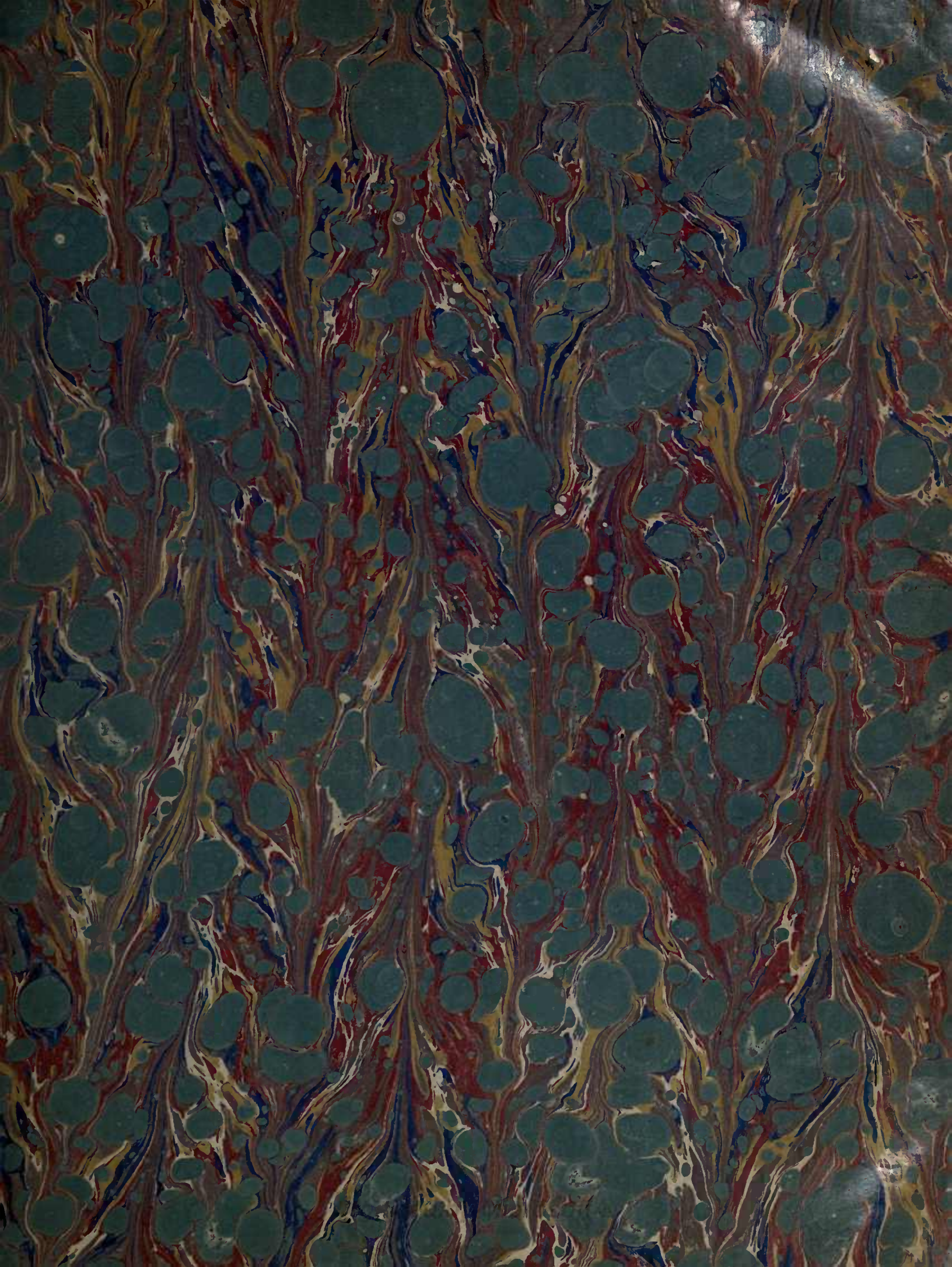
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A

CRITICAL

COMMENTARY AND PARAPHRASE

ON THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

AND THE

APOCRYPHA.

BY

PATRICK, LOWTH, ARNALD, WHITBY, AND LOWMAN.

A NEW EDITION:

CORRECTED BY THE

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CONTENTS:

DEUTERONOMY XXVIII.
JOSHUA,
JUDGES,
RUTH,
I. SAMUEL,
II. SAMUEL,
I. KINGS,
II. KINGS,
I. CHRONICLES,
II. CHRONICLES,
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A

COMMENTARY

UPON

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

DEUTERONOMY

(CONTINUED).

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it shall come to pass.*] In this chapter he repeats, with many enlargements, the reward and penalties which he had promised and threatened in the book of Leviticus, unto the observance or breach of the covenant they had made with God: and here in this verse he promises in general the blessings which are more particularly enumerated in the following verses.

If thou wilt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his commandments, &c.] See vii. 12. where the same thing is said; only here he adds the word *diligently,* to make them attend with the greater seriousness to what he delivered. (See chap. xi. 13. 22.)

That the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.] By bestowing on them the following blessings. (See vii. 14.) They were already endued with singular privileges above other nations, (Exod. xix. 5, 6.) which by their obedience would be confirmed, continued, and augmented, in greater plenty of all things.

Ver. 2. *And all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.*] Blessings that come unexpectedly, and when we are not in pursuit of them, are most welcome, and highly delight us. And such God here promises to bestow on them by his gracious providence, without their laborious and anxious seeking after them. By which very thing he set them above all nations: for what they followed after eagerly, and many times in vain, he undertakes should come to them and prevent their desires.

If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.] So as to observe and do all his commandments; as it is explained in the foregoing verse.

Ver. 3. *Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.*] That is, in all their affairs, within doors or without. Or whether they lived by employments in the city, or by husbandry in tilling the ground. It is not a natural interpretation of these words, which one of the Hebrew doctors gives of them in Bava Metzia, where he expounds, *blessed shalt thou be in the city,* Thy house shall be so nigh unto the synagogue, that thou needest not be troubled by going a long way to it; and *blessed in the field,* Thy ground shall lie so near to the city, that thou mayest quickly bring the fruit it produces to be sold in the market. But if he could have gone on in this manner, it had been something tolerable; but he expounds what follows in a most indecent manner. (See Wagenseil upon the Gemara of Sota, cap. 3. sect. 9. annot. 5.)

Ver. 4. *Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body.*] This seems to be a promise of preventing miscarriages, when they were with child: for a numerous progeny is promised afterward, (ver. 11.)

And the fruit of thy ground.] This signifies they should have seasonable harvest and vintages. For *fruit of the ground* comprehends not only all sorts of corn, but grapes, figs, pomegranates, and such-like fruits which grow on trees.

And the fruit of thy cattle.] By the word *behema* is sometimes meant all sorts of brute creatures, in opposition to men; sometimes tame creatures, in opposition to wild beasts: but here all sorts of domestic creatures (except kine, sheep, and goats), *viz. asses* and *camels.* Which Jacob brought with him, as well as oxen and sheep, when he came from Laban into Canaan. (Gen. xxxii. 5. 7.)

And the increase of thy kine.] The breed of these was very profitable, being a considerable part of the riches not only of that, but of other countries; as appears by what Pausanias saith of them. (See Bochartus, par. i. Hierozoicon, lib. ii. cap. 40. in the beginning.)

And the flocks of thy sheep.] Under the name of sheep, in the Hebrew, are comprehended goats also. All which God promises to increase, that is, to make them very wealthy. And here it may be observed, that the Israelites were generally husbandmen or shepherds, and did not commonly follow any other trades: and therefore no mention is made of them here, unless it be in ver. 6. where he seems to speak of all sorts of business.

Ver. 5. *Blessed shall be thy basket.*] The Jerusalem Tar-

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gum refers to the basket wherein they carried up their first-fruits, (xxvi. 2.) But the Vulgar Latin translates it *thy barns:* and so do the LXX. *αἱ ἀποθῆκαί σου*, the place where they laid up their corn and other fruits of the earth. Which God promises both to fill, and to preserve from the fire, or thieves, or other disasters.

And thy store.] The LXX. and the Vulgar translate it, *all that was remaining;* of which they had not present use, but kept till they had occasion for it. So it is a promise that they should never want; but still have something lying by them in store (as we translate it) above what they needed.

Ver. 6. *Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*] This the Jerusalem Targum interprets, of their entering into their schools, and going home again. But it rather signifies, they should have good journeys when they had occasion to travel, and find all safe when they returned home: or be prosperous both in time of peace and in time of war; when they are said, in the Hebrew phrase, to *go out* against their enemies. Or it may signify, in general, good success in all their affairs; which is expressed by the phrase of *coming in* and *going out,* (xxxi. 2. 2 Sam. iii. 25.) But I see no ground to think that it relates to traffic or manufactures: for they were of little use among a people, whose plain way of living made few things necessary, but what every man could make himself. And therefore we find by Ezekiel, who describes (chap. xxvii.) the great variety of merchandise which was brought to the mart of Tyre, that the Israelites carried nothing thither but wheat, and honey, and oil, and balm, (ver. 17.) which are the commodities the earth itself produceth.

Ver. 7. *The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face.*] God had promised before, that, when they went up to serve him at their solemn festivals, their enemies should not so much as desire their land, (Exod. xxxiv. 24.) and now he assures them, that, when they did invade their country, they should not prevail, but be overthrown by them.

They shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.] He not only promises them victory, but a complete victory. For fleeing *seven ways* (*i. e.* many ways), imports a total overthrow; which made every man shift for himself, as soldiers do when they are entirely routed.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord shall command the blessing upon thee.*] Protect them in their enjoyments by his sovereign power and providence; when otherwise they would have been in danger.

In thy storehouses.] The LXX. translate it *ταμεῖα*, and the Vulgar *cellaria;* which signify places wherein other goods were laid up within doors, as corn was in *barns* without, (ver. 5.)

And in all that thou settest thine hand unto.] In all manner of undertakings and employments.

And he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.] Make them live long therein.

Ver. 9. *The Lord thy God shall establish thee a holy people unto himself.*] Confirm them in that noble relation wherein they stood to him. (See vii. 6. xiv. 2.)

As he hath sworn unto thee.] See vii. 12.

If thou wilt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God.] He had separated them from all people, by peculiar laws and privileges: for this purpose, that they should be governed by him, and be obedient to him.

And walk in his ways.] Nobody can see any reason to make this a special precept (as the Jews do), that *we should walk in the ways of the Lord.* Which contains all the duty owing to him: whether by *his ways* we understand those Divine qualities, of mercy, holiness, goodness, and truth, whereby we approach to him; or (as the word *ways* is commonly used in Scripture) his Divine precepts, whereby he comes (as it were) unto us, and declares his mind and will towards us, by conformity to which we become like him in those Divine qualities: for that is the entire meaning of *walking in his ways;* ordering all our actions according to the direction of his holy will, whereby we resemble him.

Ver. 10. *And all the people of the earth.*] Who were round about them, or should have any knowledge of them.

Shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord.] Be convinced that you are, after a peculiar manner, the Lord's people, (xiv. 1. xxvi. 18.) For wheresoever we read that a person or thing hath the name of God called upon it, or is called by his name, the meaning is, that it is *his.* As the *city called by God's name,* Jer. xxv. 29. is the city of God, where he dwelt, *viz.* Jerusalem. And thus the ark is said to have the name of *God called on it,* 1 Chron. xii. 6. *i. e.* was the Lord's ark, or the ark of the covenant. And as here the children of Israel are said to be the people called by his name, so it is said of the Christian church, Acts xv. 17. For the very same phrase (as Mr. Mede observes) is used of the like relation that men have unto that which is theirs. Thus Jacob saith, Gen. xlviii. 16. that his name should be called on the two sons of Joseph, that is, they should be *his,* as Reuben and Simeon were: which shews these are *words of adoption.* (See Disc. i. p. 7.)

And shall be afraid of thee.] Not dare to do thee any hurt, or fear to have thee their enemy.

Ver. 11. *The Lord thy God shall make thee plenteous in goods.*] Bestow on them abundance of all good things, that their hearts could desire.

In the fruit of thy body.] By giving them a numerous and healthy issue; whereby they should be multiplied like the stars of heaven, or the sand on the sea-shore; according to the promise made to Abraham, Gen. xv. 5. xxii. 17.

And in the fruit of thy cattle.] Which he promised likewise to increase exceedingly.

And in the fruit of thy ground.] Which should afford large crops of corn, and great store of all other fruits every year.

In the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.] So that they should not need to send unto other countries to procure food (as they did in the days of their father Jacob), but have enough in their own land to support them all, though never so numerous.

Ver. 12. *The Lord shall open his good treasure unto thee, the heaven to give thee rain unto thy land.*] The heaven, or the air, is called the *good treasure of God,* because there he gathers together great heaps of clouds, from whence he enriches the earth with fattening showers of rain: which when he withholds, he is said to shut up this treasure, (xi. 17.) and when he bestows it, to open it; that his people might be sensible of their dependance upon his bounty for

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that blessing, as well as others, which he dispenses as he pleaseth.

In its season.] The former and the latter rain, as the Scripture calls it. The former fell in autumn, after the seed was sown, to make it take root and spring up; the latter fell in the spring-time, to bring the seed which was come up to maturity. (See xi. 14.) See the learned Dr. Prideaux, upon Maimonides's treatise De Donis Pauperum, cap. 1. not. 25.

And to bless all the work of thine hand.] By these seasonable showers he blessed their ploughing and sowing, and produced a plentiful harvest: which seems to be meant here by the *work of their hand; viz.* their husbandry; which included all sorts of plantations, as well as tillage, (Gen. ix. 20.)

And thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.] A token of great riches, (see xv. 6.) which all nations looked upon as a blessing: as indeed they are with piety. And therefore Callimachus, in his hymn to Jove, prays him to bestow both virtue and riches upon them, (ver. 97.)

—— Δίδου δ' ἀρετήν τε καὶ ὄλβον.

Which puts me in mind of a pertinent observation of Maimonides, in his preface to Pereck Chelek, in which he treats of the *foundations* of the Jewish religion. "This is the meaning (saith he) of the promises and threatenings of the law, that, if they were obedient to his precepts, he would furnish them with all good things that should further them therein, and remove from them all that hinder them: for no man can serve God as he ought when he is sick, or oppressed with famine, or vexed with wars; therefore God promises to remove all these things, and to give them health and tranquillity, that they might perfect their obedience, and be worthy of the life of the world to come. 'For this is not the end of the law, to make the earth bring forth plentifully, and to prolong men's life upon the earth, and give them healthful bodies; but that by all those things they may be helped and encouraged to perform obedience to it,'" &c.

Ver. 13. *And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail.*] This is a proverbial speech, which is explained in the words following: *And thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath.* For the head being the first and chief part of all animals, and the tail the last and lowest, those persons are said to be the *head* who command over others, and those the *tail* who are subject. And therefore this is a promise that they should rule over other nations, as their lords (as they did in the days of David and Solomon); but other nations should not lord it over them.

If that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them.] This was the condition upon which all their happiness depended; as he had told them in the beginning of this discourse, ver. 1.

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt not go astray from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left.*] See chap. v. 32.

To go after other gods to serve them.] This was the principal commandment of the law, to serve no other gods but the Lord alone. Which, while they observed, he was pleased to bless them, and to bear with many other sins which they committed. Upon which account, this commandment is so often repeated, as we find it, in this very book, vi. 14. vii. 4. 16. viii. 19. ix. 16. 28. xi. 3, 4. 30, &c.

Ver. 15. *But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and statutes, which I command thee this day.*] Especially that great commandment, *Not to go after other gods to serve them.*

That all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.] Pursue them so, that they should not possibly escape them. The same phrase is used of the blessings, ver. 2.

Ver. 16. *Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.*] As miserable, that is, every where, as he intended to have made them happy, (ver. 3.)

Ver. 17. *Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.*] The blessing of the barn was to have it full, (ver. 5.) and therefore the curse upon it was to make it empty.

Ver. 18. *Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land,* &c.] He threatens to consume their children, their corn, and other fruits, with their herds and flocks.

Ver. 19. *Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*] Have no comfort in any undertaking, either at home or abroad, in peace or in war.

Ver. 20. *The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke.*] It is very hard to know what these three words particularly import; the two first of them being very variously translated. The first of them, *meera,* seems to signify, in general, that God would blast them in all they designed and went about; for although the LXX. and Vulgar here render it *famine* and *want,* yet elsewhere the LXX. render it as we do, Κατάρα, *cursing:* and the next word, *mehuma,* they translate *hunger;* but in other places the LXX. render it by six or seven words, which import the same with our English *vexation, viz.* Ταραχὴν, *trouble* or *disturbance;* Θόρυβον, *tumult;* Σύγχυσιν, *confusion;* Ἔκστασιν, *horror* or *affrightment,* &c. which relate to great disorder, disquiet, and perplexity in their mind. And the last word, *mighereth,* the Vulgar translates as we do, *rebuke;* but the LXX. Ἀνάλωσιν, *consumption;* which are the same in effect. For when God *rebukes a man for his iniquity, he makes his beauty to consume away like a moth,* (Psal. xxxix. 11.) For God's rebukes consist not in words, but in sore afflictions, (2 Kings xix. 3. Psal. xviii. 15, &c.) particularly in disappointments and ill success in their undertakings, and continual fear of worse for the future.

In all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do.] In all their affairs (ver. 8.) they should meet with trouble, perplexity, and defeats.

Until that thou be destroyed.] He threatens that this curse, trouble, and rebuke from God should pursue them, till they had completed their ruin.

And until thou perish quickly.] When God began to punish them, after long patience with them, he was quick in his executions, and many times brought upon them sudden destruction. So he threatens in Zephaniah i. 18. that he would *make a speedy riddance of all that dwell in the land.* And though the whole nation was not rooted out speedily, but by degrees, yet they enjoyed it but a short time, in comparison of what God designed, if they had been obedient;

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in that time, they were seldom without some trouble or other, till they were expelled out of their country.

Because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.] And followed after other gods, which was the great crime that brought them to desolation.

Ver. 21. *The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee.*] The pestilence is threatened in Lev. xxvi. 25. where he saith he will *send it among them*, and here adds, that it shall *cleave unto them*, that is, be incurable. And so the author of Schebet Judah confesses, that, after they had been wasted and broken in pieces by wars, they that fled into Spain, in the time of Alphonsus, were swept away in great numbers by a plague; and introduces one applying these very words, as a propheey of it: which I thought fit to note, though this part of the propheey doth not belong to what hath befallen them since the last destruction of Jerusalem (as I shall shew hereafter), but to the times before the first destruction; when he often sent a pestilence to destroy them, (2 Sam. xxiv. 15. Jer. xiv. 12. xxi. 6, 7. 9. and many other places of that book, Ezek. v. 12. vi. 11, 12. Amos iv. 10.) But it must be acknowledged, also, that the Greeks call such unseasonable weather as destroys the fruits of the earth, by the name of Λοιμὸς, *pestilence*. So Plato, lib. x. de Legibus, saith, that which is called Νόσημα, *a disease in bodies*, Ἐν δ' ὥραις ἐτῶν καὶ ἐνιαυτῶν λοιμὸν, &c. is called *pestilence in the seasons of the year*. The murrain also in cattle is called by the same name; which even the pagans thought was sent by the anger of their gods, for the sins of men; as we learn from Callimachus, in his hymn to Diana, where he saith, (ver. 125.) that when she was angry, pestilence ate up their cattle, and hail destroyed the fruits of the earth.

Κτήνεά φιν λοιμὸς μεταβρώσκεται, ἔργα δὲ πάχνη.

As, on the contrary, when she was well-pleased, she sent fruitful seasons, and all manner of happiness, as it follows in that hymn.

Until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.] Made a great destruction, by sweeping away many people; the rest being reserved for other judgments, which follow in the next words.

Ver. 22. *And the Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation.*] These three words signify sore diseases in men's bodies: the two first of which, *sachepheth* and *kaddachath*, we translate in Lev. xxvi. 16. as we do here; only the second of them we render the *burning ague*, which here we translate *fever*. Unto which is here added *dalleketh*, which signifies such an *inflammation* as is accompanied with itching (according to the LXX. who translate it Ἐρεθισμὸν), which is extremely grievous, because the scratching of it increases the inflammation.

And with an extreme burning, and with the sword.] These two seem to relate unto the indisposition of the air, by extreme heat and drought; as we translate the word *chereb* in the margin of our Bibles; for it signifies both the *sword* and *dryness*; as the first word *charchur* signifies scorching heat, which frequently causes diseases: for it being the doubling of the word *charar*, it denotes the extremity or highest degree of it, as all such words do; of which Bochartus hath given many examples in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 19.

And with blasting and with mildew.] These two relate to the destruction of their corn, and the fruits of the earth, which follows upon the corruption of the air, as famine follows upon the corruption of the fruits of the earth. The first word *schiddaphon*, the LXX. and the other Greek interpreters translate Ἀνεμοφθορίαν, *blasting by biting winds*; though elsewhere the LXX. translate it by Ἐμπυρισμὸν and Πύρωσιν, which signify such *blighting as comes by heat*. And the second word *jerakon* (which comes from *jerek*, herb or grass, or any green thing) seems properly to be expressed by the LXX. who translate it Ὤχραν; for corn, and grass, and herbs, turn pale and wan for want of moisture.

And they shall pursue thee until thou perish.] These plagues upon their bodies, and upon the air, and the corn, and herbs, he threatens shall come upon them one year after another, till they were consumed.

Ver. 23. *And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass.*] That is, as brass, having no more moisture in it than brass hath. It is remarkable, that he doth not say *the heaven*, that is, the air or clouds, but *thy heaven*, that is, the clouds which hung over their country should be dry, though they dropped upon other lands. (See Jer. xiv.)

And the earth that is under thee shall be iron.] Hard as iron, for want of rain to soften it. (See Lev. xxvi. 19.) The observation of Maimonides is worth noting upon this part of the law: "That the Zabii, an ancient sort of idolaters in the eastern countries, thought the fruitfulness of the earth depended upon the worship of the planets, and the rest of the heavenly bodies: and therefore their wise men and their prophets (as he saith he found in their books, particularly in one concerning the husbandry of the Egyptians) taught the people to keep festivals in their honour, because the fruitfulness of the earth, by which men subsist, depends upon their will and pleasure. In opposition to which God ordered Moses to tell the Israelites in his name, that if they worshipped the stars they should have no rain; the earth should be barren, the trees yield no fruit; the season prove unhealthful, and their lives be shortened. On the contrary, if they worshipped him, the Lord of heaven and earth, and him alone, they should have showers from above; the earth should bring forth abundantly, and they should be blessed with healthful seasons, sound bodies, and long life. For it is the very foundation of the law (as his phrase is), to root the forenamed false opinion out of men's minds." (More Nevoch. par. iii. cap. 30.)

Ver. 24. *And the Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust.*] That is, there shall be such a long drought, that, instead of rain, showers of dust, blown up into the air by the wind, shall fall down from heaven upon them.

From heaven shall it come down upon thee, till thou be destroyed.] This seems to denote something more than the falling of clouds of dust, wherewith the air was filled by high winds; *viz.* showers of ashes, which have sometimes fallen in great quantities, as good historians testify. Nothing is more known than the vast clouds of ashes which Mount Ætna hath often vomited, whereby all the country thereabout hath been laid desolate. And the like hath been thrown out by Mount Vesuvius, which hath reached as far as Rome and Constantinople. (See Bonfrerius.) But if there was any such thing in Judea, it must be a miraculous judgment, there being no such mountains in those parts of the world to make such evomitions.

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Ver. 25. *And the Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies.*] He saith the same in effect, Lev. xxvi. 17. For to *smite* in Scripture (as I have before observed) signifies to *slay* or *kill.*

Thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them.] Though they marched out in a great body against their enemies, he threatens that they should soon be dispersed; the hand of the Lord, as well as of their enemies, being against them. For that expression is remarkable, *the Lord shall cause thee to be smitten,* (see ver. 7.)

And shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.] This is something more than is threatened, Lev. xxvi. 33. signifying, not only their dispersion into the remotest parts of the world, but their being tossed up and down like vagabonds, from one country to another, without any certain settlement; which hath been notoriously verified since their last dispersion by the Romans, of which they themselves have given us large accounts in several books, *viz.* Juchasin, Schalscheleth Hakkabala, Schebet Judah, and Zemuch David, wherein they have abundantly confirmed what Tertullian saith of them in his time, " Dispersi, palabundi, et cœli, et soli sui extorres vagantur per orbem;" *That being scattered, straggling up and down uncertainly, banished from their own country, they wander about the world, without any king,* &c. But this belongs to the time of the first captivity, when Nehemiah (chap. i. 8.) confesses these words were fulfilled. (See Jerem. ix. 16. Ezek. vi. 8. xii. 14, 15.)

Ver. 26. *And thy carcass shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth.*] Nothing was accounted a greater calamity among the Jews, than to have their dead bodies lie exposed, to be buried only in the bowels of birds and beasts; and therefore Jeremiah threatens this as the utmost punishment of the king of Judah, xxii. 19. xxxvi. 30. and the Psalmist bewails it as one of the sorest judgments that was befallen them, Psal. lxxix. 2, 3.

And no man shall fray them away.] That is, no man took so much compassion upon them as to chase them away, and to inter the remainders, which the birds and beasts had not devoured.

Ver. 27. *And the Lord shall smite thee.*] Why the Jerusalem Targum should here, in a particular manner, say, *the Word of the Lord shall smite thee,* I cannot imagine; unless it was to suggest, that he, being their conductor out of Egypt, was the person more especially concerned to punish them for their shameful ingratitude to their Deliverer. (See ver. 68.)

With the botch of Egypt.] Some take this to signify the leprosy, unto which they in that country were subject. Others, that *bile breaking out with blains,* wherewith God smote the Egyptians, (Exod. ix. 9, &c.) For that is called *schechin,* as this is.

And with the emerods.] The Hebrew word *apholim,* is no where to be met with but here and 1 Sam. v. 6. 9. 11. and in the rest of that history; which most interpreters (and not without reason) think signifies those painful tumours in the fundament, which sometimes turn into ulcers. (See Bochartus in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 36.)

And with the scab.] The LXX. here translate the Hebrew *garab,* (as they do also Lev. xxi. 20.) ψώρα ἀγρία, *a fierce or malignant scab.* And the Vulgar adds the word *jugis,* to signify that this was no small punishment.

And the itch.] The Hebrew word *cheres* signifies, as is generally thought, a dry itch; which is the most troublesome of all other.

Whereof thou canst not be healed.] This may refer both to the *scab* and to the *itch* beforementioned; which proceeded from such a corruption of the blood, that they were as incurable as the leprosy.

Ver. 28. *And the Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart.*] All these three relate to the mind: the first of them importing such a distraction in their thoughts, that they should not know what course to take, when they consulted for their safety: the second, such a stupidity, that they should not discern the true way, but always take the wrong: the third, that amazement and horror which followed thereupon, when they saw themselves ruined by their own foolish counsels and mad contrivances. A famous instance of which was in the time of Trajan, when they committed such outrageous massacres, both upon the Greeks and Romans (as Dion, a very sober author, relates), in Cyrene and Cyprus (where great numbers of Jews dwelt, after they were driven out of their own country), that the Lord, no doubt, (to use the word of Dr. Jackson on the Creed, book i. chap. 27.) had smote them with the *madness and blindness of heart* here threatened, that they might hereby provoke that puissant emperor's indignation, which otherwise would have slept, but now pursued them throughout his dominions, not only as enemies, or rebels, but *as noxious creatures to human society,* with a revenge suitable to their former outrages. And, indeed, this prediction was verified in their blind credulity, which made them follow every one that pretended to be their Messiah; which always brought great calamities upon them, as R. Gedaliah himself confesses in Schalscheleth Hakkabala; where he mentions no small number of these deceivers, and shews how many Jews perished who followed them. Yet they are but a few, in comparison of a long catalogue, that might be made of those pretended Messiahs. (See the learned Wagenseil's confutation of R. Lipman's Carmen Memoriale, p. 233, &c.) Unto which I shall add only one observation more out of Solomon ben Virgæ, who saith, in some places of Germany, they were possessed with such a *rabies,* that they cut one another's throats, to avoid the oppression of their enemies; and burnt themselves and their neighbours in their houses, setting whole cities on fire, and perishing in the flames. Such was their extreme rage and furious revenge, and those Christians who pressed them to change their religion. Many stories of the like nature that author tells in his book entitled Schebet Judah; where he hath sixty-four relations of the calamities which befel them in that and in other countries. But these words, I doubt not, were fulfilled before in the first desolation of Jerusalem, to which they belong. For though we have not such particular relations as those now mentioned to illustrate them, yet the prophets speak of their being *mad,* by drinking of the cup of the Lord's fury, (Jer. xxv. 16. 18.) and *blind,* (Zephan. i. 17. Lament. iv. 14.) and *astonished,* (Jer. iv. 9. Ezek. iv. 17.)

Ver. 29. *And thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in darkness.*] This shews the blindness spoken of in the foregoing verse relates to their mind; which was so

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darkened, that in the plainest and clearest things they mistook the way and means of their preservation, (Zephan. i. 17.)

And thou shalt not prosper in thy ways.] But, quite contrary, whatsoever course they took, it turned to their undoing.

And thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore.] One oppression followed upon another (as the same Dr. Jackson observes), and such rapines were committed in several places upon them as only made way for new ones, even when the supreme powers endeavoured to hinder them.

And no man shall save thee.] This was so remarkably fulfilled in these parts of the world, that the magistrates, who had a mind in many places to preserve them from such outrages, as none but Jews can justify, durst not venture to appear for their rescue. And those that did take them into their protection, were the instruments of their further wrongs, by grievous exactions for the maintenance of the war undertaken in their defence. So strangely (as that excellent person forenamed speaks, cap. 29.) did the wisdom of God bring that to pass, which his servant Moses had foretold in this verse, *no man shall save thee:* for even succour itself turned into their sorrow; and it is hard to say, whether men's purposes for their good, or for their evil, brought greater plagues upon them. Thus it was before their first captivity; Pharaoh king of Egypt came to help them, but was not able, (Jer. xxxvii. 7. xlvi. 17.)

Ver. 30. *Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her.*] Take her away from thee before thou canst consummate the marriage. This was a sore affliction, for all nations accounted it a singular blessing to complete a marriage; and, on the contrary, a curse to be defeated of such delightful hopes. Whence Callimachus, in his hymn to Apollo, promising many blessings to the youths who sung and danced before his altar, mentions this in the first place, (ver. 14.)

Εἰ τελέειν μέλλουσι γάμον————

that he would be with them, and prosper them, if they were to be married.

Thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein.] But another take possession of it, (Zephan. i. 13.)

Thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shall not gather the grapes thereof.] So we rightly translate the Hebrew word, which (as the margin notes) is, thou shalt not *profane* or *make common* the grapes thereof; which was not to be done till the fifth year after the plantation. Before which time God threatens another should enter into it, and enjoy the fruits thereof.

Ver. 31. *Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee,* &c.] All these are but particular instances of their grievous oppressions in all countries, where their goods have been confiscated, the bills of debts owing to them all cancelled. Of which the same pious and learned person, Dr. Jackson, gives several instances in the forenamed chapter.

Ver. 32. *Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people.*] This was literally fulfilled when the Jews were banished out of Portugal, in the time of king Emanuel; who ordered their children under nineteen years of age to be taken from them, and brought up in the Christian religion. When infants also were torn from their mothers' breasts, with far more grief and sorrow than they had at their coming out of their womb: and many hundred years before that, when the Goths were lords of Spain, and suffered no parents to have any commerce with their children after the seventh year of their age, but by public decree they were committed to Christians to be educated by them, who married them to their own sons and daughters. (See the same Dr. Jackson, chap. 28. parag. 1, 2.)

And thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long.] Their women filling the heavens with more hideous shrieks than the Egyptians did, when all their first-born were slain in the night. For these were bereft at once of all their dear children in the open sun, in vain begging to have them restored to them. And to increase their calamity, (as that excellent person observes, chap. 29. parag. 15.) many Moors professing Mahometism were transported out of Portugal at the same time, without such violence offered to them. What was the reason? (saith he) God would have a manifest distinction made between the Jews and other people, that this prophecy might be fulfilled.

And there shall be no might in thy hand.] Either to protect or to rescue them from violence. Where I cannot but take notice, with the same doctor, that the Moors then had some power in their hand, which moved the Portugals, perhaps, to abstain from such usage of them, lest the report of it coming to the African Mahometans, they might attempt to avenge their wrongs. But these wretched Jews had no power any where, none to avenge their injuries, which God had ordained they should suffer at all times, and in all places wheresoever they came, without redress.

Ver. 33. *The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up.*] This was remarkably fulfilled, when Salmaneser came and dispossessed the ten tribes; and when Nebuchadnezzar carried the other two tribes away, and placed other people in their room.

There were many strange people also among the Romans, who devoured their labours, before their last destruction by Titus. And ever since they have been subject to depredations of various sorts; having scraped up riches, with great care, which have often fallen into the hands of strangers. Particularly in the time of the famous crusadoes, when divers nations marched in great numbers to recover the holy land from infidels, their business was in their way to rob and spoil the Jews, and to make great slaughter of them, as both Jewish and Christian writers witness; particularly the author of Schalscheleth Hakkabala, and our Matthew Paris.

And thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway.] That they should not only sometimes, or in some ages, or in some one or few kingdoms, but always, in every kingdom whither they removed, (as he speaks, ver. 25.) suffer such violence and wrong, as no other people hath done, must needs be thought to proceed rather from Divine justice than men's inclination to injustice. Which could not but have varied with the diversity of times and places, and the several dispositions of parties, among whom they have been dispersed. And yet the brief enumeration of their particular spoils and hard usage, which Dr. Jackson makes in the forenamed chapter (whose words these are, in the beginning of it), throughout the most civil and best go-

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verned states of Europe, will abundantly confirm the truth of Moses's words in this place, *Thou shalt never but suffer wrong and violence alway*, as our old translation hath it. The same is lately observed by an eminently learned person (J. Wagenseil), in his confutation of R. Lipman's Carm. Memoriale, p. 241. where he takes notice, that the Jews no sooner have grown rich, and by degrees become considerable in any country, but some great calamity hath befallen them. This the attentive consideration of their history will justify, particularly as he observes in France, Spain, and England; God not suffering them to be quite destroyed, like the Amalekites, Jebusites, and Philistines, of whom no footsteps remain, but be scattered and tossed about through all Christian countries (for a testimony to the truth of our religion), and there only *oppressed, crushed,* and *squeezed*, as Moses here foretold. One instance of which sore *oppression* I cannot forbear to add out of Schebet Judah, where R. Solomon Virgæ confesses what great miseries they have been exposed unto, by persons pretending to be their Messiah, who have drawn the hatred of all nations upon them; particularly in Persia, he saith, they were most lamentably handled upon this score, being not only stripped of all, but forced to go about like dogs, with a great clog of wood bound to their necks, which exposed them to the scorn and laughter of all men: for while some threw it behind their backs, others would come and throw it down before their feet; some dragging them backwards, and others cruelly beating them with it. This one told him who saw it.

Ver. 34. *So that thou shalt be mad, for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.*] So they were, (as the forenamed doctor observes, chap. 29. par. 6. 15.) when their children were taken from them in Portugal. For some, being not able to rescue or dispatch them, killed themselves; others, who had better opportunity, drowned their children in wells or ditches. And here in England, one of their learned rabbins persuaded four hundred of his company, besieged with him in a strong tower by the furious multitude, to cut their own throats, rather than fall into their enemies' hands; himself confirming his doctrine, by cutting his wife's throat first, then his children's, and lastly killing himself. And thus, in the time of the forementioned crusadoes, the soldiers made such dreadful havoc of the Jews as they went along to the holy land, that many of them made themselves away out of despair; as their own authors, R. Gedaliah and David Ganz, tell us, ad an. 1096.

Ver. 35. *And the Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed,* &c.] This is the same word in the Hebrew [*schechin*] which is used ver. 27. called the *botch of Egypt*, and here *an evil botch*, that is, a very grievous breaking out; which began in those lower parts, and so spread (being incurable, and by no means to be stopped) from the sole of the feet, unto the crown of the head.

Ver. 36. *And the Lord shall bring thee, and the king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known.*] This may seem to have been fulfilled literally, only when Jehoiachim was carried away captive to Babylon, (2 Kings xxiv. 15.) and afterward Zedekiah, (xxv. 7. Jer. xxxix. 7. lii. 11.) For when they returned, they had no more any kings. But the latter part of these words [*a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known*] may incline us to extend this threatening as far as to their last dispersion by the Romans. Since which they have been driven into several countries, far less known to them than Babylon was, (with which they had correspondence before their captivity thither, 2 Kings xx. 12, &c.) and though they have had no king, yet they have set over themselves rulers and governors, who may be comprehended under that name.

And there thou shalt serve other gods, wood and stone.] Either sottishly following the example of the country to which they were carried, (Jer. xliv. 17, 18.) or being compelled thereunto by their cruel tyranny, (Dan. iii. 6.) The author of Schebet Judah observes, that this was the just punishment of their folly in running after idols, that they were sent into other countries to worship those gods which they were so fond of in their own. And he refers it particularly to the time of the captivity of Babylon; in which they continued seventy years, according to the number of years wherein those planets, whom they had worshipped, finished their course: for Saturn, as he computes, finishes his in one-and-twenty, Jupiter in as many; and so he proceeds with the rest, which make up that number. But this is too curious an observation, and the Jews have little skill in astronomy; therefore I pass it by, and only observe, that Manasseh ben Israel also understands this of the Babylonian captivity; for all the punishments mentioned from ver. 15. to ver. 49. were fulfilled under the first temple, and after the ruin of it, till the building of the second; which, though it be not exactly true (some of these predictions having been more completely fulfilled, as I have shewn, in aftertimes), yet is it reasonable to think, that this threatening particularly belongs to what they suffered in Babylon; the very same calamity being again threatened in the sixty-fourth verse, where I shall shew it belongs to their present condition.

Ver. 37. *And thou shalt become an astonishment.*] Their neighbours, he means, who saw or heard of the greatness and strangeness of their various plagues, should be dismayed at the sight, or report of them; wondering that a people, who had been so flourishing, should be made so exceeding desolate. (See 1 Kings ix. 8. Jer. xviii. 16. xix. 8.)

A proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.] So that when men would express one extremely vile, they should say he was a Jew. The same is threatened by God when he appeared to Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 7. and by Jeremiah, xxiv. 9. which, it is likely, was fulfilled at their first captivity into Babylon; (see Lament. ii. 15, 16.) but hath been notoriously fulfilled in their last captivity (as they call it), since the destruction of Jerusalem and their temple by the Romans: for here in England (from whence they have been banished above three hundred years) their name serves as a perfect measure (to use the words of Dr. Jackson, book i. on the Creed, chap. 30.) to express the height of impiety in any agent, or the depth of an abject, worthless, forlorn condition in any patient. Better we cannot express the most cut-throat dealing than thus, *You use me like a Jew;* or, *none but a Jew would have done this.* And when in common speech we exaggerate wrongs done to the most odious or despised people among us, we say, *I would not have done so to a Jew.*

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Ver. 38. *Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in.*] This was fulfilled before they were carried captive to Babylon, when God frequently sent sore famine upon them, as we read in the prophet Isaiah, lii. 19. and Jeremiah, xiv. 1—3, &c. and is often threatened by Ezekiel among other terrible judgments, and by Jeremiah himself, xxix. 17, 18.

For the locust shall consume it.] They were a great plague in those countries, falling sometimes in such vast numbers (from whence they had the name of *arbe*), that they covered the whole face of the earth, and devoured every green thing: for so another of their names imports, which is *chasil*, coming from *chasal*, which signifies to *consume* and eat up; which they did so entirely, that they were looked upon by all people as a plague sent by God, and are therefore called by Joel his *army*, ii. 25. So not only the Hebrews, but the Arabians esteemed them; who say, that some of them on a time fell before their prophet, as he sat at meat, with this inscription on their backs; "I am God, and there is none other besides me, the Lord of locusts, who nourish them; and when I please, send them forth, that they may be food for the people; and, when I please, that they may be their plague, by eating up their food." (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 6.)

Ver. 39. *Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them.*] Take a great deal of care and pains about them, after they are planted, to make them fruitful.

But shalt neither drink of the wine, nor eat the grapes.] Not enjoy the least benefit by their cost and labour.

For worms shall eat them.] The Hebrew word *tholaath* is a general name for all worms whatsoever: but there is a peculiar sort that infest vines, which the Greeks call ἴπες and ἴκες, as Bochartus observes, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 27. where he takes notice that the Latins call this worm *volvox*, and *convolvulus;* because it wraps and rolls itself up in the buds, and eats the grapes up when they grow towards ripeness, as the Roman authors explain it.

Ver. 40. *Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil.*] Though the country abounded with these trees in all parts of it, they produced nothing but leaves, and a show of fruit, which came to no perfection.

For thy olive shall cast her fruit.] Being blasted, as the Jerusalem Targum explains it, in the very blossom; or the buds dropping off for want of rain; or the fruit being eaten with worms. Maimonides observes, that the idolaters in those countries pretended, by certain magical arts, to preserve all manner of fruit, so that the worms should not gnaw the vines, nor either buds or fruit fall from the trees (as he reports their words out of one of their own books, which he names); therefore, to deter the Israelites from all idolatrous practices, Moses here pronounces, that they should draw upon themselves those very punishments which they studied by such means to avoid, (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 37.)

Ver. 41. *Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity.*] Which is threatened in many places of the prophets, and fulfilled in several invasions of their neighbours; for the Syrians, no doubt, carried captive more than one little maid, who waited on Naaman's wife, (2 Kings v. 2.) And in other inroads upon them, till the captivity of the whole land. This we may be confident was a frequent calamity, (2 Kings xiv. 26. xv. 37, &c.) But it was never more remarkably fulfilled, than since they crucified our Saviour; their children having been taken from them, (as I have observed before, ver. 32. 34.) and transported sometimes into other places. And who knows whether many of their stock, detained by king Emanuel of Portugal, beforementioned, have not been transported into America? and whether many of the Spanish colonies have not a mixture of the Jewish progeny in them? as Dr. Jackson observes. Manasseh ben Israel, I am sure, endeavours to prove (in his book called Spes Israelis), that some of the ten tribes are in America; though how they came there, he can give no account.

Ver. 42. *All the trees, and the fruit of thy land, shall the locust consume.*] So Onkelos and the Hebrew writers generally translate the word *tzelatzal;* which signifies a peculiar sort of locusts which falls upon trees, as others upon the fields. And it seems to have this name, because these locusts come in such thick clouds, that they darken the sun; the Hebrew word *tzalal* signifying to *overshadow.* The Jerusalem Targum translates it, *all your trees, and the fruits of your land, shall spoilers possess.*

I suppose these several judgments fell in the order wherein they are here mentioned in ver. 38—42. there being first a great dearth, of which we read 2 Kings viii. 1, &c. and Joel i. 10—12, &c. then many invasions of their country, wherein several were carried captive by the bands of Moab upon the Israelites, (2 Kings xiii. 20.) and of the Chaldeans, Syrians, and Ammonites, who came upon Judah, (xxiv. 2.) And we read expressly, that before this, in the days of Ahaz, a great multitude were carried captive by the Syrians, (2 Chron. xxviii. 5.) After which more spoilers came upon them in the days of Jeremiah, xii. 12. and a new famine, xiv. 1, &c. in which this forty-first verse may be thought to be fulfilled.

Ver. 43. *The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high, and thou shalt come down very low.*] There is no sorer punishment to a proud people, than to see those who are not only their inferiors, but much beholden to them (as all strangers were to the Jews, among whom they lived merely by permission), get up above them, and become their superiors. But so it was, that the Jews, by their foolish endeavours to advance themselves, raised a mere stranger to the highest dignity, who humbled them into the lowest condition. For this (as that excellent person I have often mentioned observes) may be applied to Vespasian, who was appointed to command in the wars against the Jews, and, being a person of mean birth and obscure family, had no thoughts of aspiring to the imperial seat; but by the unseasonable desire of the Jews to exalt themselves above all nations, they hoisted him up to the most sublime pitch of greatness, who was ordained by God to pluck them down from their seat, and bring them beneath all people. (See Dr. Jackson, book i. on the Creed, chap. 23. par. 3, 4, &c.) For he quite extinguished their glory, which was their temple at Jerusalem; and likewise shut up and profaned the temple which the Egyptian Jews had built in the country of Heliopolis, after it had stood above three hundred years: but if any one think good thus to apply the words of this verse unto

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Vespasian, they must not take this for the literal meaning of them; because it is evident, that by *the stranger* is to be understood those of other nations who lived *among them;* particularly, those gentiles who were brought into the country by the Assyrians, instead of the ten tribes, as some of the best of the Jewish writers expound it. What the doctor also saith, concerning their advancing Vespasian to the imperial dignity, cannot be maintained.

Ver. 44. *He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him; he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.*] Thus the covenant of God, to exalt this people and humble their foes, was quite inverted, as he also observes, (see ver. 12, 13.) all the plagues threatened to those who bare ill-will to Sion, lighting on them and their friends; and all the blessings promised to such as prayed for her peace, being heaped on those that wrought her ruin.

Ver. 45. *Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed.*] These punishments, he means, should not cease, but follow one upon another till they had brought them to utter ruin. Which is so evidently fulfilled, that, would but the atheists consider it, and lay it to heart, it would wring from them a confession of the truth of what these Divine oracles have uttered, that *this was a people who had been appointed to destruction.* For, though there be a great many of them remaining, in several parts of the world, yet they have never been suffered to grow into a nation, but in that sense are utterly *destroyed,* as Moses here prophesied.

Because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which I commanded thee this day.] It hath manifestly appeared the hand of God is very heavy upon them for their disobedience to him, there being no other reason why they, who were once so favoured by him, should be so long as they have been more miserable than any other people.

Ver. 46. *And they shall be upon thee.*] That is, the curses beforementioned should remain fixed upon them, and continue unremoved from age to age.

For a sign, and for a wonder.] That all men may take notice of them, and look upon them as extraordinary tokens of God's high displeasure, and take warning thereby to beware of their infidelity and disobedience: for, as that great man often saith, *No sign can be given equivalent to the desolation of the Jewish nation, and their continuing still banished from their own land, and miserably treated in all other countries.*

And upon thy seed for ever.] All the world may clearly see (to use his words again) that the God of their fathers hath cast them off, they having no signs or badges of his ancient wonted favours, whilst innumerable marks and scars of his fearful indignation against their fathers remain unhealed in their children, after more generations than their ancestors had of prosperity in the promised land.

Ver. 47. *Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.*] Or, *in the abundance of all things;* for this is opposed to the hunger and thirst *in which* (he saith in the next verse) *they should serve their enemies,* as a punishment for their wanton abuse of God's mercies. Which being so exceeding great, justly required not only their obedience, but cheerfulness and delight therein.

Ver. 48. *Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which he shall send against thee.*] He doth not call the Lord *their God,* as he did before, now they were abandoned by him for their sins.

In hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things.] This shews what he meant before by *abundance of all things,* plentiful provision of food and raiment, and all other things belonging to the comfort of life.

And he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck.] The loss of liberty was as great a misery as any other, which ended also in hard servitude. And it was but just that they should be slaves in the land of their enemies to cruel masters, who would not, in their own country, serve so gracious and loving a father as the Lord their God.

A yoke of iron] Signifies an unsupportable yoke, which could not be broken. (See Jer. xxviii. 13, 14.)

Ver. 49. *And the Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far.*] This evidently belongs to the Romans, as Manasseh ben Israel acknowledges; who thinks, that at this verse begins his prophecy of their calamities under the second temple, as in the foregoing he describes their calamities under the first. And in this, I think, he saith right, that there is scarce any thing mentioned in the following part of this chapter, but what relates to what they suffered under the second temple (as he speaks) and since its destruction; though I cannot say, as he doth, of the foregoing part of it, that it was fulfilled in the calamities which befel them under the first temple; for many things were never so completely fulfilled, as since they crucified our Saviour.

From the end of the earth.] This shews he speaks of the Romans, rather than of the Chaldeans, who did not come *from far,* much less *from the end of the earth;* but out of the north country, which was not very far distant from Judea: whereas the Romans, by whom they were last destroyed, came literally *from far,* and *from the end of the earth;* particularly Julius Severus was called by the emperor Adrian to their destruction out of this island of Britain; wherein Vespasian also had given great proof of his conduct. And Adrian himself, and Trajan, by whom they were still more crushed, after Vespasian had destroyed their city and temple, were both Spaniards by birth. And, therefore, Manasseh ben Israel says peremptorily, in his book, de Termino Vitæ, (lib. iii. sect. 3.) this is to be understood of the soldiers in Vespasian's army, which he brought out of England, France, and Spain, and other remote parts of the world.

As swift as the eagles.] Which every one knows the Romans carried in their ensigns. And these birds are observed to fly upon their prey with great force and violence; to whom, therefore, fierce soldiers (such as the Romans were) are compared, when they set upon their enemies. So Homer describes Achilles falling upon the Trojans,

Αἰετοῦ οἵμαϑ' ἔχων———

In Iliad Φ, where οἵματα signifies ὁρμήματα, *furious assaults,* as the scholiast interprets it. And so he speaks concerning Hector, Iliad X. As David also speaks of Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 23. and the Chaldeans are so described, coming against Jerusalem, Jer. iv. 13. xlviii. 40. xlix. 22. Lament. i. 19. Ezek. xvii. 3. and see Dan. vii. 4. and Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 9. par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 2.

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A nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand.] The Roman tongue was more strange to them than the Chaldean, especially the language of many nations, of which the Roman army was composed; and being a people whom their ancestors, perhaps, never heard of. Dr. Jackson justly looks upon the destruction and general desolation of their country, made by the Romans and their tributaries in these western parts of the world, as an everlasting monument of the truth of Moses's prophecy, in this and in the following verses.

Ver. 50. *A nation.*] This word *nation* being used thrice in this and the foregoing verse, Manasseh ben Israel (in the place forenamed) is so critical, as to observe, that this repetition shews Jerusalem was to suffer thrice by the Roman power: first, in the time of Pompey; and, secondly, when Sosius came to the assistance of Herod against Antigonus; and, thirdly, when it was besieged and overturned by Vespasian and his son Titus.

Of a fierce countenance.] So we translate this phrase, Dan. viii. 23. which, in the Hebrew, is a *strong* or *hard face.* Accordingly we translate it *impudent* (or, in our language, *brazen-faced*), Prov. vii. 13. and *hard*, Prov. xxi. 29. and *bold of face*, Eccles. viii. 1. All which set forth a people stern, fierce, undaunted, cruel, and hard-hearted; that had neither mercy nor modesty, but inflexibly pursued their designs; which is the true character of the old Romans.

Which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young.] These are wont to be pitied, being unable to hurt others; but in their wars with the Jews, the Romans spared nobody, their rage and fury extinguishing all reverence to grey hairs, and all tenderness to young babes.

Ver. 51. *And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed.*] For they brought such vast armies, as devoured all the provisions in the country.

Which also shall not leave thee corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.] He repeats it again, in more particular words, to set forth the desolation to be so great, that nothing should remain for their support.

Ver. 52. *And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates.*] The country being wasted, the Jews fled into their fenced cities, where they had laid up some provisions, to enable them to hold out a siege.

Until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustest, throughout thy land.] This was literally fulfilled by the Romans, to whom the best fortified places were forced to yield, as may be seen in Josephus's History of the Jewish War, which is the best commentary on this part of the prophecy. The walls of Jerusalem particularly were razed by Pompey; and Sosius took it again by force in the time of Augustus. But Tacitus tells, that the Jews took such advantage of the covetousness of Claudius, that they purchased of him the liberty to fortify their city again; which they did so well, that *they trusted*, as Moses here speaks, to its strength; which was so great, that Titus could not take it but by a long siege, which concluded in its utter ruin.

He shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all the land which the Lord thy God hath given thee.] He repeats it again, that they might not think to find security in any place whatsoever, though never so strongly fortified, and well provided with all things necessary for its defence.

Ver. 53. *And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.*] This was fulfilled to a tittle by Vespasian and his son Titus; who, after they had vanquished them in the field, begirt them so close in Jerusalem, that they could not stir out, and rather than surrender, perished by a lamentable famine. For there were vast multitudes of people shut up in the city, which run thither from all parts for safety; who brought the famine sooner upon them, and made it more severe when it came. If we may believe R. David Ganz, it was furthered also by a fire, which the seditious people kindled, whereby fourteen hundred magazines were consumed, stored with provisions to serve two hundred thousand people for twenty years. For this he quotes Josephus; though no such thing is to be found in him.

Ver. 54. *So that the man that is tender and very delicate among you.*] The two Hebrew words for *tender* and *delicate* signify a man that had lived in pleasure, and fared daintily, like the rich man in the gospel.

His eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom, &c.] Grudge every bit which he sees his nearest relations eat, being ready to snatch it out of the mouth of his dear consort and children, and put it into his own: for this is the effect of a ravenous hunger.

And towards the remnant of his children which he shall have.] This imports that they should see many of them die in the siege: for famine forced them to feed on bad food, and that bred pestilential diseases, which swept away many; and increased still more by the carcasses of those that were famished. If any credit may be given to one of their own authors (David Ganz), there were above a hundred and sixteen thousand dead bodies of the rich and honourable men of Jerusalem carried out at one gate of the city, which was that of the Brook Kidron, besides those which were carried out at other gates, and thrown over the walls: and this he pretends to have out of Minchas, the son of Seruk, who was a faithful register in that city. Josephus mentions almost the same number, lib. vii. de Bello Judaico, cap. *ult.*

Ver. 55. *So that he shall not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat.*] This is a description of the sorest famine, which forced them, after they had eaten up their horses, dogs, cats, and such-like creatures, and their very belts and shoes, to eat even their own children; which fathers, who used to live deliciously, Moses prophesies, should eat up themselves privately, and let none share with them.

Because he hath nothing left in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.] They were so sorely pinched with famine in a long siege, that they had nothing else remaining but their own offspring, and one another, wherewith to satisfy their hunger. Josephus observes, (lib. vii. de Bello Judaico, cap. 18.) that Jerusalem had been taken five times before this; but never suffered so dreadfully as by Titus; whom the Talmudists therefore call by the name of *impious:* which epithet belonged rather to themselves, who having, *with wicked hands* (as St. Peter speaks), crucified and slain their

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Redeemer, were, by the just judgment of God upon them for their infidelity, hardened in an obstinate belief and expectation of a deliverer from the Romans, till they were reduced to those extremities.

Ver. 56. *The tender and delicate woman among you, that would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness.*] A description of the greatest softness and delicacy; which both the Chaldees express by a word that signifies the nicest motion, and going so slow a pace, as if they were loath to touch the ground. (See Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 19.)

Her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter.] This is only a higher instance of the cruel effects of their distress by famine: for women, especially of the better sort, are naturally more tender and pitiful than men, and have the most passionate love to their children; which Moses here prophesies should be quite extinguished by hunger. And it was literally fulfilled, both in the siege of Samaria, wherein a woman boiled her son, (2 Kings v. 28, 29.) as a man did in the first siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, (Baruch ii. 3. and see Lament. ii. 20. iv. 10.) But never so exactly fulfilled as in the last siege by the Romans, when a noble woman (which fully answers to this prophecy, such persons being very delicate) did the very same, as Josephus relates in his book of the Jewish Wars, lib. vii. cap. 8. A most unnatural fact, as he observes, which was never committed, either by Greek or barbarian; and which he would not have related, because it might seem incredible, if there had not been many witnesses of it besides himself.

Ver. 57. *And towards her young one that cometh out from between her feet.*] Towards her new-born babe, which is wont to be welcomed into the world with great joy; but in this siege dispatched out of it, to assuage the rage of their hunger. In the Hebrew (as we take notice in the margin) the word we translate *young one*, properly signifies the *after-birth*: and so the LXX. translate it, τὸ χορίον. Which makes this passage most plain; that their hunger should make them so unnatural, as, first, to eat the afterbirth which came from them, and then the child which was wrapped in it.

And towards her children which she shall bear.] The rest of their children, whose cries for food they had no way to stop, but by killing them, and making them their own food. So it follows in the next words.

For she shall eat them for want of all things.] Having nothing else left to eat: for they had devoured, not only the leather of their girdles, and their shoes, and which covered their shields, but the very stale dung of oxen, and such things as the most sordid of all living creatures would not eat. (See Josephus, lib. iii. ἁλώσεως, cap. 16. lib. vii. cap. 7.)

Secretly.] It was not done secretly for any other reason, but lest any body should have a share with them, and so make their hunger return the sooner: and yet it was a hard matter to conceal what they had done of this kind; for the seditious people presently smelling there had been something boiled, got into the house, when she had eaten one half of her child, and found the other half, which she had left till another time; of which she invited them to eat.

In the siege and straitness.] These two words, which are used here, and ver. 53. and 55. may both relate to the grievous miseries they should endure, when they were besieged, (ver. 52.) and may be translated, *in the pressure and straits wherewith thine enemies*, &c.

Wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in thy gates.] We have not such an account of their distress in other cities, as we have of what they suffered in Jerusalem; where ἄπειρον πλῆθος, *an innumerable multitude perished by famine*, (as Josephus tells us, lib. vii. ἁλώσεως, cap. 7.) and ineffable calamities thereupon happened: for in every house, where the least shadow of food appeared, a war immediately began; and the dearest relations fell to blows, snatching away from each other the miserable supports of life. Nor would they let those that were dying expire quietly, not believing what they affirmed, when they told them they had no food in their houses; but the cut-throats came and searched their very bosoms, as they lay drawing their last breath, whether they had not there hid some food.

Ver. 58. *If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, which are written in this book.*] Among which those words are most remarkable, (xviii. 15. 18, 19.) "A Prophet shall the Lord thy God raise up unto thee, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken, &c. Whosoever will not hearken unto the words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD.] That is, fear the great Lord of heaven and earth, and their special benefactor, who is most glorious in himself, and to be most humbly reverenced by us: for the *name of God* is God himself; from whence it is that he is sometimes called *Haschem, the Name*, Lev. xxiv. 11. This shews the reason why Moses repeats this name the *Lord thy God* so often as he doth in the preface to this book, chap. vi.—ix. &c. In some of which there is scarce a verse wherein we do not meet with these words, and it is sometimes repeated no less than three times in one and the same verse, (xii. 18. xvi. 15.) that God might be in all their thoughts, and the fear of him might possess their hearts.

Ver. 59. *Then the Lord.*] If they still persisted in their infidelity and disobedience, after Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, and such unheard-of calamities as they had suffered during the siege of that place, he threatens to bring upon them more astonishing judgments.

Will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance.] Though their great plagues, under Vespasian, by famine, sword, and pestilence, had lessened their numbers exceedingly, yet, by the time of Trajan and Adrian, they had, like traitors taken for awhile from the rack (to use Dr. Jackson's words), recovered strength enough to be put to greater torture; for then they were made a spectacle to the world of the Divine vengeance again, which they brought upon themselves by their rebellion; and shewed therein their natural strength, by their grievous lingering pains in dying: for not only in Mesopotamia, and in Cyprus, but especially in Cyrene, and throughout all Egypt, they broke out into such outrages, ὥσπερ ὑπὸ πνεύματος δεινοῦ τινος καὶ στασιώδους, *as if they had been possessed with some fierce and seditious spirit;* (as Eusebius speaks, lib. iv. Eccles. Hist. cap. 2.) whereupon Marcius Turbo was sent against them, and setting upon them, both by sea and land, with horse and foot, made a vast destruction of them. See Dion, lib. lxviii. and

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Xiphilinus, who describe their slaughter to have been so great, that now was fulfilled (as the forenamed Dr. Jackson thinks) what Moses foretold in this place, *The Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, great plagues, and of long continuance.* And, indeed, Eusebius saith in the forenamed place, that Turbo destroyed many thousands of them, πολλαῖς μάχαις ἐν οὐ ὀλίγῳ τε χρόνῳ, &c. *in many battles, and in no small time, the war being protracted a great while to complete their destruction.* And the application of this prophecy to this time may be confirmed by a strange relation which we meet withal in their own books: for in the Jerusalem Talmud, one of their doctors tells us, that, when Trajan came upon them with his army, they were reading these very words of the law, (ver. 49.) "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth," &c. which he understanding (having asked them what they were doing), he cried out, *Here is the man* (pointing to himself), *who am come five days sooner than I intended.* And immediately compassing them about with his legions, slew them all. Then he went to their wives, and offered them mercy if they would submit themselves: but they replied, *What thou hast done to the ground, do to the stubble:* so he dispatched them also, and shed so much blood, that it ran into the sea as far as Cyprus. At this time (so he concludes his story) the horn of Israel was cut off from Israel, never to be restored into its place, till the Son of David come. This passage I find alleged by Joh. Benedictus Carpzovius, out of Massec. Sanhedr. in explication of another matter in Schickard's Mischpat Hammelech, cap. 3. Theor. 10. p. 199.

And sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.] Such as gonorrhœas, leprosies, and burning fevers, as the author of the old Nitzacon, set forth by J. Wagenseil, explains it, p. 131.

Ver. 60. *Moreover, he shall bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.*] The same diseases he foretells should infest them in, and after, their destruction by the Romans, which had done formerly under the Chaldeans, and other oppressors, (ver. 27.) What these diseases were, Pet. Cunæus, lib. ii. de Republ. Jud. cap. *ult.* hath expressed in these words, "Vitiligines, psorasque et tetra ulcera," &c. *Leprosies, itches, botches, and foul stinking ulcers,* the greatest physicians have anciently ascribed to the Egyptians and Syrians, as plagues proper to those nations; unto which diseases, he observes, the Jews were strangely obnoxious.

Ver. 61. *Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.*] It had been too long to have set down all the diseases and calamities that mankind are subject to: but he tells them, they should not escape any one of them, though very numerous, and be afflicted with them till their destruction was completed. For they were of such long continuance, as was said before, and pursued them so closely whithersoever they went, that they are no longer a nation, but a scattered, forlorn people, abandoned and forsaken by Him that formerly protected them. Of this they themselves are so sensible, that they have confessed the truth of this part of the prophecy in these later ages: for Solomon ben Virgæ having related (in the fiftieth section of his book, called Schebet Judah) how they were transported out of Palestine into Spain, and so miserably handled, that not one of a thousand remained; and then how they were destroyed in Germany and France, where, of innumerable multitudes (equal to the number which came out of Egypt), scarce five thousand survived that calamity; and what he himself saw in Castile and Portugal (where they suffered such things as cannot be expressed, nor conceived, by famine, by depredations, by transportations, and by being sold for slaves, or drowned in the sea), he thus at last concludes his sad story, that they who fled to avoid that dreadful tempest in Castile found the truth of this oracle, *Every sickness and plague, which is not written in the book of this law, shall the Lord bring upon thee, till thou be destroyed.*

Ver. 62. *And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude.*] The multitude of the Jews killed in the wars, was equal to the number of living men in Israel in the time of king David: for Josephus saith, that in the siege of Jerusalem there were destroyed, by pestilence, famine, and other ways, *eleven hundred thousand,* besides above *ninety thousand* carried captive. For they being come from all countries to keep the Passover, the *whole nation* (as his words are, lib. vii. Ἁλώσεως, cap. 17.) were shut up here by a fate, ὥσπερ εἰς εἱρκτὴν, *as in a close prison,* or rather driven thither (as Dr. Jackson speaks) *into a slaughter-house,* after they had been foiled by the Romans in the field. And yet after this they recovered strength (as I observed before), merely to be more tormented, and miserably destroyed: for in the reign of Adrian (who succeeded the emperor Trajan) they shook the Roman empire by their rebellious commotions, as Dion, who lived not long after, relates in his History, lib. lxix. which moved Adrian to exercise the greater severity upon them in their punishment, there being slain of them in battles and skirmishes *five hundred and eighty thousand,* besides a vast number consumed by famine, and sicknesses, and fire, during the time of this lingering war; which Julius Severus, a famous commander, sent for on purpose out of Britain, designedly protracted to a great length, not being willing to try it out in the field in one battle with a desperate multitude. And now, as Moses foretold, they were left *few in number:* for Dion, as if he had intended to expound these words, saith, that Severus so beset and attacked them separately, in several parties, *that very few of them escaped; fifty* of their strongest fortresses being utterly razed, and *nine hundred and eighty and five* of their most noble and populous towns sacked and consumed by fire, with the slaughter of the forementioned number; insomuch, that, as his words are, *all Judea was in a manner laid waste, and left as a desert.* This we may truly call *the last conflict of this nation with death and destruction in their own land;* out of which they were now almost totally expelled.

Because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God.] Who had spoken to them by that great Prophet, his eternal Word, promised in the eighteenth chapter of this book, ver. 15, &c. but they would not hearken to him: for which cause he gave them up to listen unto false Christs, whom they followed to their destruction; particularly Barchocheba, who, in the time of Adrian, took upon him the title of their king, and set up his throne at Bitter, in the tribe of Benjamin, which the Jews had made their chief seat, after the destruction of Jerusalem; and had in it, as

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they pretend, four hundred synagogues. Here the Romans made such a slaughter of them, when they took it, that the Jews themselves cannot find expressions tragical enough to represent it. Twice as many, they tell us, perished now as came out of Egypt; great rivers ran with the blood of the slain, which (say some of them) carried great rocks along with it in the stream. With these, and many other such-like hyperbolical speeches, they themselves exaggerate their calamities, as many have observed out of Juchasin and Gittin, particularly Const. L'Empereur, in his annotations on Jacchiades, (Dan. xi. 34.)

But though now they were left few in number in Judea, yet, in other countries where they were dispersed, they multiplied again, that God's plagues might continue to be multiplied upon them, and this prophecy more perfectly fulfilled: for some ages after this, (anno 1009.) they had so incensed Christian people against them, by bringing the Persians upon them, who destroyed the churches dedicated to our Saviour at Jerusalem, that it was resolved, by the common consent of all Christians, that no Jew should live in their territories, but be driven out of them throughout all the world. By which means the greatest part of them died of several kinds of death, or made away themselves, so that "vix pauci residui fierent in orbe Romano," *there remained but a very few of them in the Roman world.* They are the words of Glauber, who relates this, lib. iii. cap. 7.

Ver. 63. *And it shall come to pass, as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought.*] The state of the Jews, from the time of Adrian till the expiration of the Roman empire, cannot be gathered from the Roman writers; but the fathers of the church often mention their miseries. And so do their own authors; particularly the author of Schebet Judah, who saith, "It is not in the power of man to tell all the kingdoms and cities where they were scattered; in which they suffered things so horrid, that it is fitter to pass them over in silence, than to relate them: but therein was verified the Divine prediction, Lev. xxvi. 38. *Ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up,*" (sect. 49.) And Dr. Jackson, to explain this, hath more particularly observed, that as God raised up Cyrus in testimony of his *rejoicing to do them good,* who released them from their captivity in Babylon; so, to give the world a proof of his *rejoicing to destroy them, and bring them to nought,* he advanced Philip Augustus to the crown of France, (about anno 1179.) to defeat all the hopes which some kindness shewn unto them had put into their hearts: for he spoiled their synagogues of all their donatives and ornaments, confiscated all their lands and immoveable goods, and granted a release of all debts due unto them from Christians. (See book i. upon the Creed, chap. 28. parag. 13.)

And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.] This was wonderfully fulfilled by Adrian; who, after a strange desolation, beforementioned, prohibited, by a public decree ratified with the senate's consent, any Jew to come within sight of Judea. This he did out of a politic respect, lest the sight of their native soil might inspire them with some fresh desperate resolutions to endeavour their settlement there again; but herein he was unwittingly *the angel of God* (as the same excellent person speaks), to keep this wicked race out of that paradise, the good land, out of which he had driven them.

Ver. 64. *And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people.*] That was the effect of Adrian's severe decree, of not coming within view of their own country, which made them disperse all the world over, where they could find any admittance.

From the one end of the earth even unto the other.] Such as were carried captive in Adrian's war were transported by his order into Spain, his own native country, which was then accounted the end of the world westward. And many of them, it is evident by their own books, fled to Babylon, and the countries thereabout, which was as far as they knew eastward. In Spain they continued many years in great abundance, as it were, expecting a wind for their passage to some place more distant from their ancient seat. And who knows whether many of them have not, since the discovery of America, been transported thither, as I before observed? Certain it is, that the Jews themselves are sensible this prophecy was not fulfilled, till this their last dispersion, after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans: for thus R. Isaac, who had occasion to mention these words, (in his Munimen Fidei, lately brought to light by Wagenseil, Perek. vi.) glosses upon them: "In the Roman captivity, the Jews were dispersed and dissipated through all the regions of the east, and of the west: for every nation of which the Roman army consisted, when they returned to their own countries, carried some of them along with them, into Greece, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, and all other countries, which either Christians or Mahometans now possess."

And there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.] Here that excellent person I have so often mentioned (Dr. Jackson) commends it to the reader's consideration, whether this part of Moses's prophecy may not be understood of the convert Jews throughout the pope's dominions, who are often urged to commit idolatry with stocks and stones, upon more tyrannical terms (if they gainsay) than their forefathers were, either by the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Romans, or any whatsoever, that led them captive out of their land.

If it be said, there is a great difference between the heathen idolatry, and the present image-worship in the Roman church, it is granted the idolatry is of a diverse kind; and so it seems Moses meant, when he threatens the Jews, after their final transportation into these western countries, *should serve such gods as their fathers had not known:* for their forefathers, before Moses's time and after, had known the heathen gods too well; but were perfect strangers to this image-worship now in use. And to strengthen this interpretation, it ought to be observed, that these words [*which neither thou nor thy fathers have known*] are omitted in the thirty-sixth verse of this chapter; where he speaks of their *serving of other gods of wood and stone,* as he doth here. But that part of the prophecy belongs to what they did in the first captivity into Babylon, as Manasseh ben Israel observes, who understands these words to be a prophecy of what they have suffered in this last dispersion: for, reciting these words (lib. iii. de Termino Vitæ, sect. 3. p. 131.) as containing the greatest calamity that hath befallen them, he saith, "This we see fulfilled, after a singular manner, in

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this present captivity; because of all those evils wherewith the Hebrews have been afflicted in France, and England, and Spain:" for they had been often pressed, either to renounce their religion, or to be undone; and many times chose rather to comply with the idolatrous worship in the Roman church, than to be banished, and have their goods confiscated.

Ver. 65. *And among these nations shalt thou find no rest.*] This was wonderfully fulfilled in the ages which followed that in which Adrian lived; when they both disturbed others, and could find no rest themselves: for in the third century, they raised sedition in the reign of Severus, by whom they suffered very much about the year 202. after our Saviour's birth: and in the next century we are informed by St. Chrysostom, in his second oration against the Jews, (tom. vi. edit. Savil. p. 333.) "That they rebelled again in the time of Constantine; who, causing their ears to be cropped off, dispersed them, καθάπερ τινὰς δραπέτας καὶ μαστιγίας, *as vile fugitives and vagabonds, into various countries, where they carried this mark of infamy along with them, that all might be instructed to make no more such attempts.*" But in the fifth century they made new commotions, and were driven out of Alexandria for their seditious practices, where they had been settled ever since the time of Alexander the Great, and dispersed into several countries, as Socrates observes in his Ecclesiastical History, lib. vii. cap. 16. And in the next chapter relates how miserably they were deluded in Crete, by one who pretended to be Moses come down from heaven to lead them to their own land through the sea; into which many threw themselves, and perished. That expulsion out of Alexandria is mentioned by David Ganz also, one of their own authors. In the sixth century, as Elmacinus tells us, they again rebelled in Palestine against the Romans, who slew a great number of them. And in the seventh, they were expelled from Antioch by Phocas, and out of Jerusalem by Heraclius, and out of Spain (anno 604.) by Sisebutus, or, as some call him, Sisebodus, king of the Goths; and they flying in great numbers into France, were shortly after put to this hard choice, either to renounce their religion, or lose all they had; which persecution, Dr. Jackson observes, in the book often mentioned, (chap. 28. parag. 1.) is recorded by those who wrote the life of Dagobert, as one of the chief memorables of his reign. What their state was in the next three centuries, he saith, he had observed nothing remarkable: nor can I find any thing notable in the eighth, but the appearance of a false Messiah, by whom they were deluded, and brought into trouble. As for the ninth, there were no learned men among them in that age, nor in the Christian world. And in the tenth they were in the same condition; insomuch, that they were fain to make a weaver the head of one of their universities.

Neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest.] They being not able to obtain a long settlement any where; but were tossed up and down, and forced from one country to another: for so it was, that, in the beginning of the eleventh century, about the year of our Lord one thousand, they were so vexed throughout the most part of Europe, that "quid agerent, aut quo se verterent nesciebant," *they knew not what they should do, or which way they should turn themselves,* as the forenamed doctor observes, (par. 4.) out of Papirius Massonus, who hath it out of Glauber. To which I will add this testimony out of David Ganz, in his book called Tzemach David, that, in the latter end of this century (anno 1096.) when there was a famous expedition for the recovery of the holy land, *the Jews felt it a most calamitous time* (as he speaks), being robbed, and pillaged, and killed, by the soldiers as they went along. And, indeed, so much cruelty was exercised upon them, that it moved St. Bernard's compassion, to write to the bishop, clergy, and people of Spire, not to persecute them, much less kill them, or drive them out of their country: "For they are dispersed (saith he) into all lands, that, while they suffer the just punishment of their horrid wickedness, they may be witnesses of our redemption," Epist. 322. And the author of Schebet Judah, mentioning their banishment out of Savoy, Piedmont, Lombardy, Sicily, and other countries, quotes these very words of Moses [*among those nations thou shalt find no rest,* &c.] as a prophecy of that exile; which was accompanied with many other mischiefs: for, as they fled to other countries, an immense multitude of people fell upon them, and pillaged them of all the gold and silver they were carrying away with them, as he relates there, sect. 11.

And the Lord shall give thee a trembling heart.] They being always in dread of some new misery, their condition still growing more dismal in the twelfth century: for as there is a progress in Moses's prophecy of the increase of their calamities; so it proved in the event, that their sufferings grew greater and greater. They themselves (in Tzemach David, and other books) relate, that, in the year 1142. a hundred and twenty of their congregations were utterly subverted and dispersed. And in the year 1170. they were expelled again out of France, and spoiled of their treasure; which was renewed in the year 1198. How they were used here in England, our own chronicles tell us; and the like ill-usage they met withal in Germany and Spain: so that R. Zacut complains of no less than ten grievous persecutions in this one age, to abolish the name of Jews out of the world. This could not but give them a very *trembling heart.*

And failing of thine eyes.] Which looked for some relief; instead whereof they were still more hardly used in the thirteenth century, being, in the year 1253. again expelled out of France, whither they had returned; and again in 1295. when they expected some rest, there was a fresh expulsion, mentioned by R. Levi ben Gersom, who saith they were spoiled of all their goods, and sent away only with their clothes upon their backs. Which he affirms with the more confidence, because it was done in his time, when, he saith, there was such a number of them, that they exceeded those that came out of Egypt. So he writes in his exposition of those words, Numb. xxiii. 10. *Who can count the dust of Jacob?* I will forbear to mention how they were treated here in England (1290.) and in Germany; into which they flying out of France, were most cruelly used.

And sorrow of mind.] Which must needs seize upon them heavily to find their miseries so far from abating, that they still increased in the fourteenth century: when they were banished again out of France, and spoiled of their goods, 1306. and once more 1395. which the Jews call their fourth and last banishment. About the same time they were banished out of Germany, anno 1392. In Castile, indeed, they redeemed their lives with money (which they could not part withal, without much *sorrow of mind*), but in Catalonia, Arragon, and in other parts of Spain, such a terri-

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ble storm fell upon them, that they themselves, in Juchasin, say, there were no less than two hundred thousand turned Christians, with heavy hearts. It would be too tedious to mention all that they suffered in the fifteenth century in Germany, Hungary, Polonia, and in Italy, Spain, and Portugal. I will only observe what befel them in the country last named, in the next century, anno 1506. when all that is said in this verse is fulfilled, by that dreadful massacre which was made of them at Lisbon for three days together; where men were not suffered to die of their deadly wounds, but were dragged by their mangled limbs into the market-place, where the bodies of the living and the slain, with others half alive, half dead, were burnt together in heaps. The spectacle was so horrible, that it quite astonished the rest of this wretched people; two thousand of which perished in this barbarous manner. Parents durst not mourn for their children, nor children sigh for their parents, when they saw them haled to the place of torment; so that their hearts, no doubt, were ready to break with grief and sorrow. In short, "Sic eos metus exanimaverat, ut vivi non multum a mortuorum similitudine distarent:" *fear had so dispirited them, that the living in their aspect did not much differ from the dead;* which words of Osorius (in his fourth book de Rebus Emanuelis) our Dr. Jackson, who relates this sad story out of him, looks upon as a paraphrase upon these words of Moses (though Osorius did not think of them), *I will give thee a trembling heart, and failing of the eyes, and sorrow of mind.*

There are those who, by a *trembling heart,* understand the terrors of an evil conscience: so D. Chytræus, p. 131. And by *failing of the eyes* may be understood, the constant disappointment of their hopes, wherewith they were sometimes fed by false Messiahs in several ages; which disappointment bred great sorrow of mind, when after earnest expectation of some good, the quite contrary came upon them.

Ver. 66. *And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee.*] That is, it should be doubtful whether they should live or die the next moment. As it manifestly happened in the forenamed massacre, when they durst not fetch a sigh, and yet could hardly avoid it, at the sight of their parents' or children's tortures, for fear they should suffer the same before the breath was out of their tortured bodies.

And thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have no assurance of life.] So it was then: none of them knowing who would be next seized, in those three days' butchery. And so it was in some of their banishments, which, they were told, should be the best remedy for the evils impending over them, as the author of Schebet Judah speaks, who tells us, (sect. 23.) that the reason which some princes gave for their expulsion out of their territories was, to prevent their being torn in pieces by the people, who were most furiously set against them.

Ver. 67. *And in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even!*] That they might not see those miserable spectacles, which they hoped would end in the night, when men went to rest.

And at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!] Being afraid of unseen dangers, to which the night might give an opportunity; or, that they might not see their way, when they fled by sea and land, from one country to another, as they were forced to do very often: for Abarbinel, in his Commentary upon Isaiah xl. 11. reckons up four universal banishments, out of the countries where they lived. The first out of England; the next out of France; the third out of Asia, Germany, Tuscany, Lombardy, and Savoy; and the last out of Spain; when he himself was one of those who were constrained to leave that country, and knew not whither to go. He hath given us a lively description of that calamity (like to which, he saith, none had ever befallen them, since they were banished their own country) in his preface to his Commentary upon the Book of the Kings, which he wrote the very next year after their expulsion, (1493.) and the author of Schebet Judah hath transcribed in his own words: "A decree was made and proclaimed publicly, that all the Jews should change their religion, or quit the country in three months' time. Abarbinel had then a place in the court, where he petitioned the king, and besought his ministers and counsellors to revoke the edict, and be content with their estates, which they offered to him; but all in vain: for three hundred thousand, old and young, men and women, and he among the rest, went away on foot upon one day, not knowing whither to go. Some went into Portugal, others into Navarre; where they conflicted with many calamities: for some became a prey, or perished by famine and pestilence. And therefore others committed themselves to the sea, hoping to find a quiet seat in some other countries. But on the sea they met with new disasters; for many were sold as slaves when they came on any coast, many were drowned, many burnt in the ships which were set on fire; in short, all suffered the just punishment of God the avenger (as he speaks): for after all this, a plague came and swept away the rest of the miserable wretches, who were hated by all mankind; so that all that vast number perished by one calamity or other, except a very few." He that would see more of the woful miseries of this people, may look into Schebet Judah, sect. 53. where he shews what befel those who went to seek new habitations in the kingdom of Fess, where they lived a long time upon grass, and ate its very roots, and then died, and their bodies lay exposed, none being so charitable as to bury them.

For the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.] The one of these seems to refer to their dreadful apprehensions in the night; and the other to the lamentable spectacles they beheld in the day. And the simple meaning of the former part of the verse may be, that they should be weary of life, having no comfort either day or night.

Ver. 68. *And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again.*] The Jerusalem Targum translates it, *The Word of the Lord shall bring thee back again.* He, that is, who conducted them out of Egypt in a glorious cloud, would punish them for their foul offences against him, by bringing them again into bondage there. This was first fulfilled after the desolation made by Titus; when there was, as I observed before, (ver. 62.) above ninety thousand carried captive, and many of them transported into Egypt, as Josephus relates, in the conclusion of the sixteenth chapter of the seventh book, concerning the Wars of the Jews. And here Manasseh ben Israel hath a very pertinent observation, that Vespasian transported them into many and various regions: but Egypt is only here named, the more

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to reproach the Jews: as if he had said, "Ye shall be carried into that land as captives, out of which ye came in a triumphant manner," lib. iii. de Termino Vitæ, sect. 3. which may incline one to think, that he was of the same mind with our Dr. Jackson, who, observing how cruelly they were used here in England, and many other countries, concludes, that this island, and every place of Europe, wherein their condition of life hath been more hard and burdensome than their forefathers' was in Egypt, may be said to be that Egypt, into which God threatens here to bring them *in ships*.

And, indeed, we do not read of their being carried into Egypt after Vespasian's time; though it is set down here as a punishment to come upon them after a long train of other miseries; and must relate to their rigorous usage, which I have observed in many countries, in several ages, down to these latter times. The Jerusalem Talmud, it must be observed, mentions another *bringing into Egypt* (literally understood), in the Massechta beforenamed upon ver. 59. where they say, that, as God forbade them three times to return into Egypt (which they there set down), so they were forced thither three times for their transgressions against God; first, in the days of Sennacherib, king of Assyria; (Isa. xxxi. 1. 3.) secondly, in the time of Johanan, the son of Kareah; (Jer. xlii. 16.) and lastly, in the time of the emperor Trajan: but this I look upon as a mistake; for Trajan rather killed all those whom he found there, than carried them thither, as I noted before.

With ships.] Which seems to put them in mind how different their condition was now become, from what it was when they came out of Egypt without any ships; for the sea gave them a passage through it, by being made dry land. Their being carried also thither by ships, made their condition the more deplorable, because there were no means of escaping out of them, as there might have been if they had gone by land.

By the way whereof I spake unto thee.] Or, *to the way*, (so the particle *beth* often signifies, Gen. xi. 4. xvi. 22.) that is, to the place, whereof I said, *Ye shall see it no more again:* for it seems to be a manifest allusion to what we read in the seventeenth chapter of this book, ver. 16.

And there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women.] Exposed to sale like beasts in the open market; and that at so vile a price, that thirty of them (as both profane and ecclesiastical historians relate) were sold for one small piece of money. Josephus, giving a particular account how the captives were disposed of by Titus, saith, that the most goodly young men he reserved to attend his triumph; of the rest, he ordered those above seventeen years old to be sent bound into Egypt, to labour in the works there; many he distributed in the provinces to perish in the theatre by the sword and wild beasts: and all under seventeen years old he commanded to be sold. But while they were making this distribution, twelve thousand of them died of famine; partly by the hatred of their guards, who gave them no food; and partly by the weakness of others, whose stomachs could not receive it, (lib. vii. cap. 16.) By which a judgment may be made how little worth these vile wretches were, as it here follows. In aftertimes, I have observed, in the course of this Commentary, how they were sold for slaves in some places, and in all used as no better. Benjamin Tudelensis, who went a pilgrimage to visit his countrymen, represents their condition as most miserable throughout the eastern empire. And particularly complains of their hard usage among the Greeks at Constantinople: within the walls of which city they were not suffered to live, nor to come thither, but on occasion of traffic and business; and that only by boat (for they had their habitation in a kind of an island), not a man being permitted on horseback, except only one, Solyman, the emperor's physician. Whose advancement was their sole comfort in that miserable servitude, under which the rest groaned, without any difference of good or bad (as he acknowledges), who were daily beaten and abused in the open streets. Thus he confesses, though his principal design was to set forth the power they retained in the world. (Itinerarium, p. 27, 28. edit. L'Empereur.)

And no man shall buy you.] Though some, as I said before, were sold at a very vile rate, next to nothing; yet others hung upon the seller's hands (as we speak), the market being either so overstocked with their numbers, that none would cheapen the greatest part of them, or they were so contemptible that nobody would give what was asked for such useless slaves: for, as no money could purchase their peace and security from calamities, so neither could the calamities, though continually most grievous (they are the words of Dr. Jackson), redeem their estimation in the world; nor all the blood of their slain (though their massacres were numberless) extinguish that hateful and loathsome conceit which most men had entertained of them. For in the fifteenth century they were become so abominable, that several doctors began to hold it unlawful for Christians to let them live among them. Particularly the famous Thomas Terrecremata, inquisitor-general, forbade all men to have any dealings with them, or to afford them meat or drink, or any thing else. Whence proceed the direful proscriptions which we read of in that age, whereby they were forced out of Spain, Poland, Hungary, and divers other countries; where they were not suffered to live, though with a note and character upon them to distinguish them from all other men.

I conclude my observations on this chapter, with the remark which the same great man (Dr. Jackson) makes, chap. 22. paragr. 6. That the extraordinary blessings and plagues which were to overtake this people, being here set down by Moses; although their blessings might have been more and more admirable than the curses that have befallen them, yet he, either foreseeing or fearing what would be, rather than hoping the best that might be, is almost four times as long in enumerating their plagues as he is in their blessings. And so have the miseries of the latter Jews been four times as long, as the prosperity of their worthy ancestors. And since our Saviour's death, all the plagues, which were in part fulfilled before, have been more than seven times multiplied upon them. For in their former overthrows or captivities, though they suffered the violence of war, yet, after that storm was past, so they did but submit to their conquerors, they lived well enough, nay, usually found more than ordinary favour at their hands; but since our Saviour's death, they have through all ages been more and more miserable; "the memory of the foregoing plagues having been but an invitation to the like, or worse; and their continual bad usage prescribing the lawfulness of their abuse."

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CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1. *THESE are the words of the covenant.*] The Talmudists in the Gemara of Sota, cap. 7. sect. 24. refer these words to the benedictions and cursings mentioned in the foregoing chapter; which plainly belong to what God delivered unto Moses in Mount Sinai at the first; which he had now repeated in this book, with the addition of several blessings and curses, to make what he said the more effectual.

Which the Lord commanded Moses to make.] That is, to renew. For which end Moses repeated the principal laws of God, and explained them in this book; which is from thence called Deuteronomy: being a compendium of the Pentateuch, a breviary of the covenant, composed for the familiar and daily use of the children of Israel.

With the children of Israel in the land of Moab.] Where he declared to them the law which he had formerly delivered to their fathers, (Deut. i. 5.)

Beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.] This doth not signify that he made a covenant with them, different from the former made at Horeb, (Exod. xxiv.) but only now renewed the same covenant, after they had shamefully violated it more than once. Which was the more necessary, because they were ready to enter into the land of Canaan, and he was just upon his departure from them into another world; and therefore did all he could to engage them in a more firm obedience to God. And for that end, both more fully explained several laws, and added others, and at large laid before them the happiness or the misery that would ensue upon their fidelity or falseness in this covenant.

Ver. 2. *And Moses called unto all Israel.*] This seems to import a new summons which he sent out to them, to attend him, now he was about to conclude what he had to say to them, before he left them. Which he did not, as I have often observed, (see ver. 1.) all at once, in one continued speech, but at several times; and now was about to wind up all in this and in the next chapter.

And said unto them.] He argued with them from the knowledge and experience which they had of the power of God in his wonderful works, particularly three, which were very memorable. Those in Egypt, which he mentions here in the two next verses; and those in the wilderness, ver. 5, 6. and lately in the great victory he had given them over two potent kings, ver. 7, 8.

Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land.] Some of them had seen (when they were young), and others had understood from them (which is here called *seeing*), all the plagues which God brought upon Pharaoh, and upon his court, and upon his whole country. This he had often called to their mind, in his preface to the repetitions of his laws, (vi. 12. vii. 18, 19. xi. 3, 4.) and makes it a great aggravation of their guilt, if they should forsake Him, who had done such wonderful things for them, (xiii. 5. 10.) And now he concludes with the same argument, as most powerful to move them, if they had any sense of their obligations to the greatest Benefactor.

Ver. 3. *The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles.*] Of these he had put them in mind before. (See iv. 34. vii. 19.)

Ver. 4. *Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.*] They had not so considered and laid to heart God's wonderful works, as to have a lasting sense of them bestowed upon them by God. He gives us an understanding heart, but we must first consider what he hath done for us, as the apostle instructs us, 2 Tim. ii. 7. And he gives us what we do not receive; and so in effect it is not given. Thus he saith himself, that he purged Israel, but they would not be purged, (Ezek. xxiv. 13.)

What the difference is between a *heart to perceive*, and *eyes to see*, and *ears to hear*, need not be curiously inquired. They are, perhaps, but three various expressions of their gross stupidity, or three degrees of it, which was so great, that they had no continued sense of the wonderful works God hath done for them; nor did so much as regard and observe them; no, nor hearken to those who put them in mind of them; which must not be imputed to any want of power in these things to move them, much less of the Divine grace to work upon their hearts by them, but was wholly to be ascribed to their own negligence and perverseness; of which God here complains, and with which he severely upbraids them, that he had not given them this grace: which is a clear demonstration the fault was in themselves. And therefore Maimonides rightly and judiciously explains these words, when he saith, the meaning is, They had not disposed themselves to receive this grace from God.

Ver. 5. *And I have led you forty years in the wilderness.*] By a glorious cloud, which both conducted and protected them, (viii. 2. xi. 5.) Concerning these *forty years*, see chap. ii. 7.

Your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.] See viii. 4. The Jews used no shoes in Egypt, as Bochartus probably conjectures; but being to take a long journey, through a rough way in the wilderness, he commanded them to eat the passover with shoes on their feet, (Exod. xii. 11.) And these very shoes which they put on at that festival, when they were ready to march, God suffered not to decay in all their travels for forty years following. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 50.)

Ver. 6. *Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink.*] Not commonly; though, when they passed by some neighbouring country, they might possibly sometimes purchase both bread and wine, or strong liquors: but their ordinary food was the heavenly manna, and their drink was the water that followed them out of the rock. So that the meaning is, they were constantly supported by a miraculous supply from God; who took care of them, and thereby laid a greater obligation upon them to serve him, who graciously fed them without any labour of their own. For they neither ploughed, nor sowed, nor reaped, nor took any other pains for this provision; as they must have done for bread and wine, or other liquors pressed out of dates or figs, &c.

That ye may know that I am the Lord your God.] This he did for them, that he might breed and maintain them in a sense of his omnipotent power, and of his all-sufficient goodness and faithfulness to his promises; which he in-

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tended to demonstrate at his first giving of manna to them, (Exod. xvi. 12.)

Ver. 7. *And when ye came into this place.*] For they were now in a part of the country which they conquered, (iv. 45, 46, &c.)

Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, came out against us to battle, and we smote them.] See Numb. xxi. 24. 34, 35. Deut. ii. 30, &c. iii. 2, 3, &c.

Ver. 8. *And we took their land from them, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites,* &c.] See Numb. xxxii. 33. and Deut. iv. 12, &c.

Ver. 9. *Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them.*] Preserve them in memory, so as to make good your engagements which you passed to God in Horeb; which Moses was now about to renew, and lay a fresh obligation on them. For most of them being a new generation, and now going to enter upon the possession of the land of promise, it was necessary to make them sensible of the condition of their tenure, by engaging them in a solemn covenant to observe the laws of God faithfully; which was but a renewal of what was made before at Horeb.

That ye may prosper in all that you do.] See iv. 6. The Hebrew word, which we translate *prosper*, the LXX. translate *act prudently;* for they translate it Ἵνα συνῆτε. And the Vulgar, to the same purpose, *ut intelligatis*, that ye may understand to manage yourselves wisely in all your concerns, by observing the rules God hath given you; which was the way to prosper.

Ver. 10. *Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God.*] The summons which he sent out, (ver. 2.) it seems by this, was to appear at the tabernacle, where they now stood; and from whence he delivered these words to them, by the priests and Levites, (xxvii. 9. 14.)

Your captains of your tribes.] In the Hebrew, *your heads* of your tribes, who were the greatest persons in the nation, called sometimes princes.

Your elders.] These were not only the seventy elders, mentioned Numb. xi. 16. but all the other judges in their several courts, who are often called by the name of *elders* in this book, particularly xix. 12. 18. xxi. 2. 4. 6. xxv. 8.

And the officers.] Who attended upon the judge, to execute their sentence. (See xvi. 18.)

With all the men of Israel.] All the men of their several tribes.

Ver. 11. *Your little ones, your wives.*] Who were all now present, or else were represented by the men of Israel.

And thy stranger that is in thy camp.] Whether Egyptians, that followed them when they came out of Egypt, (Exod. xii. 38.) or other people who embraced their religion, so far, at least, to renounce all idolatry.

From the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water.] The meanest servant, whom they had bought, perhaps, with their money, either in Egypt, or since they came from thence.

Ver. 12. *That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *pass into covenant.* For so covenants were anciently made in the eastern countries, by dividing the sacrifice, and passing between the parts of it; as appears from the manner of God's making a covenant with Abraham in Gen. xv. 10. 17. whence some derive the Hebrew word *berith* (which signifies *a covenant*) from *bara*, which signifies *cutting off;* because something was always sacrificed at the making covenants, and anciently cut in pieces. For the same reason the Romans called a covenant *fœdus*, which they derive *à feriendo*, from striking, that is, killing some beast (particularly a swine), which was done with many ceremonies.

And into his oath.] The Hebrew word which we translate *oath*, rather imports a *curse*, which was annexed to an oath. And so the LXX. Ἐν ταῖς ἀραῖς; for they entered into this covenant with such imprecations upon themselves, as are mentioned xxvii. 15, 16, &c. wishing, perhaps, that they might be cut to pieces, as the sacrifice was (between whose parts they passed), if they did not faithfully perform their engagement.

Which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.] For the covenant was mutual, as appears by the *burning lamp*, representing the Divine Majesty passing through the pieces of the sacrifice, when God entered into a covenant with Abraham, (Gen. xv. 17.)

Ver. 13. *That he may establish thee to-day a people unto himself.*] Confirm them in all the privileges which they had often forfeited by breaking his covenant; of being his peculiarly above all people, (Exod. xix. 5. Deut. xix. 2.)

And that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee.] Bless them and do them good, as he had solemnly promised.

And sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.] Gen. xii. 2, 3. xvii. 7, 8. xxii. 16, 17. xxvi. 3, 4. xxviii. 13, 14.

Ver. 14. *Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath.*] He means those mentioned ver. 10, 11.

Ver. 15. *But with him that standeth here with us this day, before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here,* &c.] I think the particle *ki* (which begins this verse) should not be translated *but;* for this is the same with what was said before, not distinct from it; and therefore should be translated thus, *As with him that standeth here with us before, that is not here with us this day; i. e.* with all that were absent from the present assembly, and with all future posterity, who were as yet unborn. So the Jerusalem Targum understands the latter part of this verse, *With all generations which shall be after us, as if they stood here with us to-day;* and so Uziclides, as they call him, *With all generations to come, unto the end of the world, as if they stood here with us at this present.* For perpetual leagues are sometimes made between whole nations; for whom some contract in the name and place of all the rest, and bind not only themselves, but their successors. And thus kings give fiefs to their subjects, upon conditions which their families are bound to perform in after-ages, or else lose the benefit of them.

Ver. 16. *For you know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt.*] These words, and those that follow in this and the next verse, come in as an argument to move them to enter into this covenant, and to shew them the necessity of renewing it. For, as God had wonderfully multiplied them in the land of Egypt, so he delivered them from thence no less wonderfully, when they were miserably enslaved; which was such a mercy, as ought never to be forgotten (and therefore frequently mentioned in this book), and laid an obligation upon them to be wholly devoted to him, as his redeemed people, (iv. 20.)

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And how we came through the nations whom we passed by.] The Edomites, Midianites, Ammonites, and Moabites, through the skirts of whose countries they passed, and were preserved from receiving any hurt by them.

Ver. 17. *And ye have seen their abominations and their idols.*] They had opportunity in Egypt of seeing too much of their vile idolatries. And so they had as they passed by the country of Moab and Midian, when some of them were seduced to the worship of Baal-Peor; though, if they had not been blinded by their lust, they could not but have seen how contemptible an idol that was, and have abominated it. All the idols of the heathen are frequently called *abominations;* and in Lev. xxvi. 30. they are called, as they are here, *gillulim,* which we translate in the margin *dunghill-gods,* to express the utmost contempt of them. And some think they are so called, not only in regard of their matter, "sed ob formam scarabæi habitantis in stercore," *but for the form of the beetle, which lives in dung;* for so Isis, the great goddess of the Egyptians, was represented, as Plutarch tells us, in his book de Iside et Osiride. But whether in such ancient times, as this of Moses, it may be justly doubted.

Wood and stone, silver and gold.] Generally they were made of wood or stone, which sometimes were silvered or gilded over. And if any of them were made of massy silver or gold, yet, being lifeless things, they were no more able to afford them any help, than the dung on the earth. And it was an abominable thing to look upon dead matter as a god, or to think he made his habitation there (which was the opinion of the better sort of heathen), or would be represented by them, they having no likeness at all unto him.

Ver. 18. *Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe.*] These words are to be connected with ver. 15. as the principal end why he engaged every soul of them to renew their covenant with God, that none of them might revolt from him, to serve any other god. And the order wherein he places these words shews, that idolatry is of a very infectious nature, spreading itself strangely, from single men and women unto families, and at last into whole tribes.

Whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God.] Who had a hankering, as we now speak, after other gods; which might afterward break out into idolatry.

To go and serve the gods of these nations.] When the *heart, i. e.* the mind, will, and affections, are depraved, men easily find occasions to follow, whither they lead them. And by this it appears, that the principal part of the covenant was to keep them close to the worship of one God, and no other; as I have often observed, vi. 4. vii. 2. 25. ix. 1, &c.

Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood.] Many take a *root* here to signify an *evil principle,* which the apostle calls *an evil heart of unbelief,* Heb. iii. 12. But the words going before in this verse, and those that follow in the next, plainly lead us to take it for any person lurking secretly among them (like a root underground), that was tainted with idolatry, who might poison others therewith, and in time bring forth the fruits of their impiety, which he calls *gall and wormwood.* Where it must be observed, that the Hebrew word *rosch,* which we translate *gall,* properly signifies an herb growing among corn, as bitter as gall. Which in Hosea x. 4. we translate *hemlock;* and commonly in Scripture is joined with *wormwood,* as it is here, Jer. ix. 15. Lament. iii. 19. Amos vi. 12. Unto which idolatry is compared, because it is most ungrateful and distasteful (if I may so speak) unto God, and produces bitter effects, that is, most grievous punishments, unto men.

Ver. 19. *And it come to pass, when he.*] The man spoken of before, under the name of a *root of bitterness.*

Heareth the words of this curse.] Against idolatry, which Moses engaged every one of them to renounce, by making a solemn covenant with God to worship him alone, and dreadful imprecations upon themselves, if they did not make good this covenant, (ver. 12. 14—16. xxvii. 15.)

That he bless himself in his heart.] Secretly fancy none of these curses shall fall upon him, but, quite contrary, promise himself all manner of happiness.

Saying, I shall have peace.] Prosper and be happy.

Though I walk in the imagination of mine heart.] Or, *in the stubbornness of mine heart,* as it is in the margin; that is, resolve to worship what god I best fancy.

To add drunkenness to thirst.] In the Hebrew the words are (as the margin of our Bibles observes) *the drunken to the thirsty;* for both words are adjectives, as grammarians speak; and, supposing a substantive to support them, many think none so proper to be understood as the word *earth.* Which makes this a proverbial speech, *To add the wet ground to the dry and thirsty,* or rather, *the thirsty to the wet.* For the particle *beth,* which in the Hebrew is the note of the accusative case, is put before the word *dry,* or *thirsty;* and, therefore, that is the thing which is to be added to the *wet* or *drunken;* not the *drunken* to the *dry.* And the sense is, *draw others into the same wickedness;* just as if a drunken man should draw sober persons to play the fool with him, and do as bad as himself; or, after one piece of land is overflowed, the water should be let into that which is dry, and spoil that also. For this seems to be the meaning of the whole verse, If a man shall be so presumptuous, as not only to cry peace to himself, when he runs after his own devices, in serving other gods, but endeavours to draw others into the same wicked practices.

There are a great many other interpretations of these words (seven or eight) given by the Hebrew doctors, besides others in Christian writers; which may be seen in Cocceius in his Ultima Mosis, sect. 134. But this seems to be the most easy, at which the Chaldee aims, and the LXX. if the particle μὴ be omitted, which is not in the Hebrew, nor the Chaldee, nor the Vulgar Latin. And if we take the words as we translate them (only inverting them), *add thirst unto drunkenness,* the sense is as easy; *viz.* add more sins to the foregoing, (Isa. xxx. 1.) and to be still inflamed (as the Scripture speaks) with love to more idols, after the service of many of them; "increasing their altars (as Hosea speaks) like heaps in the furrows of the field," (Hos. x. 1. xii. 11.)

Dr. Jackson, in his first book upon the Creed, (chap. 30. parag. 4.) thinks the meaning is, that posterity added to the wickedness of their ancestors. For they being cast out of their good land for their infidelity and disobedience, their posterity (saith he) continue exiles and vagabonds for their stubbornness in like practices; not being willing, to this day, to offer up the sacrifice of a contrite heart for

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their disobedience past, but rather *(adding thirst to drunkenness) bless themselves when they hear the words of that curse, promising peace to themselves, though they walk on according to the stubbornness of their forefathers' hearts.*

Ver. 20. *The Lord will not spare him.*] That is, not pardon, or pass by his wickedness without punishment.

But then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man.] These words import the highest degree of anger, that is, the severest plagues, which are the effects of the anger of an incensed majesty.

And all the curses that are written in this book.] Particularly in the foregoing chapter.

Shall lie upon him.] Not only fall, but remain upon him, to his utter ruin, as it follows in the next words.

And the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.] By his *name* is meant himself; so that this is a threatening of destruction to him and his posterity, till there be no memory of him left.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord shall separate him unto evil, out of all the tribes of Israel.*] Though he offended never so secretly, (for he speaks of one that *blessed himself in his heart*, &c. ver. 19.) God threatens to make him a public and notorious example of his vengeance to all the people of Israel.

According to all the curses of the covenant that are written in the book of the law.] It was a singular condescension in the Divine Majesty to enter into covenant with them; but it contained not only blessings to the obedient, but curses upon the disobedient; the latter of which were as certain as the former.

Ver. 22. *So that the generations to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say.*] That which follows, ver. 24.

When they see the plagues of that land.] This shews that these threatenings are denounced not merely against a simple idolater, but such an one as made it his endeavour to draw others from the worship of God; not being content to be drunk himself with heathenish superstition, but zealous to intoxicate as many as he could with it, and to root true religion out of the nation.

And the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it.] In the Hebrew it is, *The sicknesses wherewith he hath made it sick, i. e.* the heavy punishments which he hath inflicted upon it, and thereby made it a miserable nation.

Ver. 23. *And that the whole land is brimstone, and salt, and burning.*] Or, as it may be translated, *Is burnt up with brimstone and salt.* For these make land barren and unfruitful; as Pliny particularly observes of salt, (lib. xxx. cap. 7.) "Omnis locus in quo reperitur sal, sterilis est, nihilque gignit." *All ground in which salt is found is barren, and produceth nothing.* (See Judg. ix. 45. Psal. cvii. 34. Jer. xvii. 6. Ezek. xlvii. 11. Zeph. ii. 9.)

That it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein.] That neither nature nor art will make it fruitful.

Like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim.] And the country about them, which was the most beautiful of all other in that part of the world, (Gen. xiii. 10.) but on a sudden turned into a filthy stinking lake, where no creature, neither fish nor fowl, can live.

Which the Lord overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath.] Being highly incensed by their wickedness, (see Gen. xviii. 20. xix. 24, 25.) as he was by the wickedness of the Jews; which was the more provoking, because they had such an example of his vengeance continually before their eyes, and yet went on in their evil ways, till they brought the like judgment upon all Judea. This was more exactly fulfilled in the last destruction of the Jews by the Romans, than in their first by the Babylonians: for the whole land was laid waste, and deserted by its inhabitants, and made a den of thieves; being brought to desolation by repeated returns of wars; more especially in the time of Adrian, when Julius Severus, as I observed upon the foregoing chapter, made such a devastation, that the whole country was turned, in a manner, into a wilderness.

Ver. 24. *Even all nations shall say.*] All that were near them, or came that way from far countries; as it goes before, ver. 22.

Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land?] Which he formerly made so populous and plenteous.

And what means the heat of this great anger?] These exceeding dreadful calamities, which evidently proceeded from a Divine vengeance. For the Jews fought so valiantly, and defended Jerusalem so resolutely (as appears by Josephus), that the author of Schebet Judah had reason to say, That it was not want of arms, the unusual terror of new machines, but the anger of God, provoked by their wickedness, which was the true and only cause of their destruction. And, indeed, Titus himself said as much, That God fought for the Romans, and drove the Jews from their fortifications, Ἐπεὶ χεῖρές τε ἀνθρώπων, ἢ μηχαναὶ, &c. *For what could the hands of men or machines have done against such strong towers?* (See chap. xxxii. 22.)

Ver. 25. *Then shall men say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.*] This account must be supposed to be given by the pious Jews, or by those who were made sensible, when it was too late, how steadfast God was in his covenant; which contained curses as well as blessings, as was before observed, ver. 21. and see vii. 9, 10. xi. 26—28.

Ver. 26. *For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them whom they knew not.*] This aggravated their sin, that they sought for acquaintance with strange gods, directly contrary to the covenant of God, (xii. 30, 31.)

And whom he had not given unto them.] Or, as it is in the margin, *had not given* (or *divided*) *to them any portion;* that is, never bestowed any benefit upon them, as the Lord their God had done, who brought them out of Egypt. Or, more simply (as Boetius thinks the words will bear), *to whom no worship belonged.*

Ver. 27. *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book.*] So Moses foretold them, vii. 4. xi. 16, 17.

Ver. 28. *And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and wrath, and in great indignation.*] Here is one word more to express his displeasure against them, than was used before, when he speaks of the destruction of Sodom, &c. ver. 23. And they all denote the great plagues threatened in Lev. xxvi. and in the foregoing chapter of this book.

And cast them into another land, as it is this day.] This may seem to relate only to their captivity in Babylon; for, after they were rooted out by the Romans, they were scattered into all lands, (xxviii. 63, 64.) But considering what goes before, (ver. 23, 24.) and that they were not

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quite *rooted out* (many of them remaining in the land when Nebuchadnezzar conquered them) till the desolation made by the Romans, I think these words relate to them also, and *another land* is only the singular number, as is usual, for the plural. And so the author of Schebet Judah understood it, who, quoting these words [*cast them out into another land*], adds, *which experience now proves to be true.*

Ver. 29. *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those that are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever,* &c.] The Jews generally take these words to be meant of the punishment of secret sins, (particularly of idolatry, spoken of before, ver. 19.) which belongeth unto God, as the punishment of open sins belonged unto them, in obedience to his law, who commanded them to put to death him that seduced any person to idolatry, and to raze the city that apostatized unto it, (xiii. 5, 6, &c. 12, 13, &c.) And their negligence in doing their duty in this particular, made idolatry spread among them to their utter ruin. But these words may be understood as a farther answer to such inquiries, as that ver. 24. in which, if men persisted, and still asked, But why doth God thus punish his own people with such unusual severity, when there are many idolatrous nations, far worse than they, who continue still in their own land, and are not thus rooted out? Moses bids them silence such demands, and rest satisfied in this, That we cannot give an account of such things as God hath not revealed, particularly why he punishes some people, when he spares others who are as bad; but must mind our own duty, which he hath plainly revealed unto us, that is (as Moses concludes this chapter), *to do after all his commandments which he hath given us in his law,* believing he will greatly reward the obedient, and terribly punish, one time or other, all those that transgress it.

There may be also a more obvious sense of these words, if we translate them as some great men have done, *The secrets of the Lord our God are revealed to us, and to our children.* Thus Onkelos, whose judgment is very valuable; which Grotius follows, and before him Forsterus; and Paulus Fagius represents it as a commodious sense, and makes it the same with the words of the Psalmist, cxlvii. 20. "He hath not dealt so with any nation," &c. For this was a peculiar favour to the Jews, that those things which God before kept secret in his own breast he now manifested to them; that they might know how to order their lives so as to please him. But this made them liable to be punished more grievously than all other people, if they did not observe his will, which he most graciously discovered to them. And if we could give any credit to the Jews, who say that all words in the Bible that have extraordinary points upon them (of which there are but ten in the Pentateuch, and these words, *lanu ulebenu, to us and our children,* are the last of them) denote something peculiar and extraordinary, I should think that they relate to the revelation to be made by Jesus Christ, the great prophet promised to them, (chap. xviii.) unto which, if they did not give heed, the most dreadful punishments would be inflicted on them; as we see they have been for many ages, and are not yet ended.

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 1. *AND it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee.*] God at the first bestowed great and singular blessings upon them; but when they grew so insensible of his mercy, as to violate the covenant he had made with them, then he sent his curses which he had threatened upon them: which were completed in their expulsion out of the good land, which he had given them; especially in their last expulsion by the Romans, which was rather an extirpation.

And thou shalt call to mind.] In the Hebrew, *bring back to thy heart,* as we observe in the margin of 1 Kings viii. 47. where there is the very same phrase, and there translated, *shall bethink thyself,* that is, reflect seriously both upon the blessings and curses, and consequently consider the truth of God in fulfilling both. In which consideration, repentance and conversion to God begin. (See Ezek. xviii. 28.)

Among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee.] Where they could not choose but often think of all the blessings they had enjoyed in their own land, and might have still enjoyed, if they had not been disobedient; and all the curses which had befallen them till they were driven from thence, and had pursued them ever since. (See Lev. xxvi. 40, &c. Deut. iv. 29, 30, &c.)

Ver. 2. *And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou, and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.*] Repentance was completed by forsaking their idols, and returning to the worship of the Lord their God alone, and by obeying all the rest of his commands, and teaching their children to do the same; and all this with sincerity of heart. This they did, in some measure, after they were carried captive to Babylon; since which time we read nothing of their idolatry. But they fell into other sins, which stopped their ears to that great prophet, the Lord Christ, when he came to them; for which they are punished to this day, and will be till they repent and obey.

Ver. 3. *Then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity.*] That is, bring those that were carried captive back again to their own land. Thus the word *captivity* is used, Psal. xiv. 7. Ephes. iv. 8.

And have compassion upon thee.] These words express the spring of all their happiness, *viz.* the Divine compassion, in pardoning their sins, which had been very provoking.

And will return and gather thee.] This is the effect of his compassion in their restitution, and recollection again into one body after their dispersion.

From all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.] This was fulfilled in part when they returned from Babylon; for then they who were scattered in other countries, flocked again to them; and will be more completely fulfilled when they shall believe on our blessed Saviour.

Ver. 4. *And if any of thine be driven out unto the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee.*] Unto this promise Nehemiah plainly alludes in his prayer to God, to prosper his endeavours for the restoration of Jerusalem.

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(Nehem. i. 8, 9.) And, finding the truth of it confirmed by the king's gracious concession to him, he went about the work, though one, who was accounted a prophet (yea, several of the like quality), dissuaded him from the enterprise, as likely to prove dangerous to his person, (vi. 10—12, &c.) Ezra also tells us how Cyrus made a *proclamation throughout all his kingdom*, which was very large, that all the Jews might return, if they pleased, into their own country, (Ezra i. 1. 4. and see Zechariah vii. 7, 8.) And though, in their last dispersion by the Romans, they be far more scattered, and into more distant regions, than they were in the Babylonian captivity (according to Moses's threatening, xxviii. 64. of this book), yet, if they did now consider the cause of it, and lay to heart their sin in crucifying the Lord Christ, no doubt God would have compassion on them, and wonderfully restore them. For the Jews themselves apply this place (and have long done so) to their present condition, being of opinion that God hath appointed a prefixed time in his own mind, though he hath not declared it, when he will deliver them; but, if they did repent, he would shorten the days of their banishment, and immediately bring them to their own land. Thus the ancient Nitzacon, set forth not long ago by Wagenseil, p. 254. And R. Isaac, since him, and more lately, often insists upon this, in his Chissuk Emuna, published by the very same learned person; particularly Perek. vii. where he saith, "There can be no time prefixed for their deliverance, because it depends upon their repentance; whereby they may cut off the length of this banishment, provided they turn to God with their whole heart, and a full repentance." For which he alleges this place. And he repeats it again, (Perek. xxvii.) as the great comfort they have in this long banishment, that, upon their perfect repentance, God will be merciful to them, and overcome their sins, and perform this promise. Which I find still more lately mentioned in Manasseh ben Israel's book, De Termino Vitæ, lib. iii. sect. 3. where he saith, "Herein all the prophets imitate Moses, being wont, after terrible threatenings, to conclude with some singular consolation. Which made R. Aquiba (as the Talmudists report) fall a laughing, when all the wise men who were with him wept and lamented, at the sight of the ruins of Jerusalem and the temple. Which they wondering at, he said, *After the clouds the sun will break out; and after the end of the evils which Moses threatened, we may hope for good things: for God is not more faithful in fulfilling the one, than in performing the other.*"

But, alas! in all ages hitherto there are no signs of repentance, much less of a perfect one; but they have been strangely hardened in their unbelief, and have bitterly reproached the Lord Jesus and his religion. Abarbinel himself, though a gentleman of a noble family, a well-bred person, and of an excellent understanding, is extremely guilty of this. And since his time Solomon Virgæ, in the age before us, considering the astonishing plagues that have befallen them, and that never any people, as he acknowledges, conflicted with so many miseries and so many ages as they have done, inquires the causes why the Divine Majesty should be so angry with them: he reckons seven; among which he accounts the putting of Jesus of Nazareth to death as one; yet not as a crime, but that which hath enraged Christians against them. For he wickedly illustrates this by that speech of Moses, Exod. viii. 24. which he thus translates, *If we slay and sacrifice the abominable gods of the Egyptians in their sight, will they not stone us?* Which is the highest reproach he could vomit against our Saviour; mingled with the most stupid folly, in giving that as a reason of the Divine anger, which at the most is only a reason in their account of men's indignation. (Schebet Judah, sect. 63.)

The most cruel usage which they have met with in all Christian countries, might thus exasperate and embitter their spirits; and I cannot excuse the violent hatred of Christians to them, and their barbarous treatment of them, though they therein fulfilled the Divine threatenings, as I have shewn upon the twenty-eighth chapter; which being ceased since the reformation of religion, the Jews have not been so virulent against our blessed Saviour; and it is to be hoped will be won to the obedience of faith by our Christian usage of them; when those other stumbling-blocks, which hinder their conversion, are removed out of the way.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it.*] Be again planted in it, as they were at their return from the captivity of Babylon; especially after they had laid the foundation of the house of the Lord, he blessed them exceedingly, Hag. ii. 18, 19. Zech. viii. 7—12.

And he will do thee good.] The prophet Zechary hath given a full explication of these words, viii. 13—15. and the prophet Jeremy before him, (xxxii. 42, 43, &c.) which was fulfilled in the building of the house of the Lord, though great opposition was made to it; and in the compassing Jerusalem with walls, and settling them in a state of liberty, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, lii. 1, 2.

And multiply thee above thy fathers.] The Hebrew words import, that he would *make them greater than their fathers.* Which he did, by their vast increase after they returned from Babylon: (see Zech. viii. 4, 5. and before him, Hos. i. 10.) which is manifest from their διασποραὶ, *i. e. spreading themselves in so many colonies,* through all Asia, both the great and the less; with Egypt, Greece, Italy, and Spain. (See Strabo, lib. xvi. concerning Joppa.) By this means they were very much exalted, as Zechariah prophesied, after their captivity; (xii. 6.) for, as they had their liberty in their own country (God being a wall of fire to them, while Jerusalem had no walls), so they spread themselves, as I said, and had their synagogues in Babylon, Arabia, Syria, and divers other countries beforementioned; and a great many proselytes also joined themselves to them.

Yet one cannot well think that so magnificent a prophecy as this is was entirely fulfilled after their return from Babylon, when they were tributaries to the Persians, and afterward fell under the power of the Grecians, under whom they suffered very much, especially in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes; whose death did not conclude their troubles, as Hermannus Witsius has shewn at large, in his Decaphylon, cap. 10. n. 9—12, &c. where he endeavours to prove that there was no moment of time, after their return from Babylon, wherein they could be said to be *made greater than their fathers,* especially in the days of David and Solomon: and therefore he concludes, that this promise is still to be completely fulfilled. And thus R. Isaac (in his book beforenamed, Chissuk Emuna) argues, (Perek vi.) that God did not bestow benefits upon them equal to those which

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their fathers enjoyed, much less superior, while the second temple stood; but all that time was full of straits and calamities; for which he alleges the prophecy of Daniel, ix. 25. And therefore saith, these words of Moses can by no means be thought to be fulfilled, when the tribes of Judah and Benjamin returned from Babylon, and left a vast number behind them, who would not come back with them, but stay there to this day.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart.*] By such singular benefits bestowed upon them, in a miraculous manner, God designed to take away the stubborn refractoriness of their spirits, (called *hardness of heart*, xxix. 19.) and to cut off all their wicked inclinations and dispositions to idolatry and superstition, which had been their ruin; which is called *humbling their uncircumcised heart*, Lev. xxvi. 41. But though God circumcised them, yet their hearts might remain uncircumcised, as appears from xxix. 3, 4. And therefore he calls upon them to circumcise their hearts themselves, (xvi. 10.) by laying to heart his benefits, and following the motions of his grace and holy Spirit, which thereby he put into their hearts: and their neglect of this, and resting merely in the circumcision of the flesh, was that which ruined them again.

And the heart of thy seed.] Accordingly, we find they were freed from idolatry after their return from Babylon; though still they continued in other sins. Which brought this present captivity (as they call it) upon them; another banishment being necessary (saith R. Isaac, in the book beforementioned, Perek. vii.) to purge them from their sins, by the severe afflictions which they now endure, and have long suffered; because their manifold sins, as he expresses it, need much scouring, by contusions and pressures. After which, he saith, they shall sin no more, but that shall be fulfilled which is written in the law, *the Lord thy God shall circumcise thine heart*, &c. quoting these very words of Moses. But, alas! they are not sensible for what sin they suffer. (See p. 96, 97. of Wagenseil's edition.)

To love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.] See vi. 5. This prophecy, the Jews say, shall be fulfilled in the days of the Messiah, according to what Ezekiel saith, xxxvi. 26. *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put into you*, &c. So R. Isaac, in the place abovenamed, and in p. 83.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecute thee.*] Their very restoration created them many enemies; whose hatred increased with their prosperity in their own land, and made them, when they had power, to persecute them. Whom God remarkably plagued, particularly Antiochus Epiphanes, who died in miserable torments.

Ver. 8. *And thou shalt return.*] This may relate as well to their return unto their own land, as to their turning unto God: of both which he had spoken before. And now, having mentioned their persecution, whereby many of them might be driven out of their country, I suppose he here promises their restoration to it again, when he had cursed their enemies.

And obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do all his commandments, which I command thee this day.] Continue steadfast in their love to him, by a strict observance of all his commandments.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, and in the fruit of thy body*, &c.] The effect of their constant and sincere obedience he promises should be still greater prosperity, in all their undertakings, and in all their enjoyments. (See xxviii. 4, 5, &c.)

For good.] To encourage them to continue faithful in the service of God.

For the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good.] Delight only in blessing them; and not send any curses upon them. (See xxviii. 63. and Jer. xxxii. 41.)

As he rejoiceth over thy fathers.] In whose obedience he delighted, (Deut. x. 15.)

Ver. 10. *If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments*, &c.] Persist in obedience to him.

And if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.] With a sincere love to all his commands, (ver. 2.) who had *planted them assuredly in their land, with his whole heart, and his whole soul*, as Jeremiah speaks, xxxii. 41. But herein they were defective, after they came out of the captivity of Babylon. For though they never returned again to idolatry, but kept close to the worship of God alone, yet they rested merely in the outward rites of religion, and had not a hearty love to God, and to all goodness; which made them reject the Son of God when he came among them, and fall under those long calamities, which will not end till they *turn to him with all their hearts and souls.*

Ver. 11. *For this commandment which I command thee this day.*] Of hearty love to God, and sincere obedience to all his commands, (ver. 2. 6. 8. 16.)

It is not hidden from thee.] Or, it may be translated out of the Hebrew, *It is not too wonderful above thee;* that is, abstruse and hard to be understood, because above their reach; but easy to be known and acquainted withal, because plainly revealed. Which is as true of the gospel, (unto which St. Paul applies these words, Rom. x. 6, &c.) as it was of the law of Moses: for therein our Saviour hath declared the mind and will of God to us, in such familiar words, that the most simple people may understand their duty.

Nor is it far off.] So that they should go to seek it, and learn it in some distant nation. R. Isaac, in his Chissuk Emuna, cap. 45. had his thoughts so fixed upon what is said ver. 4. that he fancies these words belong to that matter; and that Moses still speaks to them of repentance, *which is of greater value than any other thing, and yet most easily acquired.* Which cannot but make one wonder at their blindness; for, if repentance be so very easy, how comes it to pass that they remain impenitent for so many ages, and thereby, as they confess, prolong their miseries? And yet he repeats the same words in the second part of his work, Perek. lxxx. where he hath the confidence to say St. Paul misapplies this place.

Ver. 12. *It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?*] R. Jacob Haesæi, in his preface to that part of the Mischna called Seder Nesim (as Guil. Vorstius observes upon Abarbinel about the Articles of their Faith), hath very fairly expounded this: which he takes to be a proverbial speech, to shew that there is no need of hard, or rather impossible labour, to come at the knowledge

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of God's will, as there is in many human sciences, where the mind of man is tired by several propositions and deductions, &c. before he arrive at what he seeks: but all things are plain and easy to be understood, and not hard to be performed. For God had revealed his mind clearly by Moses from heaven, and therefore none had need to go thither to desire God to acquaint them with it, which he had done of his own accord, out of his good-will towards them. And thus Grotius observes upon Rom. x. 6. out of several Greek authors, that they expressed things very difficult, by *going up to heaven*. Maimonides, indeed, to Jesodehatorah, cap. 9. and Abarbinel, in Rosch Amana, cap. 13. make these words an argument for the eternity and unchangeableness of their law, and that there should be no new revelation from heaven: but there is no colour for this from these words, the particle *hu* being of the feminine gender, and therefore doth not refer to God, but to *the command* beforementioned, plainly importing, that men could not pretend ignorance of their duty, nor had any reason to desire that somebody would go to heaven again for those things which Moses had already brought from thence. And thus the apostle most justly accommodates these words to the new revelation from heaven by the Son of God, which was not abstruse and difficult, but as plain and perspicuous as this now made by Moses.

Ver. 13. *Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us?* &c.] Ὡς δεῖσθαι πολυχρονίου καὶ καματηρᾶς ἀποδημίας (to use the words of Philo, in his book concerning Rewards and Punishments), *so as to need long and tedious voyages, laborious and wearisome travels, to fetch it from foreign countries.* Such as the Greek philosophers took, who travelled into Egypt, and the eastern part of the world, to learn wisdom, which God now taught his people in the wilderness, without any pains to attain to it.

Ver. 14. *But the word is very nigh unto thee.*] Being brought to their very doors by Moses, the servant of God; who now delivered to them the mind of God, as the Son of God himself did afterward, when he came and dwelt among them.

In thy mouth and in thy heart.] Made so familiar to them, that they might always have it in their common discourse, to teach it their children; and had now been so often repeated, that it might be well laid up in their memory, never to be forgotten by them, (vi. 6—9. xi. 18—20.) It was also in the mouth of their priests, who were to teach them knowledge, (Malachi ii. 7.) and press it upon their hearts. Here the forenamed R. Isaac, in both the places forenamed, observes, that *Repentance depends on the confession of the mouth and grief of the heart:* but the largest confession and the sorest grief will not avail them, till they repent of their crucifying the Lord Jesus, and shall "confess him with their mouth, and believe in their heart, that God hath raised him from the dead," &c. as St. Paul speaks, Rom. x. 9, 10.

That thou mayest do it.] That they might have nothing to do but to put it in practice; and in order thereunto continually read it, and keep it in mind. In which the Jews were so diligent, that, as Josephus tells the gentiles (lib. ii. contra Apionem), they could as easily recite all the laws of God as tell their names. But here was their error, that they were not careful to do what they knew to be the will of God: and so, when he sent his Son among them, who plainly declared to them more fully the meaning of their holy books, they could not understand and receive that which they read every day. And indeed this is the common error (as Dr. Jackson well observes) of all corrupt minds, to seek that afar off, as if they were strangers to it, which is really in their mouth and in their heart, so that they would but be doers, and not only hearers of the word, as St. James speaks, alluding perhaps to these words of Moses. As St. Paul applies this whole passage to the gospel; which is that word of faith, so preached and published by the apostles, that it may be in all our mouths and hearts, without going to seek for any other infallible teacher.

Ver. 15. *See, I have set before thee this day, life and good, death and evil.*] *Life and good, death and evil,* may be but two words for the same thing, *viz.* all manner of happiness, and all manner of misery; both which he had at large set before them, in the twenty-eighth chapter. Or by *life* may be meant, long life in the land God had promised them; and *good,* all the prosperity they could wish for there: as, on the other side, *death* may signify their being cut off from the land of the living before their time; and *evil,* all the calamities he had threatened while they lived: and so the next verse seems to interpret it. Maimonides from these words observes, that the wills of men are under no force nor coaction, but are free agents; and, therefore, have precepts imposed upon them, with a punishment threatened to the disobedient, and a reward promised to those who keep God's commandments. Of which he treats at large in his preface to his Commentary upon Pirke Avoth, cap. 8.

Ver. 16. *In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and judgments.*] This includes their entire obedience to all God's laws, which are comprehended under these three names. (See vi. 1. 5. vii. 11. x. 12, 13.)

That thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.] This is the explication of the *life and good* which he set before them, if they observed God's laws with sincere affection to them, (ver. 15.)

Ver. 17. *But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear.*] Want of love to God, and of a due esteem of his wonderful love to them, made their heart turn away to other things, and not regard what he had revealed to them from heaven.

And worship other gods, and serve them.] This was the principal breach of the covenant of God.

Ver. 18. *I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish; and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither ye go,* &c.] This is the explication of the *death and evil* he set before them, (ver. 15.)

Ver. 19. *I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death.*] God, angels, and men, were witnesses that he had done his duty. See iv. 26. viii. 19. and, therefore, is owned by God himself to be "faithful in all his house," (Numb. xii. 7.)

Blessing and cursing.] They are the same with *life and death:* but he uses several words, to make them sensible that both proceeded from God; the one being the effect of his love and favour, and the other of his anger and high displeasure.

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Therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live.] That is, choose to be obedient, without which they could not be happy. Or he wishes them to set their hearts on the happiness God had promised them, that it might incline them to do as follows.

Ver. 20. *That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and obey his voice.*] Love is the noblest and the strongest spring of obedience.

And that thou mayest cleave unto him.] Obedience to God is the surest preservative from apostacy.

For he is thy life, and the length of thy days.] The author and giver of life; which he preserves and prolongs unto those who are obedient.

That thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.] Which promise confirmed by an oath being faithfully fulfilled, he justly claimed their fidelity to him upon that account: which is the reason it is so often mentioned, (vi. 10. viii. 1. ix. 5. x. 11. xi. 9. 21. xix. 8.)

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1. *AND Moses went, and spake these words unto all Israel.*] By this it seems plain to me, that after Moses had renewed the covenant with the people (mentioned in the foregoing chapter), he dismissed them, and retired to his own tent. But not long after gave them a new summons, (as he had done xxix. 2.) and went again to take his leave of them. The LXX. indeed seem to take the first words, as if the meaning was, that he *went on* with his discourse. For thus they render them, συνετέλεσε λαλῶν πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους, *he finished speaking all these words.* For which I see no warrant, nor is it likely he could speak all that here follows at the same time.

Ver. 2. *And he said unto them, I am a hundred and twenty years old this day.*] This shews these words were spoken not long before his death, which was this year, (xxxiv. 7.) Manasseh ben Israel would have us from hence observe, "The singular care God hath of those who serve him with a perfect heart, as Moses did; the days of whose years (saith he) are exactly proportioned. For so these words are expounded in Sota, cap. 1. 'To-day my years are completed; to-day I was born, and to-day I shall die:' for he was born on the seventh day of the month Adar, and on the same day of the same month he died. Thus Enoch (he adds) lived just three hundred and sixty-five years, which are proportioned to the days of the sun's annual course," lib. iii. de Termino Vitæ, sect. 5. But as there is no great weight in this observation, if it were true, so that which he saith of Moses is evidently false: for he did not die this very day, as appears from ver. 14. where he saith, "The days approach that I must die." Therefore the time was not yet come.

And I can no more go out and in.] Discharge the office I have long sustained of your governor and leader; (see Numb. xxvii. 17.) not because he wanted vigour, either of body or mind, (for that is contrary to xxxiv. 7. of this book) but because God did not think fit to permit him to conduct them any farther; as the following words explain it.

Also the Lord hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.] The particle we translate *also*, often signifies *for*; and is so translated by us in divers places; particularly in Isa. iii. 7. Jer. xvii. 8. And being so taken here, the sense of these words is plain and easy; giving a reason why he could no longer take the charge of them, as he had done, because God had otherwise ordered; having told him he should not bring them into Canaan, which they were now ready to enter.

Ver. 3. *The Lord thy God, he shall go over before thee.*] Conduct them by the ark of his presence. (Josh. iii. 5. 11. and see Exod. xxiii. 23. and Deut. ix. 3.)

And he shall destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them.] Exod. xxxiv. 11.

And Joshua, he shall go over before thee.] As their captain and leader when Moses had left them, (iii. 28. Josh. i. 2.)

As the Lord hath said.] When he was appointed the successor of Moses, (Numb. xxvii. 18. 21.)

Ver. 4. *And the Lord shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites,* &c.] See Numb. xxiv. 24. 34, 35.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord shall give them up before thy face.*] As he had promised before, vii. 23. where he saith, *The Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee.* In the Hebrew the words are, *before thy face.* (See ix. 3.)

That ye may do unto them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you.] *i. e.* Utterly destroy them, and their altars, and images, and groves, &c. (See vii. 2, 3. 5. 27. xii. 1, 2, &c.)

Ver. 6. *Be strong, and of a good courage.*] By faith in God; which their forefathers wanting, were discouraged, and durst not go up and possess the land when God commanded them, (i. 28. 32.)

Fear not, nor be afraid of them.] Be not affrighted, much less dismayed at their multitude, their stature and strength, when you go to fight with them. The second word *(afraid)* only expresses a higher degree of the same passion of fear; signifying, being overcome with it. For that is the import of the Hebrew word *aratz,* which originally signifies to *prevail over* another. This he had said to their forefathers, i. 21. 29. and after repeated to them, iii. 2. 22. vii. 17, 18. 21.

For the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee.] According to the assurance before given them, (xx. 4.)

He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.] This promise, which here is general, in the next verse but one is particularly made to Joshua; and renewed to him by God himself, after the death of Moses, when they were about to enter into the land of Canaan, (Josh. i. 5.) And it is applied by the apostle unto all faithful Christians, to encourage their hope of being conducted through all difficulties and dangers unto their heavenly inheritance, (Heb. xiii. 5.)

Ver. 7. *And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel.*] That they might have the greater reverence to his person and authority, and follow his conduct, as a leader appointed by God.

Be strong, and of a good courage.] He exhorts him to give a good example to all the people; these being the same words he had spoken to them, ver. 6.

For thou must go with this people.] Be their leader and commander-in-chief, by God's special order, (Numb. xxvii. 21.)

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Unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them.] See viii. 1. x. 13. xxx. 20.

And thou shalt cause them to inherit it.] Put them into possession of it, (iii. 28.)

Ver. 8. *And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee, and will be with thee.*] Josh. i. 9.

He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.] See ver. 6.

Fear not, neither be dismayed.] The same which he said to the people, ver. 6. but was most necessary to be pressed upon him, who, by his undaunted resolution, was to put courage into them. The word we translate *dismayed,* is different in the Hebrew from that ver. 6. which is, *be not afraid:* but the LXX. and the Vulgar use the same word to express both; which denotes such a consternation, as disables a man to do his duty; which is the proper import of this word.

Ver. 9. *And Moses wrote this law.*] Some understand by *this law,* only the book of Deuteronomy; for which I can see no reason, the Scripture calling all that is contained in the five books of Moses by the name of *the law.* St. Paul, for instance, in Galat. iii. 21. asks this question, *Do you not hear the law?* and then quotes what we read in Gen. xvi. 21. And so Nehemiah saith, x. 34, 35. that they brought first-fruits unto God, *as it is written in the law, viz.* Exod. xiii. 12. xxiii. 19. And Josiah put away the workers with familiar spirits, &c. *that he might perform the words of the law,* (2 Kings xxiiii. 24.) which we find Lev. xix. 30. xx. 6. 27. And Hezekiah also, (2 Chron. xxxi. 3.) appointed the daily oblations, and those required at stated times, to be offered, *as it is written in the law of the Lord,* which plainly refers to the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth of Numbers. And Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal, (viii. 30, 31.) *as it is written in the book of the law of Moses;* which we find no where but in this book of Deuteronomy, (xxvii. 4.)

And delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi.] Concerning this form of speech *the priests the sons of Levi,* see xvii. 9. It is probable Moses had wrote most of these five books some time ago (and so the foregoing words may be translated, *Moses had wrote this law*), but did not finish them till a little before his death, and then delivered them to the priests. But there is no necessity thus to understand it, for he might have had time enough between this and his death to write the whole Pentateuch; it being only said, ver. 14. *Thy days approach, that thou must die;* which doth not imply he was to die in a day or two, but there might be some weeks before his departure.

Which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord.] It was most proper to deliver it unto them, who alone might touch the ark, in which *this law* was to be laid, (ver. 26.) The Kohathites, who were mere Levites, and not priests, did carry the ark in their travels through the wilderness, after the priests had covered it, and put in the staves thereof; (as I have shewn Numb. iv. 5, 6, &c.) but it is evident they served only as ministers to the priests, who, upon great occasions, bare the ark themselves. As when they passed over Jordan, (Josh. iii. 3. 6.) when they compassed Jericho, (Josh. vi. 6.) and when the temple of Solomon was dedicated, and the ark brought into it, (1 Kings viii. 3, 4. 6.) When David, indeed, brought the ark to Jerusalem, it is said the Levites bare it; but at the same time the priests also were summoned to take care of it; which shews the Levites bare it as their servants, (1 Chron. xv. 2. 11. 13—15.)

And unto all the elders of Israel.] As he delivered this book of the law, that is, the whole Pentateuch (as Abarbinel and others of the Jews understand it) unto the priests, commanding them to preserve it safe near the ark; (ver. 24.) so he delivered another copy of this book to the elders of every tribe, as the Jews affirm in Debarim Rabba: where they say (and it is highly probable) that Moses, before his death, wrote thirteen copies of the law (with his own hand as they add), and having delivered one unto the priests, to be preserved in the holy place, gave one to each tribe, which he committed to the care of the elders of it. Thus Maimonides, also, in his preface to Jad Chazakah, as Buxtorf observes, in Histor. Arcæ Fœderis, cap. 5. The intent of which was, I suppose, that all the people of each tribe might resort to it (as the whole nation were to resort to that in the sanctuary), if they doubted of any thing, which might be thought to be amiss, by the errors of transcribers.

Ver. 10. *And Moses commanded them.*] Both the priests and the elders, to take care of what follows.

At the end of every seventh year, in the solemnity of the year of release.] Mentioned xv. 1, &c.

In the feast of tabernacles.] When they had gathered in all the fruits of the earth, and thereby had greater leisure to attend to the hearing of the law read to them; which, when men's minds were also freed from cares by the release of their debts, was likely to make a greater impression upon them.

Ver. 11. *When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose.*] As they were bound to do at this feast, and at Pentecost, and the Passover, (xvi. 16.)

Thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.] This order being directed, not to all Israel, but to a particular person, plainly imports, that the supreme governor, whosoever he was, had this charge laid upon him, to take care these laws should be read at this solemn time, that all the people might hear them; and therefore, I think, the Jews rightly say, that their kings, when they had them, were bound not only to look after this matter, but to read the law themselves to as many (that is) as could hear them, appointing the priests and the Levites to read it in as many other assemblies of the people as were necessary for the fulfilling of this precept. In order to which, a pulpit was set up in the court of the men of Israel on the very first day of the feast (for they did not think fit to defer it till the last, because it is here said, *when Israel is come to appear before the Lord,* not when they were ready to depart, as the Jews observe); the king going up into it, the minister took the book of the law, and delivered it to the ruler of the synagogue, who gave it to the sagan (or vicar of the high-priest), who delivered it to the high-priest, and he to the king; who stood up to receive it, and then sat down to read. All this expresses the reverence with which this holy book was delivered; and likewise the reverence with which they approached to the king; who, they say, began to read at this book of Deuteronomy (which is a compendium of the law), and proceeded, before he stopped, to those words, (vi. 4.) "Hear, O Israel," &c. which having also read, he omitted the rest till he came to chap. xi. 13. "And

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it shall come to pass, if thou wilt hearken diligently," &c. reading on to ver. 22. And then skipped to xiv. 22. "And thou shalt truly tithe," &c. reading on to the section concerning the king, (xvii. 14.) and then the cursings and blessings out of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters, till he had ended all that section of the law. Thus the Mischna, in the title Sota, cap. 7. sect. 8. which Wagenseil hath lately illustrated with most learned annotations; and our Dr. Lightfoot also hath given an account of it long ago, in his Temple Service, chap. 17. sect. 1. where he saith, the king might sit down if he pleased, when he read, but it was esteemed more honourable if he stood; as king Agrippa did when he performed this office. And before he began to read, he made a prayer to God; and all this (he adds) was done *in the court of the women.* Which well agrees with what is said in the next verse, "Gather the people, men and women," &c. But it doth not contradict what I said before, of his reading it in the *court of the men of Israel:* for if the king were of the family of David, it was always done there; if he were not, then in the court of the women, as Wagenseil observes out of Maimonides.

Ver. 12. *Gather the people together.*] All that came to this feast could not meet in one place, but were divided into several assemblies, probably in their synagogues. For as many as the courts of Israel would hold meeting there, it is reasonable to think that the rest assembled in some other holy place. Such were their synagogues, which Philo (in his book of the embassy to Caius) calls *places of secondary holiness.* And Maimonides discourses at large of the holiness of synagogues and schools in his book of Prayer and the Priests' Blessing, cap. 11. (See upon Lev. xix. 30.)

Men, women, and children.] Though the males only were bound to go up to the great feasts, yet many devout women went also voluntarily, as appears by Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 3, 4. And all the women in Jerusalem were likewise bound to attend at these solemnities, with the children who were capable of instruction. (See Nehem. viii. 2, 3.) To whom some person of authority read the law in their court, while the king of the house of David was reading it in the court of the men of Israel.

And the stranger that is within thy gates.] Such as were proselytes to the Jewish religion; not excluding those who were only proselytes of the gate, if they would come to their assemblies.

That they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law.] That by this means they might be instructed in the true way of worshipping God (which is here called his *fear),* and to his worship and service add a careful obedience to all that he commanded in this book, which they might read (and were bound to do so) in their own private houses, and which they heard read every sabbath-day in their public synagogues. For which, indeed, there is no particular command in the law; but they being commanded to teach their children every day at home the things contained in the law, and consequently to read it, (vi. 7, 8. xi. 16.) they thought it most reasonable to have it read on the sabbath in their public assemblies, where some portion of the law was read; but now the whole volume, as an authentic testimony of the whole nation, to the truth of what is contained in these books.

Ver. 13. *That their children which have not known any thing.*] For the early instruction of posterity in the sacred authority of this law.

May hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land, &c.] Be preserved in the true religion, by so solemn an acknowledgment made by the king himself, that God delivered all these laws to Moses. Accordingly we find that Joshua, their supreme governor after the death of Moses, did read all the words of the law, not omitting a word that Moses commanded, before all the congregation, with women, and the little ones, and the strangers, that were conversant among them, (Josh. viii. 34, 35.) But from that time to the reign of Jehoshaphat, (2 Chron. xvii. 7, 8, &c.) which is commonly computed to be five hundred and thirty years, we find no mention of a public reading of it. Nor from that time to the eighteenth year of king Josiah, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 30, 31.) which was the space of two hundred eighty and two years; nor from that time till after the captivity of Babylon, (Nehem. viii. 2, 3, &c.) By which neglect they more easily fell into idolatry, and continued in it, more or less, till that captivity; for a forgetfulness of the law ensued upon this neglect.

Ver. 14. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die.*] He admonishes him, that the end of his days upon earth was near, when he must resign up his office into the hands of Joshua, who had been before appointed his successor, (Numb. xxvii.)

Call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give you a charge.] This was done, I suppose, in the face of all the people, to whom Moses had been speaking, (ver. 1, 2.) to give Joshua the greater authority, and to make him reverenced by them, when they saw he was appointed by God himself to be their governor; as he had been before ordained publicly by God's order, (Numb. xxvii. 18, 19, &c.)

And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.] In the court of the sanctuary, with their faces towards it; for it was not lawful for any but the priests to go into the sanctuary itself. Some indeed have thought, that, by a special order from God, Joshua was now admitted into it: but this seems to me to be contradicted by the next verse, which saith God appeared in a cloud *over the door of the tabernacle.*

Ver. 15. *And the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud.*] This signifies, that the glory of the Lord (as other places speak) appeared unto them, and unto the people, as it had done upon many occasions, (Exod. xxxiii. 9, 10. Numb. ix. 15. xvi. 42, 43.)

And the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.] Being a symbol of the Divine presence, whose glory appeared out of the cloud, as it did Numb. xvi. 42. For the cloud was always upon the tabernacle; (Exod. xl. 35. 38. Numb. ix. 18.) but when the Lord would strike an awe into the people, and move them to regard what he said or did, then the cloud stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord came out of the most holy place, and appeared in it.

Ver. 16. *And the Lord said unto Moses.*] Out of the cloud, I suppose, as he did, Numb. xvi. 44.

Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers.] He first admonished Moses again of his departure, in the audience, I suppose, of Joshua, who heard all the following admoni-

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tion, to make him more carefully observe the end and design of it.

Sleep is a common word for *death*, either of good men or bad; which was not used merely as a soft expression of that, which the heathen dreaded as the most terrible of all things; but to put them in mind, perhaps, that death should not last always, but they should as certainly rise again, as they *lay down* (so the word is in the Hebrew) to sleep with their fathers.

And this people will rise.] In rebellion.

And go a whoring.] God, who searches all men's hearts, discerned such bad inclinations in this people, that he knew they would fall into idolatry (which is called *going a whoring* from him, as hath been often noted), notwithstanding all the means he had prescribed to prevent it. And therefore he adds one more, which was the learning them the following song; notwithstanding which, he foresaw, that after the death of Joshua, and the elders who survived him, they would forsake him, and worship other gods. (See Psal. cvi. 36. 38.)

After the gods of the strangers of the land.] This is an unusual phrase, signifying no more than what he calls in other places *strange gods*. Though some think it imports peculiarly the gods of the Canaanites, who were the former inhabitants, but, being expelled, became *strangers of the land*. And thus Onkelos seems to have understood it, who translates it, *after the idols of the people of the land*. Which was a high aggravation of their sin, that they should worship such gods as had not been able to protect their servants.

Whither they go to be among them.] This seems to countenance the foregoing exposition. And God charges them in future ages with this, as a very great guilt, that they worshipped the gods of the Amorites, in whose land they dwelt, (Judg. vi. 10.)

And will forsake me.] For he looked upon himself as forsaken (that is, not worshipped), if they worshipped any other god with him, (Exod. xx. 3.)

And break my covenant which I have made with them.] This being the principal thing in the covenant (as I have often observed), that they should worship him alone. (Exod. xx. 22, 23. xxiii. 32, 33. Deut. v. 3, 4, &c. vi. 3, 4, &c.)

Ver. 17. *Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day.*] So we read it was upon their very first apostacy to idolatry, (Judg. ii. 14.) and continued so in all ages, as we read frequently in that and the following books. (See there, ver. 20. and iii. 8, &c.)

And I will forsake them.] Go no longer before them against their enemies, but deliver them up into their hands, (ver. 8.)

And will hide my face from them.] Withdraw my favour and protection. So that they were *devoured*, as it follows, by their enemies, and wild beasts; and *many evils and troubles beset them;* or, as the Hebrew phrase signifies, *came upon them on a sudden*. The prophet Ezekiel expresses this in these words, *My face will I turn from them*, (vii. 22.) The effect of which was, the Divine presence departed out of the sanctuary, and he left it (as he there speaks) to be polluted and defiled by robbers. And so it here follows.

So that they will say on that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?] For whithersoever they went out, *the hand of the Lord was against them for evil*, as we read Judg. ii. 15. which was so remarkable a change, that it could not but at last make them reflect upon the cause of it; as we find it did, and moved them to cry unto the Lord for help, (iii. 9. 15. iv. 3, &c.)

Ver. 18. *And I will surely hide my face from them*, &c.] He repeats it again, because they were a people dull of hearing. Or the former words may relate to their first captivity, and these to the last (as they call it), wherein they now are. For they themselves take notice, that these words have been fulfilled by the many calamities which have befallen them since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This appears from Schebet Judah, where Solomon Virgæ quotes this very verse, to prove that their present sufferings proceed not from nature, but from an angry God, more powerful than nature, as he speaks, sect. 13.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore write ye.*] This shews these words were directed both to Moses and to Joshua, who was to take care, after Moses's death, to see this command observed.

This song for you.] Which follows in the thirty-second chapter.

And teach it the children of Israel.] Make them get it by heart, as we now speak.

Put it in their mouths.] That they might sing it, and thereby preserve it in their memory. For it hath been always thought the most profitable way of instructing people, and communicating things to posterity, by putting them into verse; and especially children and young people are best taught in this way. And the greater moment any thing is of, the more carefully it ought to be preserved; which Plato himself thought could be done by no better means than this. And therefore, having spoken of the songs which he would have composed for the use of the people, he would have it enacted, Δεῖν πάντα ἄνδρα καὶ παῖδα, &c. *that all men and children, whether bond or free, male or female, should be bound through the whole city to sing such songs, and never cease so to do*, &c. (See Eusebius, lib. xii. Præpar. Evang. cap. 32.) And Plato himself, lib. ii. de Legibus; where he gives a great many cautions about this matter, and concludes that Τοῦτο δὲ Θεοῦ, ἢ Θείου τινὸς, ἂν εἴη, p. 657. *this must be the work of a god, or some godlike man.* As if he had been acquainted with what Moses, the man of God, or rather God himself, here ordained, that every one should have this song in their mouths, as a means to preserve them in the worship of God alone. However, this justifies the admirable discipline of the Hebrews in those ancient times, who were taught by such hymns, as the wisest men among the heathen in future times thought the best way of instruction. For which reason, as Aristotle reports in his Problems, (sect. 19. probl. 28.) people anciently sung their laws, as the Agathyrsi (he saith) continued to do in his days, Ὅπως μὴ ἐπιλάθωνται, *that they might not be forgotten.* Particularly the laws of Charondas (as Athenæus informs us out of Hermippus) were wont to be sung at Athens, παρ' οἶνον, *over a glass of wine;* and were therefore written in some sort of verse, or tunable measure, as our incomparable Dr. Bentley hath made it probable, in his late Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris, p. 373. Tully also (to add no more) tells us, that Cato, in his book de Originibus, reports, that it was the custom

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among the old Romans to have the virtues and praises of famous men sung to a pipe at their feasts; which he thinks they learnt from the ancient Pythagoreans in Italy, who were wont, *carminibus præcepta quædam occultius tradere, to deliver in verses certain precepts,* which were the greatest secrets in their philosophy; and composed the minds of the scholars to tranquillity, by songs and instruments of music. See upon Numb. xxi. 30. concerning this way of instruction.

That this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.] Testifying that they were sufficiently warned, and could not complain that they were not taught their duty, and told their danger; and reproving also their ingratitude, and putting them in mind how ill they requited their God, (ver. 21.)

Ver. 20. *For when I have brought them unto the land which I sware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey.*] See vi. 10, &c. xv. 8, 9.

And they shall have eaten, and filled themselves, and waxen fat.] See viii. 10—12, &c. xxvii. 15.

Then they will turn unto other gods, and serve them, &c.] Against which he had most solemnly forewarned them, in the places beforementioned, and xi. 16. xii. 29, 30.

Ver. 21. *And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness.*] That they are most justly punished for their foul ingratitude and unbelief, with which this song upbraided them; having told them plainly (xxxii. 18, 19.) what would be the effect of their forsaking him; and at the delivery of it, God having solemnly said here, (ver. 17.) that when they went a whoring from him he would *forsake them, and hide his face from them.*

For it shall not be forgotten out of the mouth of their seed.] The calamities which fell upon them, according to what is predicted in this song, brought it to their remembrance when they had forgotten it, or did not regard it. For these words do not seem to be a *precept* requiring them to remember this song, but a *prediction,* foretelling that their miseries should not suffer them quite to forget it.

For I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I sware.] He saw the secret inclinations and designs which were in their hearts; and perceived that at that very present they hankered, as we speak, after idols.

Ver. 22. *Moses therefore wrote this song the same day.*] And so did Joshua, (as he was commanded, ver. 19.) who spake the words of this song unto the people as well as Moses, xxxii. 44.

And taught it the children of Israel.] Commanded them to learn it, (ver. 19.) In order to which, the Jews say, every man was bound to write for himself a copy of it: and more than that, they make it one of the affirmative precepts (as Maimonides tells us), which obliged every Israelite to write out the whole book of the law with his own hand. For so they interpret those words, (ver. 19.) *Write ye this song for you,* as if they were spoken to all the people, and their meaning had been, *Write ye this law for you, wherein is this song;* for they were not to write the law by small parts and sections (as his words are), but all of it entirely. And if a man's parents had left him a copy, yet he was bound to write one himself; or if he could not write, to procure one to be written for him by some other person, &c. (See Schickard's Mischpat Hammelech, cap. 2. Theor. 5.)

Ver. 23. *And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge.*] That is, the Lord, who had hitherto spoken to him by Moses, now spake to him himself, and gave him this charge, to gain him the greater authority. For which end he had ordered Joshua to present himself before him, together with Moses, (ver. 14.)

Be strong, and of a good courage.] Which he repeats to him after the death of Moses, Josh. i. 6, 7.

For thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them.] I have appointed thee to be the captain of my people, to lead them into the land of Canaan.

And I will be with thee.] To give him success in all his enterprises. Which words being spoken in the audience of all the people, (as may be supposed from ver. 14.) made them readily submit to the authority of Joshua, and confide in his conduct.

Ver. 24. *And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished.*] The whole book of his laws, which he put together before his death; as I said on ver. 9.

Ver. 25. *That Moses commanded the Levites,* &c.] The priests, who were of the tribe of Levi. (See ver. 9.)

Ver. 26. *Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God.*] Not in the inside of it; for he doth not say, *put it into the ark,* but *in the side of the ark,* that is, on the outside, in a little box, as Jonathan and others expound it. For it is the very same phrase with that, 1 Sam. vi. 8. where the Philistines are said to have put the jewels of gold, which they returned for a sin-offering, in a coffer *by the side of the ark;* where none could put it but the high-priest, because nobody else might go into the holy place where the ark was. And therefore those priests who received the book of the law from Moses delivered it to Eleazar, to be there placed. See Buxtorf. Histor. Arcæ, cap. 5. and Huetius, more lately, in his Demonstratio Evangelica, propos. iv. cap. de Can. Libr. Sacrorum, sect. 8. where he observes, that R. Meir, in both the Talmuds, Abarbinel himself, and many others, have been of opinion, from this very place, that the book of the law was put into the ark itself, being no less precious than the tables of stone which were there. But the Scripture tells us, *there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone,* (1 Kings viii. 9. 2 Chron. v. 10.) and their reason is good for nothing, the two tables far excelling this book, because written by the finger of God; and therefore other great doctors among the Jews rightly place it without the ark, as the very words of Moses import.

That it may be there for a witness against thee.] It was deposited in that place as a public record, that if any one should falsify or deprave any thing in the law (as Abarbinel interprets it), he might be convicted out of this book, which was sacredly preserved to be produced as a witness against him. Or (as the author of Tzeror Hammor expresses it), that if they should be so wicked as to lose the books of the law, this copy, kept under the care of the priests, might remain to testify what was the will of God. As we see it did in the days of Josiah, when it was casually found in the house of God, as they were about the reparations of it: though I cannot say they found it in the side of the ark, but rather upon the roof of the house, or in the rafters;

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where the priests had hid it, as some of the Jews think, when Manasseh endeavoured to destroy this authentic copy of the law, as he had done all other that he could find; and when they came to uncover the house, there it appeared.

Ver. 27. *For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck.*] I have been sufficiently acquainted with your perverse disposition.

Behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death?] For it was not likely they would have a greater regard to Joshua than they had to him, who had such near familiarity with God, as never any man had.

Ver. 28. *Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes.*] I suppose after Moses had spoke to the people what God ordered, ver. 1, 2, &c. (see there), he dismissed them again, that he might write the book of the law, (ver. 9.) and deliver it to the priests, &c. and then write this song (which follows in the next chapter), ver. 19. 22, &c. which being done, he is ordered here to summon all the elders of the several tribes, (and with them all the people came, ver. 30.) that he might deliver to them, by word of mouth, the song which he had wrote.

And your officers.] I have frequently observed that those *schoterim* (which we translate *officers*) were but ministers to their elders or judges. (See Exod. v. 14. Deut. i. 15. xvi. 18.) Unto which I shall add here only the words of Abarbinel; The office of the *schoterim* was to see that the sentence which the judges had given was observed, and to compel men to it. They who would have more may find a long roll of authors, who are of this mind, both Jews and Christians, in Jo. Benedic. Carpzovius upon Schickard's Jus Regium; who hath also said a great deal to the same purpose, cap. 4. Theor. 14.

That I may speak these words in their ears.] The song which God had suggested to him, and commanded him to write, (ver. 19. 22.)

And call heaven and earth to record against them.] Call the whole world to witness how wicked they are, if they fall from God, after such care to preserve them in his obedience.

Ver. 29. *For I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt yourselves.*] Fall to the foulest idolatry. (Judg. ii. 19.)

And turn aside from the way which I have commanded you.] Departing from that way of God which I have delivered to you by this command. It was a very melancholy thing for Moses to leave the world in this belief, that all his pains would be lost upon them; but he comforted himself in doing his duty to the very last, and omitting no means to secure them from apostacy.

And evil will befal you in the latter days.] This seems to express a foresight, that they would not immediately revolt, but after the death of Joshua, and of the elders who survived him, (Judg. ii. 7. 11, 12, &c.)

Because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.] By making images, after the manner of other nations, and bowing down to them, and worshipping them, Judg. ii. 12, 13. iii. 7. where *the groves* signify the images in the groves.

Ver. 30. *And Moses spake.*] With the assistance of Joshua, xxxii. 44.

In the ears of all the congregation of Israel.] Whom the elders and officers (ver. 28.) had assembled, according to their tribes and families; unto whom they went severally, and spake these words in their hearing.

The words of this song.] Which follows in the next chapter, and much differs, in the raised expressions and loftiness of the style, from the rest of this book hitherto.

Until they were ended.] Omitted nothing, but completely delivered this song to them; or they spake all these words to them, at the same time, with one continued speech. I observed before that the most ancient way of instruction was by poetical compositions, which was more ancient than rhetorical discourses. And as their chief learning did consist of poetry, so the excellency of their poetry was seen in the proper and native subject of this faculty, that is, in matters of sacred use or observation: from whence the title of *vates* descended unto secular and profane poets, who retained the manner of speech used by the former. But, as Conradus Pellicanus here truly observes, (and see my notes on Exod. xv. 1.) the Scripture poetry doth not consist in the cadency and number of syllables, contrived to please the ear, but in brief and weighty sentences, simply and sincerely composed in a lively manner, to enlighten the understandings, move the affections, and stick in the memory. And the ancients (as a great man of our own observes) had this advantage of later poets, "That the fashion of the world (as he speaks), in their times, was more apt to ravish their thoughts with admiration; wonderful events being then more frequent, and their frequency not abating, but rather increasing their wonderment, because their variety was very great, and the apprehension of invisible or supernatural powers in those events was usual and undoubted. So that admiration was then enforced upon men and the breasts of those who diligently observed those events, or were any way disposed by nature to it, were inspired with lively and sublime affections, apt to vent themselves in such poetical phrases and resemblances as we cannot reach, unless we raise our invention by imitation, and stir up admiration by meditation and study. But now our senses being neither moved with such extraordinary effects of God's power, nor our minds bent to observe the ways of his wisdom, so as to be stricken with true observation of them, we have fewer good sacred poems than of any other kind."

Thus Dr. Jackson, book i. on the Creed, chap. 14. David Chytræus also hath an excellent discourse on this subject, to shew that the ancient poetry among the heathen contained the doctrine of God, and of celestial things; all the offices and rewards of virtue, with the punishment of vice; the history of their kings, and the noble acts of famous men, tom. i. of his works, p. 154, &c. where he confirms this out of the verses of Orpheus, who lived (as he computes) about a hundred and fifty years before David; and those of Pindar, Simonides, and the rest, who lived in the time of the war with Xerxes. But Moses led the way to them all; whose mind was raised to that sublimity of thoughts and speech which we find in his songs, by admiration of those strange events which he saw, Exod. xv. Numb. xxi. and here in the next chapter, wherein he was followed by Deborah, Barak, and Hannah, &c. in after-times, Judg. v. 1 Sam. ii.

CHAP. XXXII.

Ver. 1. *GIVE ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.*] He calls angels

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and men to bear witness (xxx. 19.) that the Israelites had been admonished of their duty, and warned of their danger; and this, not by words of his own invention, but which were put into his mouth by the Spirit of God. Or (after an elegant form of speech) he calls upon all insensible creatures, every where, to listen to him, that he might awaken the Israelites out of their stupidity, or upbraid them as a people that had ears to hear, and would not hear him. And, as some of themselves have observed, he may be thought to intimate hereby, that if they would not hearken and keep his precepts, the *heavens* were forbidden to give them rain, and the *earth* to bring forth fruit. The gloss also of the Jerusalem Targum is not amiss, that Moses, being shortly to die, calls the heavens and the earth, which endure through all ages, to be witnesses against them when he was gone. But the following observation is too curious: That Isaiah, when he prophesied, *i. e.* being far remote from the heavens, and near to the earth, calls upon the heavens *to hear*, and the earth *to give ear*, or attend: whereas Moses, quite contrary, approaching now very near to the heavens, calls upon them to attend or *give ear*, and, being in spirit remote from the earth, bids it *hear*.

Ver. 2. *My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew.*] Or, *Let my doctrine drop*, &c. For this seems to be a prayer, that his words, which were sent from heaven to them, might sink into their hearts, and soften them, as the drops of rain and the dew do the earth, and produce such fruits of obedience as might make them happy.

As the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.] The aforesaid Targum thus paraphrases this whole verse: *Let the doctrine of my law be as sweet upon the children of Israel as the rain; and the word of my mouth be received by them as the delectable dew: let it be as gentle showers refreshing the grass, and as the drops of the latter rain, descending and watering the blades of corn in the month of March.*

Ver. 3. *Because I will publish the name of the Lord.*] For my song shall be concerning the Lord of heaven and earth, whose glorious perfections I will proclaim; which make him the sole object of your worship.

Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.] Acknowledge therefore the infinite power of our God; and his sovereign dominion over all; and give honour and service to none besides him.

These three first verses seem to be the preface to the song; and now follows the song itself; which Josephus calls Ποίησιν ἑξάμετρον, *a poem in hexameter verse*, (lib. iv. Antiq. cap. 8.)

Ver. 4. *He is the Rock.*] Always endures, and never changes; so that in him we may find at all times a sure refuge.

His work is perfect.] Whatsoever he undertakes, he perfects and completes it.

For all his ways are judgment.] He doth nothing without the greatest reason, and according to the rules of the exactest justice.

A God of truth.] Who is faithful to his promises.

And without iniquity.] And never deceives or wrongs any man.

Just and right is he.] Nor will he punish any man without a cause, or more than he deserves.

Maimonides takes the first words of this verse, *He is the Rock*, to signify the first principle, and the efficient cause of all things without himself. For so the word *Rock* is used, when God bids the children of Israel *look to the rock out of which they were hewn*, (Isa. li. 1.) that is, to Abraham their father, from whom they were descended. And so he thinks it signifies, ver. 18. of this chapter, *Of the Rock that begat thee, thou art unmindful*, i. e. of God, the author of their being. And again, ver. 30. *their Rock (i. e. the Lord) sold them.* (See More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 16.) And then by the next words, *his way is perfect*, he thinks is meant, that as he is the creator of all things, so there is no defect or superfluity in his works. For he takes these words to be the same with those, Gen. i. 31. *God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.* (See there, par. ii. cap. 28. and par. iii. cap. 25.) And as his works of creation are most perfect, so are his works of providence; for he governs the world with the greatest judgment and justice. So he seems to understand the next words, (par. iii. cap. 17.) *all his ways are judgment.* We are ignorant of the methods and reasons of his judgments, yet no injustice or iniquity is to be ascribed to him. But all the evil and all the good that befals any man, or the whole church, proceeds from the just and equal judgment of God. And more largely, cap. 49. "Our narrow minds cannot apprehend either the perfection of his works, or the equity of his judgments; for we apprehend his admirable works only by parts, whether we look upon the bodies of animals, or the celestial spheres: and in like manner we apprehend but a little of his judgments; for that of which we are ignorant in both, is far more than that which we know of either." I conclude this with the words of the author of Sepher Cosri, (par. iii. sect. 11.) "He that believes this, that *all God's works are perfect, and his ways judgment*, will always lead a sweet and pleasant life; all afflictions will be made light to him, nay, he will rejoice that his iniquities are hereby alleviated, and that he shall one day be rewarded for his patience; which he teaches men by his example, and thereby justifies the judgments of God." With respect to which, I suppose, the Jews now begin the prayer which they make at the burial of their dead, with this verse of Moses's song. Which prayer they call *tzidduck haddin*, i. e. *just judgment*, as Leo Modena observes, in his History of the present Jews, par. v. chap. 8.

Ver. 5. *They have corrupted themselves*, &c.] I know not how to justify this translation, nor that in the margin, *He hath corrupted himself.* Maimonides translates them better; making these words a question, and the next words in answer to them, in this manner: *Did he* (i. e. *God*, the *Rock* before spoken of) *do him any hurt?* For the Hebrew word *scecheth*, with *lamed* after it, signifies to hurt, or destroy, Numb. xxxii. 15. 1 Sam. xxiii. 10. (as Joh. Cocceius observes, in his Ultima Mosis, sect. 701.) And so the meaning is, *Is God to blame for the evils that befall him?* i. e. *Israel.* Unto which the answer follows in the next words, which we thus translate—

Their spot is not the spot of his children.] In the Hebrew, the first word of this sentence is *lo*, i. e. *not*, or *no*. Which the accent *tipcha* (as they call it) under it, shews is not to be joined with the words that follow (*banau mumam*), but taken by itself, being a denial of the foregoing question. And these words are thus to be translated, *No*,

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his children are their blot; i. e. all the evil that befalls them is the fruit of their children's wickedness. And so these words are in effect the same with those of Solomon, Prov. xix. "The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord:" he complains of God, when the fault is in himself. (See More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 12.)

Onkelos translates it thus: *They corrupted to themselves, not to him, children that served idols; i. e.* as Paulus Fagius observes, They hurt themselves, not God, when, leaving him the true God, they turned to idols; for the word *corrupt* is commonly used in Scripture, where it speaks of the sin of idolatry. The Jerusalem paraphrast aims at the same sense.

They are a perverse and crooked generation.] The whole body of them are untoward and untractable, walking contrary to God in all their ways; for there being a gemination (as they speak) of a syllable in the latter of these words *(pethalthol)*, it increases the sense, and makes it the same with the superlative degree among us, importing the highest obliquity imaginable. And these words were never more exactly fulfilled than in the days of our blessed Saviour, who calls them a *wicked* and *adulterous*, a *faithless* and *perverse generation*, (Matt. xvi. 4. xvii. 17.) And in the days of the apostles, who call them Ἀτόπους, *an absurd kind of people*, (2 Thess. iii. 3.) *who pleased not God, and were contrary to all men*, (1 Thess. ii. 15.)

Ver. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?*] He upbraids them with their senseless folly and foul ingratitude; which in the following words he demonstrates, by representing the obligations he had laid upon them.

Is not he thy father.] Having adopted them in a peculiar manner to be his children, above all other people.

Who hath bought thee?] When he rescued them from the slavery of Egypt.

Hath not he made thee.] Advanced them (for so the word *asa* is translated, 1 Sam. xii. 6.) to be a great and mighty people. (See Psal. c. 3.)

And established thee?] By settling them in excellent order, under the government of most wise and righteous laws. (See the fourth chapter of this book, ver. 7, 8.)

Ver. 7. *Remember the days of old.*] Look back as far as you are able.

Consider the years of many generations.] Consult the most ancient records; which would inform them how God chose their father Abraham long ago, and promised to bless his posterity, as he did Isaac and Jacob in a most eminent manner; and sent Joseph by a wonderful providence into Egypt to preserve them from starving, &c.

Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.] All this is to express the same thing, that they should advise with those that knew more than themselves; and particularly with *old men* (as the word may be understood which we translate *elders*), who, by the benefit of their great age, had heard and seen more than others, and could tell them how God had dealt with them, ever since he brought them by a wonderful power out of the land of Egypt.

Ver. 8. *When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance.*] He directs them still to look farther back, and they would find that long before Abraham's time God had them in his thoughts, even when he divided the earth among the sons of Noah and their posterity after the flood, (Gen. x. 5. 25. 32.)

When he separated the sons of Adam.] Or, *the sons of men;* who were one people, till he scattered them into several parts of the earth, and separated them into divers nations, by confounding their language, (Gen. xi. 8, 9.)

He set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel.] He had then the children of Israel in his mind, before they were a nation; and made such a distribution to other people (particularly to the seven nations of Canaan), within such bounds and limits, as that there might be sufficient room for so numerous a people as the Israelites, when they came to take possession of that country.

How the LXX. came to translate these words thus, *He appointed the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels*, it is hard to say. Bochartus hath made the best conjecture about it (which was hinted by De Muis before him), lib. i. Phaleg. cap. 15. that they had a bad copy before them, which left out the three first letters of Israel; and so they read *Baneel*, the children of God, meaning the Israelites. Instead of which some transcribers put the *angels of God*, because they are sometimes called *his sons*. Which led the ancient Greek fathers, who followed this translation, into great difficulties: and it grew a common opinion, that every nation was under the government of an angel; which seems to be the meaning also of the son of Sirach, Ecclus. xvii. 17. And many others fancying that God divided the nations according to the number of the children of Israel, when they came into Egypt, which was just seventy, they thence gather there were just so many distinct nations, and so many several languages; which is a conceit of some of the Jews, as Mr. Selden observes, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 9. But Bochart, in the place abovenamed, hath given the plain and simple meaning of this place in these words: "God so distributed the earth among the several people that were therein, that he reserved, or in his counsel designed, such a part of the earth for the Israelites, who were then unborn, as he knew would afford a commodious habitation to a most numerous nation."

Ver. 9. *For the Lord's portion is his people.*] And not satisfied with this kindness, he chose them alone, out of all other nations, to be under his special care, and to enjoy singular privileges, which none other had; and therefore they are called his *peculiar treasure*, (Exod. xix. 5.) This Origen maintains to be true against all the cavils of Celsus, lib. v. p. 250. edit. Cantabr. where he shews how beneficial their laws were; and that they were taught so early to know God, to believe the immortality of the soul, and rewards and punishments in the life to come, as demonstrated they were distinguished from all other people whatsoever. (See p. 260.)

Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.] This is the same thing repeated in other words; alluding to the manner of measuring and dividing lands by *cords*, as the word in the Hebrew is, which we translate *lot*. (See Psal. xvi. 6. and chap. 4. of this book, ver. 20.)

Ver. 10. *He found him in a desert land.*] There he first took the Israelites to be his peculiar people; for so the word we translate *found* frequently signifies. As in Psal.

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cxvi. 3. *the pains of hell gat hold upon me;* where in the Hebrew the words are, *found me.* And in the New Testament, (Rom. iv. 1.) *What shall we say then, that Abraham our father hath found?* that is, attained.

In the waste howling wilderness.] Desolate and void of all sustenance; where nothing was to be heard but the howlings and yellings of wild beasts, (Deut. viii. 15.)

He led him about.] Conducted the Israelites from place to place, (Numb. xxxiii. 1, 2, &c.)

He instructed him.] Gave them his laws, (Exod. xx. 1, 2, &c. xxxiv. 1. 10, &c.)

He kept him as the apple of his eye.] Protected and defended them from all dangers with extraordinary care; for there is nothing of which we are more tender than the sight of our eyes; which God hath guarded by several coats and humours, and eye-lids fenced with hairs, to preserve it from hurt. Unto which R. Levi ben Gersom thinks these words allude.

Ver. 11. *As an eagle stirreth up her nest,* &c.] Eagles are observed to have a most tender affection to their young ones; who are here meant by *her nest,* as Bochartus observes (it being a common figure used by other authors, to put *continens pro contento*), whom she provokes to fly (which is meant by *stirring up* her nest) by *fluttering over them* with her *wings stretched out.* Upon which she *takes* them while they are so weak and feeble that they fail in their attempt to fly, and *supporteth* them till they recover strength to commit themselves unto the air. See Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 3. and I. G. Vossius de Orig. et Progr. Idolol. lib. iii. cap. 77. where he observes, that this kindness to her young ones is chiefly found in the *black eagle;* though something of it be seen in others; which may be the reason they lay but a few eggs, because they are not able to educate many young ones with such tender care.

Ver. 12. *So the Lord alone did lead him.*] Numb. xiv. 14. This is an exact resemblance of God's tender care of his people Israel. Whom he solicited, by Moses and Aaron, to aspire after their liberty, when they were oppressed in Egypt; just as an eagle excites her young ones, when they lie drowsy in the filth of their nest, to fly away. And as the eagle flutters over them, with her wings spread abroad, so God by his Spirit moved the Israelites to be obedient to their deliverers out of Egypt. For Moses uses the very same word, when he speaks of the Spirit of God *moving upon the waters,* Gen. i. 2. And as the eagle carries her fainting young ones on her wings, so God supported them when they were weary, and upheld them in dangerous ways. Insomuch, that he is said to carry them in his arms, as a father doth his child, (Deut. i. 31. Hosea i. 1. 3.) See Bochartus in the place abovenamed, cap. 4.

And there was no strange god with him.] To help or assist him: but by his almighty power alone they were protected and preserved. Which made their sin the more heinous, in sacrificing to other gods, (ver. 17.) as if they had been their benefactors.

Ver. 13. *He made him ride on the high places of the earth.*] Brought the Israelites in a triumphant manner to possess a noble country, full of lofty and very fruitful mountains, which were in Canaan, where they lived deliciously. So *to ride* signifies, as Bochartus thinks, *laute et opipare vivere.* Which he justifies by that place in Hosea, x. 11. *I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plough, and Jacob shall break his clods;* that is, saith he, the people of Israel lived in pleasure, when Judah lived laboriously, (par. i. Hierozoic. lib. i. cap. 41.) But *to ride* signifies, also, to subdue and conquer; which may be the meaning here, Psal. xlv. 4. lxvi. 12. and to have dominion and rule, as Maimonides interprets it, in his More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 70. In which sense it is said of God himself, in the next chapter of this book, *He rideth upon the heavens for thy help,* ver. 26. And he rideth upon *Araboth* the highest heavens, (Psal. lxviii. 4.)

That he might eat the increase of the field.] Abundance of corn and fruit.

And he made him to suck honey out of the rock.] Wild honey; which was esteemed an excellent food in that country, and was sometimes found upon the ground, sometimes in the hollow part of trees, and sometimes in the clefts of rocks, as Bochartus observes out of good authors, (Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 15.) This *rock-honey* seems to be spoken of as the best of this kind, being joined with the *finest wheat,* Psal. lxxxi. *ult.*

And oil out of the flinty rock.] No part of this country being barren, but affording something or other for their sustenance; though some say that the olive-tree thrives best in rocky places. Columella himself observes, that it doth not delight either in low places or in high, but "magis modicos clivos amat," *but rather loves the sides of moderately-rising hills,* (lib. vi. cap. 6.) And D. Chytræus notes, that as the most generous wine is produced upon the Rhine, below Mentz, out of the hardest flints; "sic oleæ locis petrosis sterilibus non infeliciter proveniunt;" *so olive-trees grow prosperously in stony and barren places,* (tom. i. p. 173.)

Ver. 14. *Butter of kine.*] The use of butter was very ancient among the Hebrews, though lately known to the Greeks, (as I observed upon Gen. xviii. 8.) and it was accounted an excellent food.

And milk of sheep.] Which the Scripture often mentions, (Isa. vii. 21, 22. 1 Cor. ix. 1. 7.) And under the word *tzon,* as hath been often observed, *goats* also are comprehended, whose milk likewise is mentioned, Prov. xxvii. 27. Aristotle mentions both, and so doth Columella, and a great many others, in Bochart's Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 45. where he proves that they made butter of these milks, as well as of cows.

With the fat of lambs.] Well fed. For *carim* properly signifies *pasture sheep,* as the same Bochart there observes, (cap. 43.)

And rams of the breed of Bashan.] A country famous for excellent pasture; being εὔβοτος καὶ εὐανθὴς, &c. as St. Cyril calls it. (See Numb. xxxii. 1. 4.)

And goats.] Of the breed of that country.

With the fat of kidneys of wheat.] The Hebrews call the best of every kind of thing by the name of *the fat.* And the *kidneys of wheat* signify large and plump corn, affording great plenty of flour. Cajetan thinks it signifies wheat as big as a kidney; or rather, having that shape, as our kidney-beans have.

And thou shalt drink the pure blood of the grapes.] Most generous red wine; very clear and bright. So Achil. Tatius, lib. ii. calls wine αἷμα βοτρύων.

Maimonides, in his More Nevochim, par. ii. cap. 47. takes all the expressions in this verse to be metaphorical, signifying (as Onkelos allegorizes them) the possession of

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all their enemies' cities and goods, after they had poured out their blood like water on the ground.

Ver. 15. *Jeshurun waxed fat.*] Grew rich, saith Onkelos and the Jerusalem Targum.

And kicked.] Against him who fed him so plentifully and deliciously. It seems to be a metaphor taken from oxen, who, being stirred up with a goad to labour, lift up their heels and kick against him who pricks them forward. So did the Israelites when they were urged and pressed to their duty by the prophets; not only despised, but evil-entreated them.

Why Israel is called *Jeshurun* is not easy to resolve. Jo. Cocceius (in his Ultima Mosis, sect. 973.) derives it from *Shur*, which signifies to *see, behold*, or *descry*. From whence, in the future tense and the plural number, comes *Jeshuru*, which, by the addition of *nun parogogicum*, as they speak, makes *Jeshurun*, that is, *The people who had the vision of God*. I know nothing more simple, nor more probable than this; which highly aggravated their sin, who, having God so nigh unto them, (iv. 7.) and their elders having had a sight of him, (Exod. xxiv. 10.) were so ungrateful as to rebel against him, and worship other gods. Some refer this *kicking* to their revolt from the house of David; when Jeroboam, to preserve his new kingdom, set up the golden calves, to prevent the return of the people to their old master, by going up to Jerusalem to worship.

Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness.] This variety of expressions is used to signify how exceeding bountifully God had provided for them; and withal, how very wanton and insolent they were grown, as cattle fed in a fat pasture are wont to be. The words *with fatness* (after *covered*) are not in the Hebrew, but are well supplied out of other places, particularly Psal. xvii. 10.

Then he forsook God.] The Jerusalem Targum here hath it, *They forsook the Word of God.*

Which made him.] Advanced them from a desert where he found them, (ver. 6. 10.) into a very rich and plentiful country. This was the lamentable effect of their *plethora*, or fulness; unto which we are all too prone, as an excellent person of our own hath long ago observed. "Even such as seem most upright (saith he) when they wax fat, spurn with the heel, and cast away the memory of their misery, and of God's former mercy, behind their backs. And what was the reason that the Israelites waxed thus full and fat? Only because they did not use that exercise which God had appointed to keep them under, and preserve their hearts from being lifted up: (Deut. viii. 11, &c.) 'Take heed to thyself, lest when thou hast eaten, and filled thyself, &c. then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt,' &c. The daily and lively representation, or recognition of their condition there, should have been as usual to them as their meat and drink, yea, as it were, their thanksgiving before and after meats," as our Dr. Jackson speaks, book xi. on the Creed, chap. 34. And Maimonides himself, mentioning those very words, "Lest when thou hast eaten, and filled thyself," &c. very well observes, that to prevent pride and apostacy, which grow out of great plenty, God commanded them to offer their first-fruits before him every year, with a solemn confession, how poor they were in the beginning, and then raised by God to be a mighty people, (Deut. xxvi. 5, 6, &c.) For which end the Passover was instituted, "That they might remember the day when they came forth out of Egypt all the days of their life," (Deut. xvi. 3.) See More Nevoch. par. ii. cap. 39.

And lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation.] As there was a progress in their insolent forgetfulness of God, expressed in three phrases, which may signify three degrees of their stupidity *(waxen fat, grown thick*, and *covered with fatness)*, so some observe as many degrees of their rebellion: first, they *kicked against God, i. e.* threw off the yoke of his laws, and refused to observe them; secondly, they *forsook God*, and fell into idolatry; and, lastly, they *lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation*. Where the Hebrew word *nibbel* signifies more than a light esteem; for, if it come from *nebelah*, a dead carcass (as some think it doth), it denotes the greatest abhorrence, nothing being so much abominated among the Jews as a dead carcass, the touching of which was the highest pollution. And thus J. Cocceius and Campeg. Vitringa understand it; who observe that this was never so fulfilled as in their behaviour towards our Lord Christ, who was indeed the Rock of their salvation, and so vilely used by them, as if he had been the most loathsome man upon earth. So Vitringa expounds these words, (in his Observ. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 9. p. 173.) "instar flagitii tractavit rupem salutis suæ." For this is a word used by God himself, when he would express his utter detestation of Nineveh, and his dealing with her according to her abominable wickedness, Nahum iii. 6. "I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile," &c. and when he speaks of the disgrace he would put upon his own temple, Jer. xiv. 21. The LXX. indeed simply expound the word *ἀπέστη, he departed;* but the last words they expound *ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ σωτῆρος αὐτοῦ, from God his Saviour*, as Onkelos also, *his most mighty Redeemer*. Which, in the most eminent sense, is the Lord Jesus; for none brought such salvation to them, and wrought such a redemption for them, as he did; who is "the stone which God laid in Sion," &c. (Isa. xxviii. 16.) But instead of flying to him, as men in danger do to a rock, or strong fortress, they not only rejected him, but abused and put the highest indignities upon him.

Ver. 16. *They provoked him to jealousy.*] Made him extremely angry with them. For so jealousy is described as the rage of a man, Prov. vi. 34.

With strange gods.] Whom they fell in love withal, and worshipped. This was the ground of his jealousy, their falseness to God, who had espoused them to himself. And the Hebrew word *zar (strange)* we sometimes translate *another*, (Job xix. 27.) So that *a strange god* and *another god* are the very same, (Psal. lxxxi. 9. Exod. xx. 3.) Therefore God saith he will not *give his glory to another*, (Isa. xlii. 8.) and that their sorrows shall be multiplied that *hasten after another god*, (Psal. xvi. 4.)

With abominations provoked they him to anger.] I take this to be a repetition of the same thing, their idols being called *abominations*, because God exceedingly hates them, (vii. 25. 1 Kings xi. 5.) Though R. Solomon and Abarbinel, by *abominations*, here understand those filthy mixtures forbidden in Lev. xviii. with witchcrafts, and such-like wickedness. And Abarbinel refers the first part of this verse to the times under the first temple, when they worshipped the sun, moon, and stars; and the latter part

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of it to the times under the second temple, when, though they were free from idolatry, they were corrupted with other abominable filthiness.

Ver. 17. *They sacrificed to devils, and not to God.*] The Hebrew word *schedim*, which we translate *devils*, imports as much as *destroyers;* (as the devil is called, in the book of Revelation, ix. 11.) evil spirits delighting in mischief, and leading those that worship them into perdition. Though some think they are called *schedim* ironically, by way of scorn, the true God being *Schaddai*, the *Omnipotent*, and *All-sufficient;* and these called, by way of mockery, *counterfeit gods*, who had no power to help their worshippers, nor were sufficient to preserve themselves. Either of these accounts of the word is better than that of Manasseh ben Israel, who derives it from שדה *a field*, because they frequent desert places. But then they should have been called *sedim*, not *schedim*, as he must needs know, who was a great master in the Hebrew learning. The LXX. call them here δαιμόνια, and so doth the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 19. because the demons led men into the impiety of worshipping other gods, either themselves or other beings, which they persuaded simple people had some divinity in them; and that not only the stars, but even beasts here upon the earth, nay, onions and garlic, which they did not take to be gods, but things by which, as intermediate causes, their gods were pleased or offended with them, and therefore worshipped them.

To gods whom they knew not.] Or, as the words may be translated, *gods that knew not them*, that is, had never bestowed any benefits upon them: for, as it follows, they were new gods, never before heard of by their ancestors.

New gods, that newly came up.] Such as Jeroboam's calves, invented out of his own brain; and the gods of other nations, Moloch and Baal, which were new to the Israelites, and had not been known among them; for the demon gods were of no great antiquity: Bel, or Baal (as he is called in the Chaldee dialect), the first king of Babel after Nimrod, being the first that ever was deified (as Mr. Mede observes), or reputed a god after his death; whence all other demons were called Baalim, as all the Roman emperors were called Cæsars, from the first emperor of that name. (See p. 776.) Besides which the heathens had another higher sort of demons, which had never been linked to a mortal body, *viz.* those we call angels, who the Israelites were taught to be but ministers unto their God, and therefore not to be worshipped.

Whom your fathers feared not.] That is, did not worship. This was a great aggravation of their guilt, that when they would have other objects of worship, they did not return unto those whom their ancestors had reverenced (the *Teraphim*, for instance, which were the gods of Laban and Rachel), for whose worship they might have pretended tradition; but chose gods whom their forefathers were not acquainted withal; which was a token of a strange proneness to idolatry. And Maimonides, mentioning this verse, observes, that they worshipped not only things that had a being, but mere imaginations: for which he quotes these words of the book Siphri: "It was not enough that they worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, and celestial signs, but they worshipped their shadow." (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 46.)

Ver. 18. *Of the Rock that begat thee.*] God, the author of thy being. See ver. 4.

Thou art unmindful.] Being wholly intent to idols, which they themselves have made.

And hast forgotten God that formed thee.] Into a kingdom of priests, making them his peculiar people, (Exod. xix. 5, 6.)

Ver. 19. *And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them.*] Cast them off as they had done him.

Because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters.] For so they were till they corrupted themselves, and thereby highly incensed him against them: for nothing can be so provoking as the rebellion of children against a most indulgent parent. Maimonides translates it, *By reason of his anger against his sons and his daughters*, More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 36. where he observes, we never find the word *caas* (which is here used, signifying *indignation*), in Scripture, applied to God, but only when it speaks of idolatry.

Ver. 20. *And he said.*] Resolved.

I will hide my face from them.] See xxxi. 17, 18.

I will see what their end shall be.] Not cease my judgments till I have brought the sorest calamities upon them, and made an end of them, that is, of their polity and government.

For they are a very froward generation.] Incorrigibly wicked.

Children in whom there is no faith.] Who had broken their covenant with him (xxxi. 16.) so often, that they were not to be trusted, when they made profession of repentance. The book of Judges, and, indeed, their whole history, testifies to the truth of this.

Ver. 21. *They have moved me to jealousy.*] See ver. 16.

With that which is not God.] By worshipping God's creatures, or the work of their own hands.

They have provoked me to anger with their vanities.] The same thing, in other words; all the gods of the nations, whom the Israelites imitated, being mere *vanities* (or *things of nought*, as the Jerusalem Targum hath it), as hath been often observed.

And I will move them to jealousy.] He threatens to be even with them, and serve them in their kind.

With those that are not a people.] Who either were not a nation in being at this time, or so obscure, base, and ignoble, that they were not worthy the name of a nation. The Jews interpret it to the Chaldeans; whom God raised up on a sudden, when nobody would believe it, (Habak. i. 5, 6, &c.) to be a terrible scourge to them. (See Isa. xxiii. 13.)

And I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.] The Jews thought all nations so, except themselves. And, in one sense, all the gentiles were really so: for nothing was more foolish than to worship creatures meaner than themselves, (Jer. x. 8.)

The apostle applies this unto the bestowing the blessing of the Messiah, whom the Jews refused, upon the gentile world, (Rom. x. 19.) which strangely enraged the Jews; as we see, when our Saviour first mentioned it, Matt. xxi. 43, 44, &c. and when St. Paul did but speak of going to preach unto them, Acts xxii. 21, 22. and see 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. And through all ages since it hath made them gnash their teeth to see so many nations subject unto our Saviour, and honour him as God, whom they rejected as the vilest of men.

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Ver. 22. *For a fire is kindled in mine anger.*] Great and sore calamities are compared to *fire* in Scripture, (Ezek. xxx. 8.) which God here threatens to send upon them, as the woful effects of his heavy displeasure.

And shall burn unto the lowest hell.] Never cease till they have destroyed them. For *hell* and *destruction* seem to be the same, (Prov. xv. 11.) And therefore the *lowest* hell signifies the depth of misery.

And shall consume the earth with her increase.] Make an utter desolation in the country, (Isa. i. 7.)

And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.] Subvert the strongest fortresses, which were accounted impregnable. Such as Jerusalem (which Rasi thinks is here meant), in whose last destruction this was perfectly fulfilled, as it was in part at the first, (2 Kings xxv. 9.) For Titus himself, as Josephus relates, (lib. vii. de Bello Judaico, cap. 43.) observing the vast height of the walls, the bigness of every stone, the exact order wherein they were laid and compacted, &c. cried out—God was with us in this war, he drove the Jews from these munitions, ἐπεὶ χεῖρές τε τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἢ μηχαναὶ, τί πρὸς τούτους τοὺς πύργους δύνανται: *for what could men's hands or machines do against such towers?* Which calls to mind what is related, not only by St. Chrysostom, Sozomen, Socrates, but by Ammianus Marcellinus himself, a heathen historian (lib. xxiii. beginning), how that when Julian, the apostate, ordered the temple of Jerusalem to be rebuilt, terrible globes of fire burst out, *prope fundamenta, from the very foundations*, which overturned all, burnt the workmen, and made the place so inaccessible, that they desisted from the attempt. The certainty of this hath extorted the same confession from the Jews themselves (David Ganz, in his Tzemach David, and R. Gedaliah, in Schal. Hakkabala), though they pretend the building went on and was finished, but after many years overthrown by an earthquake.

Ver. 23. *I will heap mischiefs upon them.*] Which shall miserably oppress and crush them.

And spend all my arrows upon them.] His judgments and plagues are often compared to arrows shot at them, (Psal. vii. 12, 13. xxxviii. 2. xci. 5.) And he speaks in the language of an archer, who shoots till he hath emptied his quiver, and hath not one arrow left.

Ver. 24. *They shall be burnt with hunger.*] This verse and the next explain what he means by arrows, which are here enumerated. And, first, he threatens a famine, with which he saith they should *be burnt;* either because these judgments are compared to fire, ver. 22. or because extreme hunger parches the inward parts, and makes the visage *as black as a coal*, as Jeremiah speaks, Lament. iv. 8.

And devoured with burning heat.] With fevers, and calentures, as they are called in hot countries.

And with bitter destruction.] With the pestilence; which he calls *bitter*, because it was incurable.

And I will send the teeth of wild beasts upon thee.] This was another of the sore judgments which God threatened to their disobedience. (See Lev. xxvi. 22.) Upon which Maimonides observed, that magicians were wont to promise them, by their arts, to free their cities, fields, and plantations from lions and serpents, and such-like hurtful creatures; unto whose power God delivered them, because they forsook him, and followed idolaters and magicians, (More Nevoch. par. iii. cap. 37.)

With the poison of serpents of the dust.] Whose bitings were deadly. And they were exposed to them, as well as to wild beasts, when they were forced to fly into wildernesses, and hide themselves in dens and caves; where some of them could not avoid being devoured by wild beasts, and bitten by serpents, which lay lurking in those holes. So Cocceius, in his Ultima Mosis, sect. 1271. where he notes also, that this was fulfilled in part when they were thrown by the Romans to wild beasts in the theatres, as Josephus relates, lib. vi. de Bello Judaico, cap. 16. 20.

Ver. 25. *The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy.*] They could no where be safe; for in the field the sword of their enemies cut them off; and at home they did not think themselves secure in their closest chamber, but died with fear, or made away themselves, lest they should fall into the hands of those that sought to destroy them. (See Lament. i. 20.) Or, perhaps, by the *terror within*, may be meant famine and pestilence, (Ezek. vii. 15.)

Both the young man and the virgin, the suckling, with the man of grey hairs.] He threatens to deliver them into such merciless hands, as would spare none, nor make any difference of sex or of age. This Huetius refers to the last destruction of Jerusalem, in his Demonstr. Evang. propos. ix. cap. 173. and Abarbinel also confesses it was then fulfilled.

Ver. 26. *I said.*] *i. e.* Resolved.

I would scatter them into corners; I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men.] Utterly destroy them, so that not one of them should be found; and if any remained they should skulk, and not dare to appear among men.

Ver. 27. *Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy.*] He that is omnipotent is not capable of fearing any thing: but he speaks in our language, and gives this reason why he did not make them cease to be a nation, because he would not have their enemies insult, and grow outrageous in their insolent language, even against himself. Of which we find an instance, Isa. xxxvii. 28, 29.

Lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely.] Ascribe all this to their false gods (as Cocceius understands it), which are called *strange gods*, (ver. 16.)

And lest they should say, Our hand is high.] Imagine their own power and valour had destroyed the Jews; as both the Assyrians and Chaldeans boasted. (Isa. x. 7, 8, &c. Habak. i. 15, 16.)

And the Lord hath not done all this.] And attribute nothing to the Most High in all the business. Certain it is, the wickedness of the Jews was so exceeding great, that their final extirpation had been accomplished many generations before it came to pass, had the Lord been only just, and respected nothing but their deserts, whom he very often preserved when they might have been justly destroyed, for such reasons as he himself here gives; that his glory might not be impeached among the nations, but they might see by the strange deliverances and restorations of the Jews, that "their God was a God of gods," most worthy to be honoured by all the world, as he himself speaks below, ver. 36. So Dr. Jackson well observes, book i. on the Creed, chap. 22. sect. 4.

The marginal translation of this last clause is also agreeable to the Hebrew, *Our high hand, and not the Lord, hath done all this.* To prevent which wrong construction of

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God's judgments upon them, he took such a time for the execution of them (as Conradus Pellicanus well observes), when the world began to be better instructed by the coming of Christ. So that Titus himself said, as I noted before, that it was God, and not the hands of the Romans, that destroyed them. (See xxix. 24. and this chapter, ver. 22.)

Ver. 28. *For they are a nation void of counsel.*] The Hebrew word *abad* (which is commonly translated *perish*, and here we translate *void*) signifies, in the Ethiopic language, *is foolish* or *mad*, as Job Ludolphus observes in his excellent history of that country. Which makes it probable this was the ancient sense of the word among the Hebrews, and gives the best account of this place, which may be thus translated, *They are a nation foolish in their counsel.* Whose counsels led them to such courses as utterly undid them; and when they seemed most wise they madly ruined themselves. And thus those words of Jeremiah may be best translated, "The heart of the king is foolish," (iv. 9.)

Neither is there any understanding in them.] They did not understand what was good for themselves; but imprudently chose that which did them mischief. Some refer this to the enemies of the Jews before spoken of: but that seems not so agreeable to what follows, which relates to the same persons, and most likely expresses God's compassion towards the senseless Jews. Huetius applies this to their stupid blindness at their last destruction; which they were so far from preventing, that they drew it upon themselves, as Josephus shews. (See xxviii. 28, 29.)

Ver. 29. *Oh that they were wise.*] So as seriously to consider God's dealing with them exactly, according to what he foretold them.

That they understood this, &c.] Or, as it may be translated, *Then would they understand this, they would consider their latter end.* They would soon perceive the hand of God in all that is befallen them; and that if they do not change their course, they will, in the conclusion, be utterly undone.

Ver. 30. *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight?*] Whence should such an amazing change proceed? that the Israelites, who formerly with a handful of men put vast armies to flight, (Lev. xxvi. 8.) should now, though never so numerous, be beaten by one or two of their enemies, fleeing when none pursues them? (Lev. xxvi. 17. 36, 37. Deut. xxviii. 25.)

Except their Rock had sold them.] A little consideration was sufficient to make them understand, that this had been impossible if they had not forsaken their God; who thereupon delivered them up to the will of their enemies. For by their *Rock* is meant God; and his *selling them* is his quitting his interest in them, and giving them up to be slaves to those that hated them.

And the Lord had shut them up.] So that they could not escape the hands of their enemies.

Ver. 31. *For their rock is not as our Rock.*] None of the gods of the heathen (whom he calls *their rock*, because they relied on them for safety) have such power as he that gave us our being. So Maimonides interprets the word *tzur, the spring and fountain of all things.*

Our enemies themselves being judges.] Who were often forced to acknowledge his overruling power and providence, controlling all their designs. As the Egyptians confessed, Exod. xiv. 2. 5. and Balaam, Numb. xxiii. 19. 22. and the Philistines, 1 Sam. iv. 7, 8. and the king of Babylon, Dan. iii. 29.

Ver. 32. *For their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah.*] I suppose he speaks here of the Israelites, (giving an account why their enemies so shamefully chased them, ver. 30.) who are compared to a vine, which God brought out of Egypt, and planted in Canaan, (Psalm lxxx. 8.) And the prophet afterward calls them *the plant of his pleasure,* (Isa. v. 7.) Which was an ancient resemblance, as appears by this place; where he represents them as such a degenerate people, that they were as bad (nay, *worse,* as the marginal translation is) as the Sodomites, or the people of Gomorrah: and therefore deserved (ver. 26.) to be utterly destroyed, as they were. (See Isa. i. 10. Jer. ii. 21.)

Their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter.] These words represent their actions (called *fruit* in Scripture) to be so wicked that they were not to be endured. And so Josephus describes them before their last destruction, lib. vi. de Bello Judaico, cap. *ult.* where he saith, if the Romans had delayed to fall upon such a wicked people, he thinks either the earth would have opened its mouth and swallowed them up, or a flood drowned their city, or thunder and lightning from heaven destroyed it, as it did Sodom. Πολὺ γὰρ τῶν ταῦτα παθόντων ἤμεγκε γενεὰν ἀθεωτέραν, *for they were a more atheistical generation than they who suffered such things.* And again, (lib. vii. cap. 30.) he saith, that the time when they were destroyed was so fruitful in all manner of wickedness among the Jews, ὡς μηδὲν κακίας ἔργον ἄπρακτον καταλιπεῖν, *that there was no one work of wickedness that was not committed; nor can one imagine any thing so bad that they did not do; endeavouring publicly, as well as privately, to excel one another both in impiety towards God and injustice to their neighbours.*

Ver. 33. *Their wine is the poison of dragons.*] This still represents their fruit, that is, their works, to be most pernicious, being compared to the poison of dragons. Many authors, indeed, say that dragons have no poison in them (as B. Chytræus and others observe); but as the Hebrew word *thaanim* signifies any kind of *serpent,* so it is certain that the *dragons* of Afric and Arabia had a deadly poison in them, though those of Greece had not; as the famous Bochartus shews at large, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iii. cap. 14. Who also observes, in another place, that the Hebrew word *rosch* signifying both the *head* and also *poison;* the poison of serpents lies partly in their gall, partly in their teeth, and partly in a little bladder under their tongue, (par. i. lib. i. cap. 4.)

And the cruel venom of asps.] The poison of asps is called *cruel,* because it is accounted the acutest of all other, instantly penetrating into the vital parts. Whence the proverb δῆγμα ἀσπίδων, *the biting of asps,* for an incurable wound. For they who are bitten with an asp seldom escape with their life; as Aristotle, Pliny, and a great many other authors observe, in Bochart. par. ii. lib. iii. cap. 5.

Ver. 34. *Is not this.*] That is, the vengeance he is going to speak of in the following verses. For this particle *hu* often refers to what comes after, not to what goes before, as Cocceius observes.

Laid up in store with me.] To be produced in due time.

Sealed up among my treasures?] He speaks of it as a

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matter determined or decreed, as deeds are which are signed and sealed, though not presently executed, but kept safely in a cabinet. And the meaning of this verse is, that though he do not speedily punish evil-doers, it is not because he doth not observe them, or forgets what they do; for he hath prefixed a time to reckon with them, as will appear in the issue.

Ver. 35. *To me belongeth vengeance and recompence.*] As the supreme Lord, Governor, and Judge of the world, whose office it is to punish offenders. It is evident the apostle, alleging these words, (Rom. xii. 19.) ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, *Vengeance is mine* (or *to me belongeth vengeance*), exactly follows the Hebrew text, and not the present LXX. which render these words, ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐκδικήσεως ἀνταποδώσω, *in the day of vengeance I will recompense.*

Their feet shall slide.] Though they think themselves unmoveably fixed in their dominion, they shall certainly fall.

In due time.] Not so soon, perhaps, as men may expect; but when the great Judge of the world sees it most seasonable.

For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.] When they little thought of it, and prided themselves in their prosperity, God suddenly brought down the Chaldeans, who had been the great instruments of plaguing the Jews, (Isa. xlvii. 7—10, &c. Jer. l. 15. 27. 31. li. 6. 8.) And so shall the plagues of Babylon the great "come in one day. In one hour her great riches shall come to nought," (Rev. xviii. 8. 10. 17.)

Ver. 36. *For the Lord shall judge his people.*] Plead their cause, as the Scripture elsewhere speaks, (Jer. l. 34.) and deliver them from the oppression of their enemies; as this phrase is often used in the book of Psalms, (vii. 8. x. 18.)

And repent himself for his servants.] Have mercy upon them (as the Vulgar truly expresses the sense), and turn his hand, which punishes them, upon their enemies. (See Jer. l. 20. li. 24.)

When he sees that their power is gone.] That they are not able to help themselves. That is the *due time* or *season*, beforementioned, for God to interpose, when the enemies of his people think themselves irresistible, there being none able to oppose them.

And there is none shut up, or left.] Some refer this to persons, and others to things; and either way it signifies their condition to be so forlorn, that they could do nothing, either by men or by money, for their deliverance. J. Forsterus translates these words, *custoditum aut neglectum*, i. e. precious or vile. By which wonderful deliverance and restoration, when they were so totally destitute of all help, all the world was given to understand that there is no God like unto the Lord.

Ver. 37. *And he shall say.*] Or, *It shall be said.*

Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted?] It is dubious whether these words be directed to the Jews, or to the gentiles who had oppressed them. It seems most agreeable to take them as a reproach to the enemies of the Jews, who had long bragged of the power of their gods, and ascribed all their success to them, (ver. 27.) who now could not deliver them in their distress.

Ver. 38. *Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink-offerings.*] For the same rites were used among the gentiles as among the Jews; who offered all the fat upon the altar, and there poured out the wine which accompanied the meat-offering, &c. (See Numb xv.) The LXX. refer this to the worshippers themselves, and translate it thus (agreeably enough to the Hebrew), *The fat of whose sacrifices ye ate, and drank the wine of their drink-offerings.* And Onkelos to the same purpose.

Let them rise up and help you, and be your protection.] From the calamity which was unavoidably coming upon them, (Isa. xlvi. 1, 2. 7. Jer. li. 17, 18.)

Ver. 39. *See now.*] Open your eyes now at last, and be convinced, by your sad experience, of your error.

That I, even I, am he.] That it is I, and none but I, who have made these changes in the world: first making you instruments in punishing my people; and now inflicting the like punishments upon you, (Jer. li. 24, 25. 49.)

The words in the Hebrew being, *I, I am he*, the author of the Old Nitzacon was sensible that we Christians might hence observe, that there are two who are here called God, the Father and the Son. And therefore takes care to inform his reader, that there are not *two first principles* of things. Which, as no Christian is so foolish as to affirm, so their own authors have acknowledged more persons than one, here called God. Thus Jonathan, in his paraphrase, plainly supposes another person in the Divinity, whom he calls the Word, when he thus explains this verse; *When the Word of the Lord shall reveal himself to redeem his people, he shall say to all people, I am he that have been, and am, and shall be,* (see Rev. i. 8.) *and by my Word kill and make alive. I smote the people of Israel, and I will heal them in the end of the days.* Which makes these words a plain prophecy of the Messiah, and him to be God. And so the Jerusalem Targum: *See, that I now am he in my Word, and there is no god besides me: I am he who kill the living in this world, and raise the dead in the world to come,* &c.

And there is no god with me.] As I have no superior, so neither have I any equal.

I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal.] If I please to destroy any people for their sins, none can hinder me; and if any repent and implore my mercy, I restore them to perfect safety. R. Isaac, in his Chissuk Emuna, (par. i. cap. 6. sect. 20.) alleges these words as a prophecy of the resurrection of the dead in the days of the Messiah. And in another place, (cap. 10.) he alleges them as an effectual confutation of those ancient heretics who imagined two supreme powers; one of them, the author of all good; and the other, the author of all evil (which I observed upon Lev. xvi. to have been a very ancient opinion): for there could not be, they fancied, the same care which had an influence upon both. To remove which false conceit, God declares, *I kill*, as well as *make alive*, &c. And for the same reason he saith, in Isa. xlv. 7. *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.*

Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.] Nor can any reverse the judgment that I pass upon men.

Ver. 40. *For I lift up my hand to heaven.*] Swear solemnly to do what follows; *viz.* be revenged on his enemies, as well as deliver his people. Thus Abraham anciently sware, Gen. xiv. 22. And when God promised to bring the Israelites into Canaan, he is said *to lift up his hand*, (Exod.

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vi. 8. Nehem. ix. 15.) From whence some think the word *promittere* is derived, signifying to engage by stretching out the hand: and that from thence sprang the custom of stretching out, and lifting up their hand, when they sware. Which the gentiles practised, as those known words of Virgil inform us, Æneid. xii.

"Suspiciens cœlum tenditque ad sydera dextram."

When God therefore is said to lift up his hand *to heaven*, the meaning is, he swears by himself; as it here follows.

And say, I live for ever.] As sure as I live.

Ver. 41. *If I whet my glittering sword.*] Make all things ready for the execution of my judgments.

And my hand take hold of judgment.] I begin to punish.

I will render vengeance to mine enemies.] None shall stop my proceedings, to be fully avenged of them.

And will reward them that hate me.] For, as Jeremiah speaks, li. 56. *The Lord God of recompences will surely requite. For it is the vengeance of the Lord:* (as he speaks in the foregoing chapter concerning Babylon, l. 15.) *Take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her.*

Ver. 42. *I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh.*] Make an exceeding great slaughter, (Isa. xxxiv. 5, 6.)

With the blood of the slain, and of the captives.] This signifies none should be spared: for they should be killed who were taken captive, as well as those who fell in the battle.

From the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.] How the Hebrew word *paroth* comes to signify *revenges*, I am not able to give an account; but in that sense we take it both here and in Judges v. 2. The word *para*, from whence it seems to be derived, signifies *to make bare*, or naked. And so the Vulgar Latin here understands it; and thence Joh. Forsterus hath given a probable sense of these words (taking *rosch*, which we translate *beginning*, for *the head*, as it properly signifies, or *the king*), in this manner, *Because of the baring* (*i. e.* making bare) *of the head by the enemy;* that is, the taking away of the kingdom and priesthood from Israel. The LXX. translate it ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς ἀρχόντων ἐχθρῶν, *from the head of the princes of the enemies.* Which is a sense very agreeable, if we could find any word in the Hebrew like to *paroth* that signifies *princes* or *rulers.* But I think there is a more simple sense may be given of these words than any of the forementioned, only by supposing the particle *lamed* to be omitted (as in many other places) before *paroth*, which is this, *From the king to the slave of the enemies.* For they were wont to shave their captives, as every one knows, by way of contempt and scorn. Which is the reason God threatens baldness so often to the Israelites by his prophets, when he was so angry with them, that he gave them up to be slaves. Next to this is the translation of Onkelos, *I will take away* (those words he adds) *the crowns from the head of the enemy.* Which was the making the king's head bare.

This universal slaughter is most notably expressed by Jeremiah, l. 35—37. 43. And some think this prophecy will be then most amply fulfilled, when the Jews shall be called, and made members of the church of Christ. (See Dr. Jackson, book xi. on the Creed, chap. 12.)

Ver. 43. *Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people.*] Here the particle *eth* is omitted before *ammo*, as I supposed, in the foregoing words, *lamed* to be before *paroth.* Which made the Vulgar translate these words, *O ye nations, praise his people.* But the LXX. discerned the true sense, and translate it as we do: the apostle having justified their translation in Rom. xv. 10. where he expresses this, word for word, as they do, εὐφράνθητε ἔθνη μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ, *Rejoice ye gentiles with his people.* But it must here be noted, that before these words the LXX. have some other, which are very remarkable, Εὐφράνθητε οὐρανοὶ ἅμα αὐτῷ, καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ, *Rejoice ye heavens together with him, and let all the angels of God worship him* (and then follows, *rejoice ye gentiles with his people*), which are not in the Hebrew, nor in the Chaldee, and yet the latter clause of them, προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ, *let all the angels of God worship him,* are the very words of the apostle, Heb. i. 6. which seem to have been taken from hence out of the LXX. for they are no where else to be found in the Scripture. The margin, indeed, of our Bibles refers us to Psal. xcvii. 7. But there the words of the LXX. are otherwise, προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ, *worship him all ye his angels;* which are in the second person; whereas here, and in the apostle, the words are in the third. We may therefore suppose rather, that the LXX. from ancient tradition among the Jews, added these words, before they translated this verse, to declare unto what time the fulfilling of them should principally belong. For Psalm xcvii. seems to be but a descant (as Dr. Jackson's words are) upon this part of Moses's song; from whence the Jews might learn the scope of it. And accordingly the apostle uses the words of the LXX. here in this place, rather than those of the Psalmist; because he would have the Hebrews understand and consider, that Moses himself had predicted the exaltation of the Son of God, as the Psalmist afterward expounded him.

There is another translation of these words of Moses, which is very agreeable to the apostle in Rom. xv. 10. *Rejoice ye nations, who are his people.* (See ver. 21. of this chapter.) Either way, this is a plain prophecy of the gentiles becoming one body with the people of Israel. And thus Kimchi himself translates it, *Sing ye gentiles, who are his people*: which began to be fulfilled after our Saviour's ascension to the throne of his glory in the heavens, when all the angels of God worshipped him. Hitherto Moses had supposed, in this song, great enmity between them: and that sometimes they had plagued Israel sorely; as at others, God rendered to them according to what they had done unto his people. But now he breaks out into a rapture of joy, to think that they should one day be reconciled, and made one people of God. And the LXX. thus understanding it, might well preface to their translation of this verse, with the words now mentioned, *Rejoice ye heavens together with him.* For if there be joy in heaven, as Procopius Gazæus well glosses, at the repentance of one sinner, how much more for the salvation of the whole world, by destroying the devil's tyranny? Which being to be performed by the advancement of the Son of God into the heavens, the next words might well be added, *Let all the angels of God worship him.* Which they had always done (the same Procopius observes) as their God who created them; but now they praise and extol his humanity, exalted at the right hand of God.

For he will avenge the blood of his servants.] These words seem to express some of the motives that should per-

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suade the gentiles to become one body with the Jews (for such the apostles and all the first converts were), God's punishing all those who shed the blood of his *servants;* as the Christian *martyrs* are called in the book of the Revelation. In which confidence the LXX. add another sentence before these words, καὶ ἐνισχυσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ Θεοῦ, *and let all the sons of God be strong in him.*

And will render vengeance to his adversaries.] To all such as oppose this blessed union; and first to the Jews, who set themselves against it more than any others (being mad at the apostles for preaching to the gentiles), and then to the Romans, who persecuted all those who embraced Christianity.

And will be merciful unto his land.] This cannot be meant of the land of Israel, which was no longer God's land than any other, but of the whole earth (as Conrad. Pellicanus well explains it), in which that one people of God dwells, reduced (as he speaks) in the whole multitude of the faithful into one catholic church. For they all acknowledge, from the greatest to the least, that one only Omnipotent God, with no less devotion and affection, than Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses did.

And unto his people.] The whole world that believe in Christ, and are his faithful servants; whose blood he will avenge, (Rev. xix. 2.) and then set up his tabernacle with men, and dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he will be their God; (Rev. xx. 3.) which I mention, because this part of the prophecy reaches unto the last times, and is not yet all fulfilled.

Thus this famous song concludes, which, as the Jews reckon, consists of seventy verses, each of which contains two distinct and entire sentences, and, as they fancy, is a compendium of the whole law of Moses. Nay, some of them (such are the idle conceits of this nation) think this hymn is so perfect a prophecy, that it contains in it the names of all the men in the world; which they undertake to find, and, by that versicle where it is, to tell what fortune he, whose name they seek, shall have in the world. Thus, instead of observing seriously what Moses foretold would certainly befal themselves, their superstition and hardness of heart have led them to vain conjectures concerning other men. See Jo. Wagenseil upon Sota, p. 164, &c. where he saith a Jew undertook to shew him his name in this song, which fell out in a verse that signified prosperity to him. And since him Martinus Mauritius, in his book De Sortitione Hebræorum, cap. 16. sect. 3—5.

Ver. 44. *And Moses came, and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people.*] The very same that is said before he spake this song, (xxxi. 30.) and is now repeated at the conclusion of it, to express his fidelity in his office to the very last.

He and Hoshea the son of Nun.] Who was now his assistant in this work, as he was designed to be his successor after his death. He is commonly called Joshua, but Oshea was his name at the first, (Numb. xiii. 8.)

Ver. 45. *And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel.*] When he had made an end of speaking them, then he added what follows.

Ver. 46. *And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day.*] Apply your minds to press upon yourselves the observation of all these things. For this expression is a little more than letting them *be in their heart,* (vi. 6.) or *laying them up in their heart,* (xi. 18.) For they were so to retain the remembrance of them, as to attend unto them, and consider them.

Which ye shall command your children to observe to do.] This necessary duty of instructing their children is often pressed, (iv. 10. vi. 7. xi. 19.) because without this care their religion would soon be lost; but, by this means, might be preserved and propagated to all generations.

All the words of this law.] Which they might be certain was delivered by God to Moses; there being as many witnesses of God's presence with him, as there were men in their nation. But he had seen so many instances of their unbelief, that he uses all the ways, manners, and forms (as Pellicanus observes), that he could think of, to urge them to obedience: by delivering them tables of their laws written by God himself, by books, by pillars, by blessings, cursings, obtestations, threatenings, long exhortations, songs, phylacteries, and other ceremonies, &c. which he continued to do as long as he had breath, and was able to speak, that they, and their posterity, might be happy.

Ver. 47. *For it is not a vain thing for you.*] You shall not employ your diligence in this matter unprofitably. The Jews upon these words have founded a maxim, which Maimonides often mentions, "That every precept hath its end and use; which (though they do not appear to us) are grounded upon strong causes and reasons." (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 26. and 50.) The design, for instance, of many ceremonial laws cannot now be fully discerned, because they were instituted directly contrary to the idolatrous rites of the Zabii; which are long since utterly abolished, and but imperfectly recorded in those ancient authors that speak of them.

Because it is your life.] The means to make you a happy people. Here are two benefits, saith R. Isaac, which are promised by the observation of this law; a spiritual and a corporal. The *spiritual* in these words, and the *corporal* in the next, *ye shall prolong your days,* &c. And he puts the spiritual first, though, among all corporal blessings, this of long life be the chief, (Chissuk Emuna, par. i. cap. 18.)

And through this thing.] By teaching your children to observe to do all that is commanded in this law.

You shall prolong your days in the land whither you go over Jordan to possess it.] Have the great blessing of a long life in all manner of happiness, which your posterity shall enjoy for many generations in the land of Canaan. By which it appears, that nothing else but contempt of this law could have ejected them out of this country.

Ver. 48. *And the Lord spake unto Moses that self-same day.*] Immediately after he had ended the foregoing song, and given them this admonition at the conclusion of it.

Ver. 49. *Get thee up into this mountain Abarim.*] Which he had pointed him unto before, and told him what he doth now, (Numb. xxvii. 12.)

Unto Mount Nebo.] Abarim was a ridge of hills, whereof Nebo was one. (See there upon Numb. xxvii. 2.)

Which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho.] This is a more particular description of the site of this mountain than he gave before in the book of Numbers.

Behold, the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession.] Which he might easily do from the highest part of the mountain called Pisgah, (Deut. iii. 27.)

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Ver. 50. *And die in the mount whither thou goest up.*] After he had taken a view of the land every way.

And be gathered unto thy people.] To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This signifies, saith R. Isaac, that he should be associated and joined to the souls of the just, who are called *his people.* For the people of Moses were not buried in Mount Abarim; and therefore he doth not speak of gathering his body to their bodies, but of his soul to their souls. (Chissuk Emuna, par. i. cap. 11.)

As Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people.] See Numb. xx. 24. 28. xxxiii. 38.

Ver. 51. *Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel,* &c.] Rebelled against his commandment, as he speaks, Numb. xxvii. 14.

Because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel.] Numb. xx. 12. xxvii. 14.

Ver. 52. *Yet thou shalt see the land before thee.*] He had earnestly begged of God that he might go over Jordan; but he denied him that favour, (Deut. i. 37. iii. 25. 27.) yet he was pleased to mitigate his punishment, by letting him enjoy a sight of that good country into which he might not enter.

But thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.] By which the Israelites should have learnt, that as Moses left them short of the promised land, and could not bring them into the possession of it; so his law did not contain a perfect revelation of God's will, but they were to expect something beyond it.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Ver. 1. *AND this is the blessing.*] As Jacob blessed his children, at his departure out of the world, when God had begun to fulfil the promise to Abraham, of giving him a numerous offspring; so Moses having seen them vastly increased, and ready to enter upon the land promised to them, (Gen. xv. 18, &c.) takes his farewell of them, with a blessing pronounced upon the people in general, and upon each tribe in particular. Which is in part *prophetical,* as the blessing of Jacob was, and delivered in the prophetic style, which hath some difficulty and obscurity in it; on purpose, perhaps, to excite their diligent study to inquire into the meaning. (See Gen. xlix. 1. 3.)

Wherewith Moses, the man of God.] Or, *the prophet of the Lord,* as Onkelos translates it: for prophets are called *men of God* in the holy books, (1 Sam. ix. 6—8. 1 Kings xiii. 1. 1 Tim. vi. 11. 2 Tim. iii. 17. 2 Pet. i. 21.) because, in the exercise of their sacred function, they did not deliver their own sense, nor the sense of other men, but the mind and will of God who spake by them.

Blessed the children of Israel before his death.] Before he went up into Mount Abarim to die, (xxxii. 49.) he prayed God to bless them; and also foretold their future state and condition. Such had been the ancient custom among the holy patriarchs (as we learn from the example of Jacob), to admonish their posterity upon their dying beds of such things as they thought most imported them: for then they could not but be thought to speak most sincerely; and their words were apt to be entertained with greater respect, and preserved in mind with greater care. Moses therefore, their deliverer, leader, and lawgiver, concludes his life in the same manner; and it is very likely deposited these dying words with them in writing.

Ver. 2. *And he said, The Lord came from Sinai.*] And, in the first place, he endeavours to make them sensible of what God had done already for them: and the chief of all his benefits being the revelation of his mind and will to them, he commemorates that as a common blessing to them all, before he begins to speak in particular to each tribe: for that is meant by *the Lord came from Sinai;* where he appeared in a most particular manner, and from thence promulgated his law with the greatest solemnity, (Exod. xx.) And thus the gentiles took an unwonted brightness in any place to be a token of the Ἐπιφάνεια, *appearance,* or *advent,* of some of their gods in that place. As also a great commotion in any place, they took for another token of it. See the illustrious Spanhemius, in his annotations upon Callimachus's hymn to Apollo, ver. 7. which they seem to have learnt from this appearance of God on Mount Sinai, and the quaking of that mountain, when God appeared on it.

And rose up from Seir unto them, and shone forth from Mount Paran.] There is no difficulty in the foregoing words, it being evident that God came down on Mount Sinai, and thence delivered his commands to the Israelites, and espoused them for his people. But how he rose up from Seir unto them, the country of Edom, and shone from Paran, the country of Ishmael, is not so easy to understand. The Jews, indeed, who are wont to solve all difficulties, by inventing what they please, are not troubled to give an account of these words; which signify, they fancy, that the Divine Glory first resided upon Mount Seir, where God propounded his law to the children of Esau; but they would not have it, because they found these words in it, "Thou shalt not kill;" he went, therefore, to Paran, and offered it to the children of Ishmael, but they refused it also, because they found these words in it, "Thou shalt not steal;" so he came to Sinai, and gave it to the Israelites, who said, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do," Exod. xxiv. 3. Thus the Jerusalem Targum, and Pirke Eliezer, and some other more ancient authors, with this addition, that he offered the law to all the nations of the world, but they rejected it, because it was written, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." But this looks so like a fable, that some of themselves are ashamed of it, and have given a better sense of the words, though I cannot say the true one. For thus Abraham Peritsol expounds them, *The true law came out of Sinai to the Israelites, by which the Edomites were so enlightened, that God might be said to rise up to them also: and afterward the celestial influence shone out of this law to the Ishmaelites, who were the better for it.* Thus Const. L'Empereur reports his sense in his Annotations upon Bava-kama, cap. 4. sect. 3. where he endeavours to make out a plainer sense of these words, in this manner: Though the mountain of Paran was nigher to Sinai than Seir was, and first occurred to those that went out of Egypt; yet there was great reason to mention Seir before it, because Moses had respect to the order of their journeys, and not to the site of the places. And their journeys were so directed by Divine Providence, that, fetching a long circuit, forward and backward, they should come to Canaan. In all which turnings and windings they were marvellously preserved and provided for, by the same good Providence

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which conducted them. Of this Moses here makes a thankful commemoration, how he led them from Mount Sinai to the borders of the land of Canaan, towards Mount Seir, as is expressly noted by Moses, (compare Deut. i. 19. with ii. 1. and Numb. xx. 14.) From whence, by reason of their infidelity, they were led back again towards the Red Sea, and encamped in the extremity of the wilderness, (Numb. xxxiii. 35.) where Ptolemy places Paran: (though there was another part of it called Paran, near Kadesh, Numb. xiii. 3. 27.) and from thence they were led back again in a long circuit to the east part of the land of Canaan. This may be one reason why these two places are mentioned together with Sinai, that God, who there appeared to them, was with them all the time they wandered about in the wilderness, till he brought them to the borders of Canaan, where they now were. And another may be, because in Mount Seir the brazen serpent was erected by God's order, for the cure of such as were bitten by serpents, when they looked on it; which was an illustrious type of our blessed Saviour, and the salvation wrought by him, (Numb. xx. 4. 9.) And in the desert to which Paran gave the name (because it overlooked the whole, though very large), they received the joyful news that they should march into Canaan: or, as D. Chytræus understands it, in the wilderness of Paran the seventy elders received the Spirit, to make them assistants unto Moses in the government, (Numb. x. 12. xi. 24, &c.) And here, I may add, Moses repeated his law to them, (Deut. i. 1. 5.) who seems, in this verse, to follow a metaphor borrowed from the sun, which first illuminates the air, and then rises, and then spreads abroad his beams; as God by degrees declared his presence with his people, whithersoever they went, first at Mount Sinai, then at Seir, and, last of all, here in the wilderness of Paran.

But it must be acknowledged, that these words may be interpreted in a more simple manner, they being but a farther amplification of what was said in the first words, *the Lord came from Sinai.* When at the same time he *rose up from Seir*, and *shone forth from Mount Paran.* For these mountains were very near one to another; or rather parts of one and the same ridge of mountains, as Con. Pellicanus here observes; and is more clearly made out by a very learned man among ourselves, (Dr. Hyde, in his excellent notes on Abraham Peritsol, Itinera Mundi, p. 73.) for Teman (which is the same with Paran, Habak. iii. 3.) was near to Edom, whose chief city was Bozrah, (Amos i. 12.) as that was near to Sinai.

The ignorance of the Mahometans is much to be pitied, who out of this place imagine they have found as good an authority for the Alcoran, as there is for the law of Moses, and for the gospel of Christ. For thus they interpret these words, *God gave the law from Sinai, and the gospel from Seir* (which they would have to be the same with Galilee, which our Saviour much frequented), *and the Alcoran from Mount Paran;* which they fancy is a mountain not far from Mecca. (See Dr. Pocock upon Greg. Abulfaraji, p. 183. and Guadagnolus Resp. pro Relig. Christiana.) But the last words of this verse, *for them*, are sufficient to confute these conceits; for they plainly shew that the whole verse speaks of the people of Israel.

And he came with ten thousand of saints.] Or, as our Mr. Mede thinks it should be translated, *with his holy ten thousands*, or *myriads;* that is, attended with an innumerable company of angels, who waited on him at the giving of the law. See Psal. lxviii. 7. Dan vii. 10. of which Enoch, perhaps, prophesied in part, Jud. 14, 15. And from hence it may be thought, that notion of the Jewish doctors, followed by St. Stephen and St. Paul, that the law was given by angels, had its beginning; (Mede, book ii. p. 437.) that is, they attended upon God, as his ministers, when he himself gave the law.

From his right hand.] With which we are wont to deliver things to other persons.

Went a fiery law for them.] For the law of Moses was given out of the midst of fire, and therefore called *a fire of law*, as the words are in the Hebrew, (Exod. xix. 16. 18. Deut. iv. 11, 12. v. 22—24.) The cabalists (as Reuchlin observes) fancy that God wrote the law in a globe of fire, and sent it to them. But the Jerusalem Targum is more sober, which thus expounds it, *He stretched his right hand out of the midst of flames of fire, and gave the law unto his people.* And Onkelos still better, *The law written with his right hand he gave us out of the midst of fire.* Or, as Campeg. Vitringa would have this latter part of the verse translated, *On his right hand a fire, and out of the fire a law for them.* The meaning being, that God came to Mount Sinai with that fire; for, in Scripture, to be *on the right hand* of any one, is to accompany him, (lib. ii. Observ. Sacr. cap. 4.)

By the conclusion of this verse it is apparent, that the former part of it belongs entirely to God's mercy unto the children of Israel, upon whom he bestowed his law, in most illustrious tokens of his presence. Which makes it highly probable, that his "rising up from Seir upon them, and shining from Mount Paran," belongs to the same matter; that is, the cloud wherein he descended on Sinai, with a vast host of angels, extended itself so far, as to cover the neighbouring mountains of Seir and Paran. Though the meaning may be, as I have shewn, that he continued his presence with them after they went from Sinai, through all their journeys in the wilderness of Seir and Paran, till they came to the place where they now were.

Ver. 3. *Yea, he loved the people.*] All this was the effect of his love and kindness to the people of Israel, whom he owned for his son, and his first-born, (Exod. iv. 22.) and therefore in a tender manner brought them out of Egypt, (Exod. xix. 4.) that he might instruct them in his laws.

All his saints are in thy hand.] Whereby he made them a holy nation, (as it there follows in Exod. xix. 5.) whom he took into his special care and most gracious protection, as this phrase signifies in many places, (Numb. iv. 28. 33.) And Onkelos refers it to the mighty power whereby he brought them out of Egypt: but it may have respect to God's preservation and support of them, when he gave the law in such a terrible manner, that Moses himself quaked, and yet none of them received any harm. As for the change of the person from *his* to *thy*, it is very frequent in this language, particularly in Dan. ix. 4.

And they sat down at thy feet.] The first word (which we translate *sat down*) being no where else found but here and Isa. i. 5. where it plainly hath another sense, hath occasioned various interpretations of this sentence. But most agree in this of Sol. Jarchi, that as scholars sat at the feet of their master round about him, while he taught them their lesson, so the people encompassed the mount where God was, and heard his law, which he thence deli-

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vered. But it is a question, whether there was such a custom of scholars in those days; and the people did not sit, but stood at the foot of the mount, (Exod. xx. 18.) Therefore Onkelos understands this of their sitting down, or pitching their tents, where the glorious cloud that led them rested, (Numb. x. 12. 33.)

Every one shall receive of thy word.] This still is commonly referred to the people's receiving the law. But Onkelos thinks it hath respect to their journeys "at the commandment of the Lord," (Numb. x. 13.) For so he interprets it, *They went forward according to thy word.* And so the Jerusalem Targum expounds these and the foregoing words; *Behold, they were led, and came to the foot of his cloud, and went forward and rested, according to the command of his word.* It takes in also the other sense of the word *tucchu* (as it signifies *smiting* in Isa. i. 5.) in this manner, *Though he inflicted many chastisements upon them, yet they did not cease, nor desist from the doctrine of the law.*

Ver. 4. *Moses commanded us a law.*] He commanded them to observe that law which God had given them, when he was about to depart from them. This he did in this very book, (i. 3. v. 1. vi. 1. viii. 1, &c.) He speaks of himself in the third person, which is very usual throughout all this book.

Even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.] As a peculiar blessing which God had bestowed on them, and on their posterity, above all other nations in the world, (Deut. iv. 8.) who, as they had not this law given to them, so they were not bound to observe it; as the Jews themselves conclude from this very place. Nor did they force any body to embrace this law, when they made a conquest of a neighbouring country, but left them to their liberty, provided they would become proselytes of the gate; that is, forsake idolatry, and keep the common precepts enjoined to all mankind. Thus Maimonides interprets the word *inheritance.* (See Schickard, in his Jus Regium, cap. 5. Theor. 17. and Grotius, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. i. cap. 1. sect. 16.)

The author of Etz-Hachajim, a MS. highly valued by the famous Wagenseil, saith, That when a child began to speak, the father was bound to teach him this verse. In which, instead of מורשת *hereditary*, some of the Jews read מאורסת *espoused;* as if the law were espoused to the Jewish nation. (See Wagenseil on Sota, p. 519. 520.)

Ver. 5. *And he was king in Jeshurun.*] Or, *for he was king*, that is, under God, the supreme ruler and governor of Israel; and therefore in his name, and by his authority, required them to observe these laws. Which plainly shews him to have had the supreme power in all things, both civil and sacred. Which is excellently expressed by our Mr. Thorndike, in his Review of the Rites of the Church, &c. p. 68. where he observes, "That the Israelites, being made a free people by the act of God bringing them out of Egypt, and entitling them to the land of Canaan, upon the covenant of the law, had Moses not only for their prophet and their priest (for by him Aaron and his successors were put into the priesthood, the tabernacle and all belonging to it consecrated), but also for their king, their lawgiver, their judge, and commander-in-chief of their forces, under God, if not rather God by Moses. For we find, that, after Moses's decease, either God by some extraordinary signification of his will and pleasure, stirred up some man in his stead for the time; or, if there was none such, ruled their proceedings himself, by *urim* and *thummin* answering their demands, and directing what to do, and what course to follow, in all the public affairs that concerned the state of that people. Whereupon, when they required Samuel to make them a king, he declared it was not Samuel, but himself, whom they had rejected: because they had rejected him whom God had immediately set over them in his own stead, by whose death the power returned to God, as at the beginning."

Concerning the word Jeshurun, see xxxii. 15. and Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 2. n. 2.

When the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.] To renew their covenant with God, and to receive his last commands. (See xxix. 1, 2. 9, 10. xxxi. 28, 29.)

Ver. 6. *Let Reuben live, and not die, and let not his men be few.*] In the last clause of this verse, we repeat the word *not* (which is wanting in the Hebrew) without any necessity: for the words may be thus translated exactly, *let Reuben live, and not die, though his men be few.* Which seems to be a confirmation of the prophecy of Jacob, (Gen. xlix. 4.) *that he should not excel,* and yet should live, and not perish; that is, be in some measure a flourishing tribe, though not so numerous as some others. (See there.) And possibly it may be here suggested, that though they passed armed over Jordan before their brethren to settle them there, (according to their engagement, Numb. xxxii. 27. Josh. iv. 12, 13.) yet none of them should perish, but both they, and their wives, and children, that stayed behind them, should be all preserved.

Ver. 7. *And this is the blessing of Judah.*] As much as to say, Judah shall be remarkably blessed. For these words [*this is the blessing*] are used of none of the rest of the tribes, either of Reuben, which went before, or the others that follow after. Here is no mention made of Simeon (who was next to Reuben), because that tribe was included in Judah, with whom their possessions were mixed, (Josh. xix. 1.) and therefore they went together to make expeditions, (Judg. i. 3.) Judah also is here put before Levi, because it was to be the royal tribe, according to the prophecy of Jacob; which Moses was assured God would fulfil, and therefore prays as follows: *And he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah.* Grant his petition, when he calls for help against his enemies. So Onkelos paraphrases it, *Hear his prayer when he goes forth to war.*

And bring him unto his people.] Return him home in peace unto his people; as the same Onkelos expounds it.

Let his hands be sufficient for him.] To avenge him of his enemies, as he also explains it.

And be thou a help to him from his enemies.] Suffer them not to prevail over him, but give him the victory, when he fights with them. So the Jerusalem Targum paraphrases these two last passages; *Let his hands exercise revenge upon his enemies in battles, and do thou support and sustain him against those that hate him.* This was notoriously fulfilled in this tribe, which was the most valiant and successful of all other. For in all their wars this tribe was the principal; and the safety of all the rest seems to have depended upon this. (See Judg. i. 1, 2, &c.

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xx. 18.) And as these places shew that this was the most considerable tribe before they had kings; so after that it was able, together with Benjamin, to maintain its ground against the other ten tribes, and all other opposers.

Ver. 8. *And of Levi he said, Let thy thummim and thy urim be with thy holy-one.*] Continue in this tribe the high dignity of consulting with thee, and receiving directions from thee, by the high-priest, concerning the public safety. Or, as some take it (because *thummim* is here set before *urim*, which is not in any other place), make them upright and faithful, as well as understanding and knowing, in the discharge of their duty. For though by *holy-one* be principally meant the high-priest, who was in a peculiar manner anointed to be separated to the service of God, especially in this part of it, to approach him with *urim* and *thummim*, (which gave Aaron the name of the *saint of the Lord*, Psal. cvi. 16.) yet it comprehends all the rest of the priests and Levites in conjunction with him; for they were all separated unto the Lord, having signalized themselves (as we speak) by their early zeal for the Lord, when their brethren apostatized to idolatry. Of which Moses takes notice in the next verse, *Who said unto his father*, &c. *I have not seen him*, &c. regarded, that is, no relation when they executed the commands of God against the worshippers of the golden calf. See our learned Dr. Spencer, de Leg. Hebr. lib. iii. cap. 7. dissert. 7. where he treats also of these words, as they may be applied to our Lord Christ, the true *holy-one* of God; who is, indeed, a priest for ever, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, &c. (Heb. vii. 26.)

Whom thou didst prove at Massah.] Or, *whom thou hast thoroughly proved.* For the words in the Hebrew are, *Whom in proving thou didst prove;* the ancient interpreters not taking *Massah* for the name of a place (as we do), but for *trying* or *proving.* And so, indeed, the words in the Hebrew seem to import; the particle [*beth*] before *Massah* being different from that before *Meribah* [which is *al*], though we translate them both alike by the word *at.* And thus the Jerusalem Targum paraphrases, *Whom thou didst prove*, or *try, and he stood in the trial;* that is, approved himself perfect or upright, as Onkelos expresses it. This procured that tribe a blessing from the Lord, (Exod. xxxii. 26. 29.) and brought them into *special grace and favour with him*, as the word we translate *holy-one* signifies. For it is not *kadoth*, but *chasid.*

And with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah.] Though God did severely chide and reprove Moses and Aaron (who were the heads of this tribe), when they were tried at the waters of strife, (Numb. xx. 12, 13.) yet they did not forfeit their office by the offence they then committed; and, therefore, Moses prays it might still continue in Aaron's posterity.

Ver. 9. *Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor know his own children.*] This relates unto the impartial execution of judgment by the Levites, upon the worshippers of the golden calf, without respect of persons: (Exod. xxxii. 26, &c.) and as some will have it, to Phineas's zeal, mentioned in Numb. xxv. But, that it hath any respect to a more ancient judgment, given in the case of Judah and Thamar (as the Jerusalem Targum fancies), there is no ground to believe. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 8. n. 2.)

For they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.] See Exod. xxxii. 28, 29. Abarbinel, and others, make this to be the reason of what follows.

Ver. 10. *They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law.*] Because they were so upright, as to take no notice of their dearest relations in judgment; therefore, they were entrusted with this office of teaching the people the statutes of God, that is, deciding all controversies which arose about any thing in the law. So the Jews expound it; and it is agreeable to what we read in the seventeenth chapter of this book, (ver. 9, 10.) and many other places, as Mr. Selden shews in the place forenamed, p. 372, &c. and our Mr. Thorndike, in his Religious Assemblies, chap. 2. where he observes, the *teaching* here mentioned consisted in declaring the meaning and obligation of the law in matters doubtful; as is apparent from Lev. x. 8—11. For though others might be members of their courts of judgment, yet they consisted chiefly of priests and Levites. As for *teaching* the people in their religious assemblies, that was not so much the office of the priests and Levites as of the prophets. For though the prophets, and the disciples of the prophets, were commonly priests and Levites (who, being most free from the care of estates and inheritances, and by their office, in his ceremonial service, came nearest to God of all other men, were most likely to be endued with an extraordinary degree of knowledge, and of the fear of God), yet it is certain, that the charge of *teaching* the people in their assemblies belonged as well to those prophets who were not priests and Levites as to those that were. (See him, p. 25.) And this was one reason, as Maimonides observes, why the tribe of Levi might have no inheritance in the land, that, being free from the trouble of ploughing and sowing, &c. they might wholly attend to the study of the law, and be able to teach Israel God's judgments, (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 39.)

They shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-offerings upon thine altar.] This was the peculiar office and honour of the priests alone, to offer incense on the golden altar, and burnt-offerings upon the brazen. The Jerusalem Targum thus paraphrases it, *They shall put incense of precious spice before thee, to pacify thine anger, and offer a most acceptable sacrifice upon thine altar.*

Ver. 11. *Bless, Lord, his substance.*] The word we here translate *substance*, is translated *wealth*, viii. 17, 18. which consisted most in cattle (they having no land to till), which he prays God to increase, that they might have sufficient sustenance for themselves and their family. It is a strange fancy of some of the Jews, that whosoever offered incense grew rich, and therefore no priest was suffered to offer incense more than once, that so riches might be derived to them all. Thus they trifle, while their hearts are set on getting money, and not on growing good. (See Sheringham on Joma, p. 35, 36. and Mauritius de Sortitione Hebræorum, cap. 24. sect. 4.)

And accept the work of his hands.] All their ministry at the altar where the priests officiated; or about the tabernacle, of which the Levites had the care.

Smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.] For they who were enemies to the priests and Levites were enemies to religion, and to all civil government, which was chiefly administered by them, as was before observed. (See xvii. 8—12.)

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Ver. 12. *And of Benjamin he said.*] He mentions him next to Levi, because the temple, in which the priests officiated, was partly situated in his lot.

The beloved of the Lord.] Or, being beloved of the Lord, as the LXX. interpret it, Ἠγαπημένος ὑπὸ Κυρίου.

Shall dwell in safety by him.] *i. e.* By the Lord; which signifies the stability of his portion, which had Jerusalem the holy city in it, as we read Josh. xviii. 28. For though Mount Sion was in the tribe of Judah, and so the sanctuary was there, (Psal. lxxviii. 68.) yet the city wherein it stood was not. Nay, the ancients think the altar of burnt-offering was in the tribe of Benjamin, as Kimchi observes upon that place beforementioned in Joshua. (See upon Gen. xlix. 27.) And there are reasons to make one think, that Sion, in the place forenamed, and in others, is to be taken in a large sense, comprehending Mount Moriah also, (on which the temple was built, 2 Chron. iii. 1.) which was in the tribe of Benjamin, and consequently the temple was situated in this tribe.

And the Lord shall cover him all the day long.] The glory of the majestical presence of the Lord shall be a shield over him (to defend him) continually; as the Jerusalem Targum expounds it.

And he shall dwell upon his shoulders.] For the Divine Majesty (saith Onkelos) shall dwell in his country. It being in the temple, and the temple in the tribe of Benjamin, where it stood upon Mount Moriah, as the head of a man doth upon his shoulders; as Dr. Lightfoot glosses in his Temple Service, p. 145. edit. 1. Or the word we translate here *shoulders* may signify, as it is translated in other places, *sides*, (Numb. xxxiv. 11.) or *borders*. And nothing is more certain, than that the Divine habitation was in the borders of Benjamin, whose lot touched Judah's at Jerusalem; and was so united to it, that when the rest fell off from Judah, the tribe of Benjamin always adhered to it.

This being the sense which the ancient interpreters give of this verse, and very agreeable to the words, I shall not trouble the reader with any other; but only mention a conceit of Conradus Pellicanus, who, by *the beloved of the Lord* here understands David, who *dwelt in safety* by Benjamin, though the king of that tribe persecuted him, for God *covered* and protected him continually from violence, &c. It is strange that a man otherwise judicious, and well acquainted with the Jewish learning, should propound this as the best interpretation he could think of, when there is nothing of a blessing upon Benjamin in it.

Ver. 13. *And of Joseph he said.*] This tribe follows next, his lot falling near to Benjamin, who lay between Judah and Joseph.

Blessed of the Lord be his land.] He foretells that this tribe should be situated in a most plentiful country, and enriched by the Divine blessing upon it.

For the precious things of heaven.] Sending fruitful showers from heaven.

For the dew.] Together with the evening and morning dews, which are no less refreshing to the earth than rain.

And for the deep that coucheth beneath.] He means springs of water which burst out of the bowels of the earth, for the use of man and beast.

Ver. 14. *For the precious fruits of the sun.*] Whose kindly heat brings them forth, and makes them grow to maturity.

And the precious things put forth by the moon.] For all fruits are plumped by the moon's cool and fattening moisture in the night, which is digested by the sun in the day. Or, this passage may relate to the several sorts of fruit which are produced every month. So Onkelos interprets it, *It produceth also sweet fruits at the beginning of every month.* For the word *jerachim* in the Hebrew, being in the plural number, signifies *moons, i. e.* months. And so the Jerusalem Targum translates it, *in every new moon*, which comprehends the whole month.

Ver. 15. *And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills.*] Such as Mount Ephraim, and Samaria, and Bashan, which were exceeding fruitful in grapes and olives, and such-like excellent fruit: and called *ancient* and *lasting*, because they were made together with the earth, in the beginning; and not mounts cast up by the art of men. (See Gen. xlix. 20.)

Ver. 16. *For the precious things of the earth.*] This seems to relate to their arable land, which he foretells should bring forth great store of all sorts of corn.

The word *meged*, which we translate *precious*, is repeated five times in these three last verses, signifying that which in its kind is *most excellent and eximious*, as that great man Ezekiel Spanhemius observes upon Callimachus's hymn to Diana, ver. 245. where mentioning several instruments of music among the Greeks, whose names came from the Hebrew, he thinks one called Μάγαδις (which was ἀρχαῖον ὄργανον, as Athenæus saith, but he could not tell whether a wind or stringed instrument) came from this Hebrew word *meged*, for it was not of a Greek original. And in Cant. iv. 13. this word is translated *pleasant*, as all music is; but that especially which was made by this instrument Μάγαδις. For Plato, who took it for a stringed instrument, calls it πολυχορδώτατον, Anacreon saying he had one of twenty strings, as Spanhemius notes upon the hymn in Delum, p. 472.

And fulness thereof.] By the *fulness* of the earth may be meant, either the plenty and abundance of its fruits, or the ripeness thereof, as Bochartus observes in his Canaan.

And for the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush.] That is, of God, *whose majesty* (as Onkelos paraphrases) *dwells in the heavens, and was revealed to Moses in the bush*, (Exod. iii. 2. 4.) That is, the Schechinah there appeared in a most glorious manner, and the Lord told Moses he was there present, whose *good-will*, which is the fountain of all blessings (for to it they owed their deliverance out of Egypt, which God then promised to Moses out of the bush), he wished might be the peculiar portion of Joseph.

Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph.] The word *blessing* is not in the Hebrew; but this being connected with the foregoing words, may be thought a prayer, that the good-will of God, the fountain (as I said) of all blessings, may rest upon Joseph. Or, as Onkelos translates it, *Let all those things* (beforenamed) *come upon the head of Joseph.* And so the Jerusalem Targum expounds it, *Let all these blessings come, and be made perfect upon the head of Joseph.*

Upon the top of him that was separated from his brethren.] That is, saith the same Targum, *upon him that was made ruler over all the land of Egypt, and splendid in the honour given him by his brethren.* (See this explained upon Gen. xlix. 26.)

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Ver. 17. *His glory is like the firstling of his bullock.*] The ancients thought there was so much majesty in the countenance of a bull, especially of a young bullock in its prime, lifting up its head, that they made it an emblem of kingly power, as Bochartus hath shewn out of several good authors in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 29. And accordingly here it signifies, that the tribe of Ephraim should have royal authority established in it. For he doth not compare the person of Joseph to a young bullock, (though he was a goodly man, eminent for his beauty and comely proportions, Gen. xxxix. 6.) but the tribes which sprang from him, as appears from the last words of this verse; whose glory he here comparing to that of a young bullock, and its glory consisting in its strength, the power of the tribes of Joseph is hereby denoted; which was so great, that they were the chief support of the kingdom of Israel, which began in Jeroboam, who was king of ten tribes; after whom there followed a long race of kings till the captivity. There may be also some respect in these words unto Joshua, the first governor of all the people, who was of the tribe of Ephraim; as of Manasseh were Jair, Jephthah, and Gideon, who were famous men among the judges.

It is remarkable also here, that Joseph is compared to the *firstling* of a bullock, because Reuben being set aside for his incest, Joseph had the right of primogeniture, in part, translated unto him, (1 Chron. v. 1, 2.) and, in consequence of it, had a double portion in the land of Canaan.

It is to be noted likewise, that he is said to be like unto the firstling of *his* bullock, because there were not more goodly bullocks any where than in Bashan, (Amos iv. 1.) which fell to the share of some of the children of Manasseh, (Josh. xvii. 5.)

There have been some great men, who, from this place and other conjectures, have fancied that Joseph was worshipped in Egypt after his death, under the form of an ox, by the name of Serapis, which Bochartus hath confuted in the book forenamed, cap. 34.

And his horns are like the horns of an unicorn.] This is a farther description of the power and strength of the house of Joseph: for a *horn* is every where an emblem of mighty power and force, and an *unicorn* (as we translate the word *reem*) is a very strong as well as a stately creature. But Bochartus hath alleged a great many things to prove, that *reem* is a sort of wild goat in Arabia, as big as a deer, and of the same colour, which they now call *gazellas*, (par. i. Hierozoicon, lib. iii. cap. 27.) There were some of them sent lately to the French king by the divan of Tripoli, which had black horns, in shape like those of a goat, only they were round and pointed. But the tallness, strength, and swiftness of this creature, together with its fierce untameable nature, hath made Ludolphus (who at first was of Bochart's opinion) to conclude, upon second thoughts, that the *reem* in Scripture signifies the *rhinoceros*, as the Vulgar Latin here translates the word. See lib. i. Commentar. in Histor. Æthiop. cap. 10. n. 74. which seems not so well to agree with these words of Moses; which suppose the creature here spoken of to have two horns (he using the plural number), with which the two tribes descended from Joseph are very fitly compared. And so David mentions the *horns* of the *reem*, (Psal. xxii. 22.) But whatsoever creature it was, princes and great men were wont to be compared to it, as appears from Isa. xxxiv. 7. where the grandees (as we now speak) of Edom are called *unicorns*, as in the following words they are compared to bullocks and bulls.

With them he shall push the people together.] Throw down all that oppose him, particularly the Canaanites. For these (saith the Jerusalem Targum) are the great men of the Amorites, whom Joshua, the son of Nun, slew; who was of the tribe of Ephraim; and the captains which Gideon, the son of Joash, slew, who was of the tribe of Manasseh.

To the ends of the earth.] Of the land of Canaan.

And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.] These things shall be performed by the numerous armies of Ephraim and Manasseh. Of these are the benedictions of these two tribes; the younger of which he signifies should be more powerful than the elder, according to the prophecy of Jacob, (Gen. xlviii. 19.)

Ver. 18. *And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out.*] About their business, as the Jerusalem Targum expounds it, that is, their merchandise; which they exercised upon the sea of Gennesaret, where they were situated, and not far from the Mediterranean; in which he prays they might have such good success, as to fill their hearts with joy. There are those who understand this of their *going out* to war against their enemies, which is the exposition of Onkelos. And so this phrase is often used, particularly in Gen. xiv. 8.; and the valour of this tribe is, upon one occasion, celebrated in Judg. v. 18. But Jacob's prophecy determines us rather to the other sense, Gen. xlix. 13. where he represents this tribe as mariners rather than soldiers. Though it must be acknowledged, that there were great numbers among them in David's time, who were expert warriors, (1 Chron. xii. 33.) and that the Israelites generally were not addicted to traffic, the sea-coast being possessed by the Philistines and the Canaanites, save only what belonged to this tribe.

And Issachar in thy tents.] The same Jerusalem Targum expounds it, *Rejoice, ye house of Issachar, when ye come into your schools:* for this was a learned tribe, at least in some ages, as appears from 1 Chron. xii. 32. But Jacob's prophecy rather determines us to another sense, which is, that they should grow rich by feeding cattle, and by husbandry: for which their country being very proper, they chose rather that quiet kind of life than merchandise. Though they were near neighbours to Zebulun, and for that reason, as well as because they were brethren by the same mother, are here put both together in one benediction. This seems also best to agree with the phrase of rejoicing *in their tents;* in which they are said anciently to dwell who fed cattle, Gen. iv. 10. And perhaps the learning that the children of Issachar are said to have had, in 1 Chron. xii. 32. which consisted *in the understanding of the times*, was nothing else but their skill in the proper seasons for sowing, and planting, and pruning, &c. *to know what Israel ought to do* in the management and improvement of their land; which was of great use, especially in that country.

Ver. 19. *They shall call the people unto the mountain.*] Here Moses predicts the house of God should be set upon a mountain; unto which, he saith, Zebulun (for the latter end of the verse shews he speaks particularly of them) should invite the rest of their tribes, by their forwardness and zeal, to go up to worship God at the three great festi-

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vals. So the Jerusalem Targum paraphrases, *Behold, the people of the house of Zebulun shall be ready to go to the mount of the holy house of the Lord.* Or, by *the people*, perhaps, he means the gentiles their neighbours, whom they should endeavour to bring to the service of the true God; which was especially fulfilled when Christ came. (Matt. iv. 15, 16.)

There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness.] Liberal sacrifices, out of their honest gains by merchandise.

For they shall suck of the abundance of the seas.] Import abundance of various commodities, and grow rich by their traffic.

And of treasure hid in the sand.] This is a farther amplification of the same thing, relating particularly to their importation of gold, and silver, and precious stones, which are digged out of the earth. Some think it hath respect to the rich mines which were in this country; but of that I can find no proof.

Ver. 20. *And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad.*] That is, blessed be God, who hath allotted to him such a large inheritance; which he afterward also farther enlarged, as we read 1 Chron. v. 18—20.

He dwelleth as a lion.] Lives secure and fearless, though encompassed with enemies, whom the Gadites tore in pieces (as it here follows) if they offered to molest them. For this was a very warlike tribe, as we learn from 1 Chron. xii. 8. and therefore here compared to a *lioness* (so *labi* signifies), which equals a lion, if not exceeds him in strength and fierceness; as Bochartus hath observed out of good authors in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 50. And so Onkelos here translates it, *He dwelleth as a lioness.* And the Jerusalem Targum puts in both, after this manner; *He remains quiet, as a lion and a lioness; neither is there people or kingdom that shall stand before them.*

And teareth the arm with the crown of the head.] Kills the princes with their kings, as Onkelos truly expounds it. For by *arms* are meant men of strength and power; and by the *crown of the head* is properly to be understood the chief commander, ruler, or king. And therefore the LXX. also translate *crown of the head* by Ἄρχοντα, prince, or supreme governor.

Ver. 21. *And he provided the first part for himself.*] He first received his portion in the land which they conquered, as Onkelos expounds it. Which he is said here to *provide for himself*, because this tribe (with Reuben, and part of Manasseh) desired to be possessed of the country of Sihon, which was accordingly given to them, (Numb. xxxii. 1, 2. 33.)

Because there, in a portion of the lawgiver.] Which Moses (who was their lawgiver) gave them by God's order; whereas the other nine tribes and a half had theirs given them by Joshua.

Was he seated.] The word in the Hebrew signifies *hid*, *i. e.* protected, when, going to the war in Canaan, they left their wives, and children, and cattle, without any defence, but God's providence, according to the promise they made to Moses, (Numb. xxxii. 16, 17, &c.) What the Jerusalem Targum, and Onkelos, and several of the rabbins, even Aharbinel himself, here say, of Moses being buried in this tribe (which they make the sense of these words), I think is no more to the purpose, than what the cabalists observe upon this place, that, in the blessing of Gad, the whole alphabet is found, *because Moses our master* (saith Baal-Hatturim) was buried in his territory, who observed the whole law from *aleph* to *tau*, i. e. from the beginning to the end. (See Theodoric Hackspan. Cab. Judaica, n. 10.)

And he came.] He speaks of this as a thing already done, because he certainly foresaw they would perform their engagement.

With the heads of the people.] With the chief commanders of the rest of the tribes of Israel. Or, as the words may be translated more literally, *he came, the heads of the people; i. e.* the Gadites marched in the front before the children of Israel. For so was the agreement between Moses and them, as we read in Numb. xxxii. 17. that they should *go ready-armed before the children of Israel.* Of which engagement Joshua put them in mind when they were entering into Canaan, (Josh. i. 14.) and they stood to it, (ver. 16, 17.)

He executed the justice of the Lord.] Upon the seven nations of Canaan, whom God commanded them to extirpate.

And his judgments with Israel.] Going in the foremost of the Israelites to battle, till the whole country was subdued to them, (Numb. xxxii. 21, 22. 29. Josh. xxii. 1—3, &c.)

Ver. 22. *And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp.*] Courageous as a young lion; so Onkelos. Which was most eminently verified in Samson, who was of this tribe; and whom "the Spirit of the Lord began to move in the camp of Dan," (Judg. xiii. 25.)

He shall leap from Bashan.] The tribe of Dan had no inheritance near Bashan; but he compares them to the young lions of that place. For lions haunted mountains, (Cant. iv. 8.) and this mountain in particular was famous for them, and bred very fierce ones; which every one knows leap upon their prey, when they assault it, and fasten their nails and their teeth in it. (So Bochart observes many ancient authors describe them, par. i. Hierozoicon, lib. iii. cap. 2. p. 739.) And thus did the Danites on a sudden leap from one end of Judah to another, and seized on the city of Laish, near to the fountain of Jordan, calling it by the name of Dan, as we read Judg. xviii. 29.

Ver. 23. *And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour.*] That is, with the favour of God, which is explained in the next words.

And full with the blessing of the Lord.] The word *full*, as Maimonides observes, signifies that which is most perfect and absolute in its kind, (More Nevoch. par. i. cap. 19.) Such was the country of Galilee, wherein this tribe had their possession, which was πίων τε πᾶσα, καὶ εὔβοτος, &c. (as Josephus speaks, lib. iii. de Bello Judaico, cap. 4.) *fat throughout in all its parts, and very fertile;* planted with all manner of trees, insomuch that it invited him to husbandry, who was averse to labour; and by that means was entirely inhabited, and had no void space in all the country, &c.

Possess thou the west and the south.] The same Josephus makes this tribe to have possessed the east and the north in the upper Galilee, (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 1. p. 142.) which is directly contrary to what Moses here saith; therefore Bochartus (in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 18.) judiciously expounds these words of Moses, not with respect to the whole land of Canaan, but to the Danites beforementioned. For the portion of Naphtali extended from the south of the city called Dan, or Laish, to the sea of

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Tiberias. And so the three Chaldee paraphrasts expound the Hebrew word *jam* (which we translate *west*) by the sea of Tiberias, or Gennesaret, which is the same; for the Hebrews call great lakes by the name of seas. And by this sea is not meant the Mediterranean, but the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias, or Gennesaret; for by all these names it is called, as Mr. Selden observes in his Mare Clausum, p. 21.

Ver. 24. *And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children.*] With a numerous and beautiful issue.

Let him be acceptable to his brethren.] All the rest of the Israelites shall court them, for their goodly aspect; or (as some rather think) he prophesies this tribe should win the favour and affection of others, by their affability and obliging behaviour; for which Jacob predicts they should be famous, (Gen. xliv. 21.)

And let him dip his foot in oil.] Be planted in a rich soil, full of olive-trees; which should make oil so plentiful, that they might not only wash their faces, but their feet in it. Onkelos translates, *He shall be nourished with the delights of kings.*

Ver. 25. *Thy shoes shall be iron and brass.*] Or, as in the margin, *Under thy feet shall be iron;* which hath made some think these minerals were digged out of Libanus, near to which lay the tribe of Asher; who, according to this exposition, trod upon a soil full of iron and brass. But no author, Bochartus saith, mentions any such thing as the brass of Libanus; and therefore some understand by these expressions, the barbarous people that dwelt in Galilee of the gentiles, who pressed the Asserites, as an iron shoe or fetters do the feet. But the Arabic here by *minal*, which we translate *shoe*, understands a *bolt* or *bar;* and renders this passage, *Thy bolts shall be iron and brass;* that is, as Onkelos expresses it, *They should be as strong as iron and brass.* And so Kimchi, expounding the words of Jonathan, (who interprets it, *Thy habitation shall be as strong*, &c.) saith the meaning is, *Their country should be as well fenced, as if it had been shut up in brazen or iron walls;* and R. Solomon to the same purpose. (See Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. vi. cap. 16.) But I have observed, that the same Bochartus acknowledges in his Phaleg. that Sarepta, (which the Hebrews call Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 9.) a city of Sidon, had its name from the brass and iron which were here melted; being in great plenty in that country, as the Hebrews gather from this blessing of the tribe of Asher (who were the inhabitants of those places), *Iron and brass are under thy shoe*, as he there interprets it, (lib. iv. cap. 34.) And so a very learned man, long before him, David Chytræus, expounds these words, and adds this observation; "Nam Sidon et Sarepta, quæ a metallis excoquendis nomen habet, in tribu Asser fuerunt." *For Sidon and Sarepta, which had its name from the melting of metals there, were in the tribe of Asher.*

And as thy days, so shall thy strength be.] The same Chytræus expounds it, *All the time of their life, they should retain the same vigour of body and mind.* Which seems to be the sense of Onkelos, *As the days of thy youth, so shall thy strength be.* And the Jerusalem Targum more expressly, *Such as they were in the days of their youth, such they should be in their old age.* Or simply, these words signify, that this tribe *should grow stronger and stronger;* which Hottinger seems to have aimed at, when he propounded this exposition in his Smegma Orientale, cap. 7. *As are thy days, so are thy riches and wealth.* Masius, quite contrary, upon Josh. xix. 31. interprets these words to signify, that they should have perpetual conflicts with the old inhabitants of the country. All which various interpretations proceed from the uncertain signification of the Hebrew word *daba*, which we render *strength.*

Ver. 26. *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun.*] And now, having blessed every particular tribe, he concludes with this general demonstration of their happiness, that their God was not like the gods of other nations, but super-eminent in all perfections. And therefore they must needs be blessed (as the same Chytræus explains it), who had him propitious to them, as their father, their keeper, their defender, avenger, and saviour from all their enemies.

Who rideth upon the heavens in thy help.] Who commandeth in the heavens, as well as in the earth; and sends help and succour to thee from thence by thunder, lightning, and hailstones; as we read he did in many places, (Psal. xviii. 8, 9, &c. lxviii. 33—35.) "And as he that rides upon a horse, turns him this way, and that way, as he pleaseth, (they are the words of Maimonides in his More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 70.) so God by his power and pleasure commands the heavens; and is not fixed to them, as the soul of them (which was the foolish opinion of the Zabii), but, as the rider is far more honourable and excellent than the beast on which he sits, and of a quite different species from it; so God is represented by this metaphor (though but in a weak manner), as separate from the heavens, and of a more excellent nature, far transcending them, which are but the instruments he uses, to fulfil his will and pleasure."

And in his excellency on the sky.] Or, as it may be translated word for word, *and in his magnificence, the clouds.* From whence he sends such storms and tempests, as demonstrate his power.

Ver. 27. *The eternal God is thy refuge.*] Or, *dwelling-place;* to whom they might always betake themselves for safety, and never fail of it, (Psal. xc. 1.) In the Hebrew the words are, *The eternal God is the habitation*, or dwelling-place; from whence the Jews have framed this maxim, to preserve all men from having low thoughts of God, as if he was contained in any thing, *God is the place wherein the world dwells, and not the world the place where God dwells.* So Maimonides observes in the place abovenamed, out of Bereschith Rabba.

And underneath are the everlasting arms.] To support all those, with an unwearied power and care, who commit themselves unto him.

And he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee.] As he had carried them through the wilderness with an unwearied care, so he promises God would expel the Canaanites, and make room for them in their country.

And shall say, Destroy them.] Give the Israelites power, as well as authority, to root them out. For to *say* here is as much as to *do*, and therefore signifies *executing their destruction.*

Ver. 28. *Israel, thou shalt dwell in safety alone.*] Live in quiet and peace, separate from all other people: or, the Divine protection shall be sufficient for their security. This Rasi thinks was fulfilled in the days of Solomon: (1 Kings iv. 25.) but others of them think it is still to be fulfilled.

The fountain of Jacob.] That is, his posterity, who

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flowed from him as a river from a fountain, (Isa. xlviii. 1. li. 1.) Cocceius thinks these words should be joined to the foregoing in this manner, *Israel shall dwell in safety alone by the fountain of Jacob,* that is, by God. But though this may have some countenance from the ancient interpreters (as I shall observe presently), yet most go the other way; there being the like expression in Psal. lxviii. 26. *Bless the Lord in the congregation, from the fountain of Israel:* or, as it is in the margin, *Ye that be of the fountain of Israel; i. e.* are derived from him as your Father.

Shall be upon a land of corn and wine: also his heavens shall drop down dew.] In a fruitful country, upon which the heavens shall drop down refreshing dews. Onkelos paraphrases the whole thus, *Israel shall dwell securely alone, according to the blessing wherewith Jacob's father blessed them, in a land of corn,* &c. And so the Jerusalem Targum (making more express mention of the word *fountain*), *Israel shall dwell by himself securely, from the fountain of benediction, wherewith Jacob blessed them, in a land producing wine and oil; and the heavens above are commanded to send dews and rain upon them.*

Ver. 29. *Happy art thou, O Israel.*] He was not able farther to express their happiness, and therefore breaks out into admiration of it; exciting them thereby to be deeply sensible of it, and affected with it.

Who is like unto thee.] Who had the Lord for their God, as he said before, ver. 26, &c. and iv. 7, 8.

A people saved by the Lord.] Who have been redeemed by his mighty power. So the Jerusalem Targum, *Whose redemption* (I suppose he meant out of Egypt) *is from the presence of the Lord.* Who had preserved them ever since, and would still protect them, as it here follows.

This R. Isaac (in Chissuk Emuna, par. i. cap. 18.) saith, signifies the spiritual blessings God bestowed on them. For true felicity (saith he) doth not consist in victory over enemies, and plenty of corn, or such-like things, of which he had spoken before in the foregoing verse, but in the salvation of the soul, of which no nation in the world was secure but the Jews; which made Moses (saith he) break out into these words, *O happy people saved by the Lord!* As much as to say, Among all people, is there any saved like to thee? This he saith, because Christians were wont to tell them, that they fixed their minds wholly on the corporal felicity, which their law promised them; which made him look about to find out all that he could draw to a higher sense. And he fixes so much upon these words, that he repeats it again, a little after, that the salvation here promised is everlasting. And yet his eyes could not be opened to see, that this salvation was to be brought to them by the Messiah: and that our Lord Jesus is he, whose gospel is as full of such promises as their law is of the promises of corn, and wine, and oil.

The shield of thy help.] To defend them from all the assaults of their enemies. He adds this, saith the same R. Isaac, to shew that they to whom he promises spiritual blessings, are not thereby put out of hope of temporal; for the people that are saved by the Lord have him also for their *shield* and their *sword,* as it here follows.

And who is the sword of thy excellency!] To cut their enemies in pieces, so that they should glory and boast in magnificent victories over them. Or, as Onkelos translates it, *From his presence are all the victories of thy valiant men.*

And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee.] Find themselves deceived in all their vain hopes of saving themselves or hurting the Israelites. Or, should be so afraid of them, that with feigned stories they should court their friendship, as the Gibeonites did. Or, more simply, should submit to them, though not heartily, yet out of fear, as this phrase is used, Psal. xviii. 44. lxvi. 3. and other places.

And thou shalt tread upon their high places.] Upon the necks of their kings, as both Onkelos and the Jerusalem Targum understand it, taking *bamoth* here for great men, in high stations. And thus Joshua did, as we read Josh. x. 21. But this word commonly signifies, either *strong holds,* or *places of idolatrous worship;* which neither their great men nor their gods themselves should be able to preserve from ruin.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Ver. 1. *AND Moses went up.*] Having thus declared his affectionate concern for the happiness of every one of them, he took his leave of the elders and all the people, and went up whither God had commanded him, (xxxii. 49, &c.)

From the plains of Moab.] In which was their last station before they entered into Canaan, Numb. xxxiii. 48—50. where God delivered several commands to them, Numb. xxxv. 1. xxxvi. 13. and where Moses spake to them what we read in this book, Deut. i. 5.

Unto the mountain of Nebo.] Which was the highest part of the mountain of Abarim, as appears from Numb. xxvii. 12. compared with Deut. xxxii. 49. Near to which there was a city of the same name, (Numb. xxxii. 38. Isa. xv. 2.)

To the top of Pisgah.] Which was the very top of the mountain Nebo. (See Deut. iii. 27. Numb. xxi. 20.)

That is over against Jericho.] A famous city on the other side of Jordan. I see no ground to believe that the people of Israel accompanied him hither (as Josephus tells the story), with so many tears, that Moses wept also; and having beseeched them not to take his departure so heavily, he dismissed them together with the elders, and remained there alone.

And the Lord.] Or, as Jonathan hath it, *the Word of the Lord,* who had accompanied him with his blessed presence through the wilderness.

Shewed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan.] God had often promised him that he should see the good land promised to their fathers, though not be permitted to enter into it, (Numb. xxvi. 12. Deut. iii. 27.) And now fulfils his word, and gives him a full prospect of it; bidding him first look northwards, through the whole land of Gilead (which comprehends all that was given to the two tribes and half on this side Jordan, where they now were) to the land of Naphtali, which was in the upper Galilee, beyond the sea of Gennesaret, as far as to the utmost northern border, which was then called Laish, and afterwards Dan, (Josh. xix. 47. Judg. xviii. 28.) and in latter times Cesaræa Philippi.

The mention of Dan, which was not the name of this place till after that tribe had conquered Laish, in the time of the judges, shews, that this was not written at the same time with the rest of this book, no more than what we read

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(ver. 5, 6. 10.) of his death and burial, &c. (unless we suppose Moses to have given an account of his own death and burial by the spirit of prophecy, which is not probable), but it is most likely by Samuel, who was a prophet, and wrote by Divine authority what he found in the records which were left by Joshua and others who succeeded him; who gave an account of Moses's leaving the world, and of all that was done after, till the end of the time of the judges.

Ver. 2. *And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh.*] Having seen the northern parts, he bade him turn his eyes towards the midland country, where Ephraim and Manasseh were situated.

And all the land of Judah.] Which lay southerly.

Unto the utmost sea.] By which some understand the Salt Sea, which lay on the south border of the land of Judah, (Numb. xxxiv. 3.) But then there will be no mention of the western part of Canaan, which lay upon the Mediterranean or Midland Sea, which is hereby meant.

Ver. 3. *And the south.*] And after he had seen the south, which the tribes of Judah and Simeon inhabited, he bade him take a view of the eastern parts of the country, as it here follows.

And the plain of the valley of Jericho.] All the region about Jordan, especially the lovely plain of Jericho; which is very much celebrated by other authors, and lay in the tribe of Benjamin.

The city of palm-trees.] Which is often mentioned in Scripture; sometimes without, and sometimes with the name of Jericho, (Judg. i. 16. iii. 13. 2 Chron. xxviii. 15.) which was so called, because a multitude of palm-trees grew about it, as Strabo (as well as Josephus) testifies in his Geograph. lib. xvi. p. 763. where he describes this plain, as Πεδίον κύκλῳ περιεχόμενον ὀρεινῇ τινι, &c. as encompassed about with mountains, after the manner of a theatre, abounding with palm-trees, and other garden-trees mixed with them, for the space of a hundred stadia. And there was also, he observes, Ὁ τοῦ βαλσάμου Παράδεισος, *the paradise of balsam;* which is a rare aromatic plant, like to the turpentine-tree, whose juice is of great virtue and value, &c. From which odoriferous plant growing here, some think this city had the name of Jericho, signifying sweet-smelling. So R. Judas, in the Gemara of Beracoth, where he mentions this tree as growing about Jericho, and thence derives its name from the Hebrew word *reach*, which signifies *a sweet smell.* This is more probable than the conjecture of D. Chytræus, who imagines Jericho to come from *Jerec*, which signifies the *moon;* and in their German language, he thinks, might be called Luneburgh.

Unto Zoar.] Which lay in the entrance of the Salt Sea.

Ver. 4. *And the Lord said unto him.*] After he had shewed him the land, the Word of the Lord (as the Jerusalem Targum hath it) spake these words to him which follow. And God having been wont to speak to Moses out of the cloud of glory, Josephus conceives that now he was encompassed with it, and from thence heard this voice; which the Jews fancy was so loud, that the people heard it into the camp. Thus at our Saviour's transfiguration upon the holy mount, a glorious cloud overshadowed him and his three apostles, who heard the voice say to them, *This is my beloved Son*, &c. The Samaritans, as Hottinger relates in his Smegma Orientale, cap. 8. p. 456. tell the story thus: That Joshua, Eleazar the priest, and all the elders accompanying him to the mount, fell into such a passion, when they were to take their leave, that they could not be parted from him. Whereupon the pillar of fire came down, which separated them from Moses, so that they saw him no more.

This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed.] Gen. xii. 7. xiii. 15. xv. 18, &c.

I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes.] Which the Lord strengthened, it is likely, with a greater vigour than usual, that he might take a larger prospect, than otherwise he could have done, of this country. Or, as some of the Jews understand it, he laid a map of it before his eyes, wherein every part of it was exactly described. But that might have been done in the plains of Moab, without going up into a mountain; therefore the other is more reasonable, that he strengthened his visive faculty with a greater power, to see the whole country in its length and breadth, &c. And therefore some of the rabbins have been so wise as to put both together, as J. Bened. Carpzovius observes out of several of them, (upon Schickard's Jus Regium, cap. 5. Theor. 16. p. 285.) who thus speak: "God shewed him the whole land, as in a garden plot, forty miles in breadth, and as many in length; and gave his eyes such a power of contemplating the whole land, from the beginning to the end, that he saw hills and dales, what was open, and what was enclosed, remote or nigh, at one view."

But thou shalt not go over thither.] This he had often said to him: and now mentions it, that he might die in a comfortable sense, that he had been as good as his word to him, and consequently carry this belief along with him into the other world, that he would make good the oath which he sware to their fathers, of bringing them into Canaan, and there fulfil all that he had foretold.

Ver. 5. *So Moses, the servant of the Lord.*] So God himself calls him after his death, in the next book, Josh. i. 2. 7. as the most eminent minister of his, that he had hitherto employed in Israel. But the observation of R. Bechai is not well founded, that he is not called *the servant of the Lord* till after he was dead, and then admitted unto the nearest familiarity with the Divine Majesty: for though these very words are not used, yet the Lord calls him *my servant Moses*, which is the same thing, Numb. xii. 7.

Died in the land of Moab.] For this country was still so called, because it anciently belonged to the Moabites, (see Numb. xxi. 26.) from whom Sihon had taken it, as Israel now had taken it from him: so that he really died in the land of Israel.

According to the word of the Lord.] The Jerusalem Targum expounds this very soberly, *According to the sentence of the decree of the Lord;* that is, as the Lord had determined and declared he should, xxxii. 49, 50. And so this phrase is commonly used in this very book, xvii. 6. 10, 11. as well as in other places of the Pentateuch, Numb. ix. 20. xiii. 3, &c. which will warrant this interpretation, That Moses did not die of any disease, nor was worn out with age, but merely because God, the supreme governor of all things, so ordered it. But some of the Jews, not satisfied with this, have far-fetched conceits concerning the death of Moses from these words: for because it is said he died, *al pi, at the mouth* (as the words are literally in the Hebrew) *of the Lord*, Maimonides himself saith, that their wise men

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think (and he seems of their opinion), that it signifies the Lord drew his soul out of his body with a kiss. And thus died Aaron and Miriam, but none besides them. Of Aaron indeed it is expressly said he died, *al pi, of the Lord,* but it is not said of Miriam; and yet they will have her to have had the same favour; that is, they died, saith he, of too much love, from the pleasure they had in the thoughts of God; which apprehension of God, conjunct with the highest love to him, he thinks is called *kissing,* (Cant. i. 2.) "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 51.) But this is not the meaning of the phrase, though, no doubt, Moses departed this life in a most delectable sense and taste of the Divine love, having no unwillingness to die, nor being surprised with death; for he knew the time, and the place, and the manner of it: and as he did not die of any disease (as was said before), or of old age, or by external force, but only by the will and pleasure of God, who took his soul out of his body; so he did not part with it against his will, nor with any fear, but, with a placid mind and composed spirit, committed himself to God, in whose embraces (as we may speak) he expired: and this it is likely the ancient Jews meant, when they said, *his soul departed with a kiss.*

As to the time of his death, the Scripture doth not mention the year, the month, and the day; but the Jews commonly place it in the last month of the fortieth year after their coming out of Egypt, called Adar, and the seventh day of that month. Thus they say, in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 10. and in their Calendar which they now follow; and so Patricides, in Hottinger's Smegma Orientale, p. 457. But our great primate of Ireland in his Annals observes, that it agrees better with the following history, to place his death in the first day of that month; and Torniellus makes the same computation, that it must be either in the latter end of the eleventh month, or in the beginning of the twelfth.

Ver. 6. *And he buried him.*] This refers to the words foregoing; *viz.* the Lord, who commanded his angels to bury him. So Epiphanius, ἐνεταφίασαν οἱ Ἄγγελοι, &c. Hæres. ix. p. 28. and see p. 600. Though in the Scripture active words are very often used passively, and the meaning may be only that *he was buried,* yet there is this to be said for the other sense, that thereupon it is thought, that the contest arose between Michael the archangel and the devil (as St. Chrysostom, Theodoret, Procopius Gazæus, and others take it), who would not have had him buried, but opposed it, that he might administer an occasion to the Jews to commit idolatry; though we never find that the Jews were given to the worship of relics, as our most learned Usher observes in his Annals. (See there.)

In a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-Peor.] This valley was in the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, (iv. 46.) who had taken it from the Moabites, as I noted before, and was now possessed by the Israelites. And Beth-Peor was a part of the possession of Reuben, (Josh. xiii. 20.) which was a place where the temple of Peor anciently stood; from whence it had its name: for this idol is not only called Baal-Peor, but simply Peor; (Josh. xxii. 17.) and as Beth-Baal is the temple of Baal, so Beth-Peor is the temple of Peor, as I. Gor. Vossius observes, de Orig. et Progr. Idol. lib. ii. cap. 7.

Now by all these circumstances of his burial, it appears how frivolous that opinion of the Jews is, mentioned in Jalkut, out of Siphri, that Moses did not really die, but was translated into heaven, where he stands and ministers before God; which conceit Josephus himself follows, lib. iv. Antiq. cap. 8. where he saith, that he having dismissed the elders, who went with him to Mount Abarim, and then conversing awhile with Eleazar and Joshua, while he embraced them, νέφους αἰφνίδιον ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ στάντος, *a cloud on a sudden coming upon him,* he was snatched out of their sight into a certain valley: which is not only beside, but contrary to the Scripture, which saith he died, and was buried in the valley. And yet some of the ancient fathers, particularly St. Ambrose and St. Hilary, have followed this opinion, that when Moses is said *to die,* it doth not signify the separation of his soul from his body, but his translation to a better life. See Sixtus Senensis, in his Bibliotheca, lib. v. Annot. 61. where he observes, this is not only against Scripture, but against the sense of almost all ecclesiastical writers.

But no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.] These words, *unto this day,* shew that this passage was not written by Moses, as Josephus and Philo imagine, who say he wrote this by the spirit of prophecy. (See ver. 1.) The reason why his body was concealed most think to have been, lest in future times it should become an object of their worship. So R. Levi ben Gersom: "Future generations, perhaps, might have made a god of him, because of the fame of his miracles: for do we not see how some of the Israelites erred, in the brazen serpent which Moses made?" And the heresy of the Melchisedekians shews this was no vain fear, (as Hermannus Witsius observes, lib. i. Miscell. cap. 17.) if Epiphanius may be believed, who saith, that in Arabia Petræa, διὰ τὰ θεσήμεια θεὸν νομίζουσι, &c. *they thought him to be God, because of his wonders he wrought,* and worshipped his image. What would they have done, if they had had his very body? which he did not desire to be carried into Canaan, and buried among his ancestors, as Joseph ordered concerning his bones: for he understood, it is likely, the mind of God to be, that, as he should not go over Jordan while he was alive, so his body should not be carried over when he was dead; which R. Chama thinks might have proved dangerous, because in the time of their distress (especially at the captivity of the land) the children of Israel might have been prone to run to his sepulchre, and beg him with tears to pray for them, whose prayers had been so prevalent for them in his lifetime: for such a piece of superstition, it seems, crept in among them in latter ages; of which see Wagenseil upon the Gemara of Sota, cap. 1. sect. 52. annot. 2.

But though no man knew where Moses was buried when this was written, yet some Maronite shepherds, we are told, have pretended lately (1655) to find out his tomb, with this inscription in Hebrew, *Moses, the servant of the Lord.* A great stir was made about it, as the same Witsius observes, out of Hornius's Historia Ecclesiastica. But a learned Jew, he saith, so confuted the story, shewing it was another Moses whose tomb they found, that the report presently vanished; and the learned Wagenseil makes some probable guesses, that it was the tomb of Moses Maimonides. (See Annot. 6. in Gemara Sota, cap. 1. sect. 51.) But Bartoloccius, in his late Bibliotheca Rabbinica, tom. iii. p. 928, &c. hath made it very probable,

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that Hornius was imposed upon by somebody in this narration, there being no such authors known among the Jews as R. Jakum, or Jacomus ben Gad, who, he saith, confuted this tale.

Ver. 7. *And was a hundred and twenty years old when he died.*] A third part of which time, wanting one month, he had been employed in the government of Israel, as Josephus observes in the conclusion of his fourth book of Antiquities.

His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.] That is, he had all the vigour of youth remaining, there being not so much as a wrinkle in his cheeks: so some of the ancients interpret the last clause: others, he had not lost so much as a tooth out of his mouth. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 45. p. 506.) Both Onkelos and the Jerusalem Targum refer it to the splendour of his countenance, which continued to the last. From hence it was that the heathen, who were not wholly unacquainted with this story, but had not a perfect knowledge of it, imagined that Moses was troubled to die, when he was so vigorous; for Trebellius Pollio, in the life of Claudius, saith, that the most learned mathematicians were wont to say, that no man lived beyond a hundred and twenty years: for though Moses lived a hundred and five-and-twenty years (so he mistakes), being " Dei, ut Judæorum libri loquantur, familiaris," *a man familiar with God, as the books of the Jews tell us:* yet he complaining that " juvenis interiret," *he died when he was young,* they say he was told by an uncertain God, that no man should ever live longer. This mistake arose from their misinterpretation of those words, Gen. vi. 3. " Yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years:" for Huetius well observes, that this *incertus Deus* was the true God, the creator of heaven and earth; whom St. Paul saith they called also *the unknown God,* Demonstr. Evang. propos. 4. cap. 1. n. 57. And I cannot but add, that this passage out of Trebellius was taken notice of above a hundred years ago, by a learned man I have often mentioned, David Chytræus, to shew that these sacred books were not unknown to the heathen, and that they had a reverence for them.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days.*] The time of mourning for the dead was longer or shorter, according to the dignity of the person. And the Jews have a tradition which distinguishes between the days of weeping and mourning; the former of which never exceeded a month, which was the time they wept for Moses; the latter never lasted more than a year, as they gather from the example of the greatest doctor they ever had, R. Judah, who composed the Mischna; for whom they mourned twelve months. (See Schickard, in his Jus Regium, cap. 6. Theor. 19. and upon Gen. l. 3. 10. Numb. xx. 29.)

So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.] They lamented him completely thirty days, and no longer. By which it seems, that *weeping* and *mourning* (whatsoever difference was between them) were anciently of the same length, though the Jews, in the forenamed tradition, are pleased to make the one last much longer than the other.

Now by this, and what follows in the book of Joshua, we may certainly know the truth of what I said (on ver. 5.) concerning the day on which Moses died; for if we add unto these thirty days, which followed immediately upon it, the three days wherein the spies lay hid in the mountain, (Josh. ii. 22.) and allow three or four days more for their going and coming back, and then add the three days they lay by Jordan before they passed over, (Josh. iii. 2.) they make just a month and ten days, from the first day of the last month, when I supposed Moses died, unto the day they got safe over Jordan, which was the tenth day of the first month; whereas, if we reckon as the Jews do, that Moses died on the seventh day of the last month, it would have been the seventeenth day of the first month before they got over Jordan. I observe also, that, though the Talmudists generally make him to have died on the seventh day of Adar, yet there have been some who placed it on the first; for the Medrasch Rabbah, telling the story of Haman's casting lots to find the best time to do execution on the Jews, saith he pitched upon the month Adar, because it had been unlucky to the Jews, by the death of their master Moses therein. But he did not consider, saith that Medrasch, that *as Moses died on the first day of this month, so he was born on the same first day.*

Ver. 9. *And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom.*] To take the government upon him, and manage it prudently, as soon as Moses left them; which was necessary to be mentioned, that it might not be thought they wanted a head to conduct them, as their neighbours possibly might imagine, when the news came of Moses's death; for, as the Samaritans tell the story, (in Hottinger's Smegma Orientale, p. 462.) when they heard the lamentations which the whole congregation made for Moses, they began to rejoice, and gather their forces together to set upon the Israelites, as wanting a leader: but they soon found themselves mistaken, Joshua having taken the charge of them, and being endued with his spirit.

For Moses had laid his hands upon him.] Whereby he committed to him the supreme authority after his departure, and implored the Spirit of God to qualify him for it; for power to execute any office among the Jews was given by laying on of hands, whereby they were ordained and appointed to it. And this was a rite of prayer also, as many have observed, for the obtaining the gifts of the Spirit, which were necessary for the discharge of that office. And, though no words of prayer be mentioned, yet the very *laying on of hands* denotes it, as our learned Dr. Outram observes from this very place, and from 1 Tim. v. 22. lib. i. de Sacrif. cap. 15. n. 8. Of Moses's laying on hands upon Joshua, we read Numb. xxvii. 18, &c. And he was solemnly also, a little before Moses's death, presented unto God, by his own command, xxxi. 14, &c. of this book.

And the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.] Obeyed him as their supreme governor, according to God's command, delivered to Moses, Numb. xxvii. 20. Deut. xxxi. 23. (See Josh. i. 16, 17, &c.)

Ver. 10. *And there rose not a prophet since in Israel like to Moses.*] This is a plain demonstration, that the promise God makes by Moses, that he would raise up " a Prophet like to him," (Deut. xviii. 15. 19, &c.) was not fulfilled either in Joshua or in Samuel (who it is likely wrote this chapter, as I said before), and the best of the Jews confess, shall not be fulfilled till Messiah come. Thus the author of Sephir Ikkarim, lib. iii. cap. 20. " It cannot be, but

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that a prophet shall at last arise like to Moses, or greater than he; for the king Messiah shall be as great or greater: therefore these words are not to be expounded, as if there should never be such a prophet, but that in all the time of the following prophets, till the cessation of prophecy, none should arise like to Moses. But after that, there shall be one like him, or rather greater than he."

Whom the Lord knew face to face.] Or, as De Dieu thinks it should be translated, *Who knew the Lord face to face.* This was one pre-eminence of Moses above all the prophets, that he conversed more familiarly with God than any of them did. See Numb. xii. 8. which place explains this: for *to know him face to face,* was to speak familiarly to God, and to hear God speaking in like manner unto him. And so the Jerusalem Targum expounds these words; only instead of *the Lord,* he saith, *Who knew the Word of the Lord talking with him,* and delivering to him most excellent laws, for the good government of his people. In which laws he still lives, they all remaining upon record to this day, when the laws of all the famous lawgivers, whom the gentiles honoured as gods, are obliterated: but it must be observed, that in this, wherein Moses excelled all the prophets, our blessed Saviour far transcended him: for he was "in the bosom of the Father," (John i. 18.) and spake "what he saw and heard," &c. (Josh. iii. 11. 32.)

Ver. 11. *In all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do.*] The Jerusalem Targum hath it, *Which the Word of the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land.* (See iv. 34. vi. 22. vii. 19.) In these signs and wonders Moses excelled all the prophets, doing more miracles than all that succeeded him, as Maimonides observes, More Nevoch. par. ii. cap. 35. But our blessed Saviour excelled him in this, as well as them; doing more wonders than all the prophets put together had done from the beginning of the world, and far greater also than theirs, (John xxi. *ult.*)

Ver. 12. *And in all that mighty hand, and in all that great terror which Moses shewed.*] As the former verse relates to what he did in Egypt, so this hath respect unto their passing through the Red Sea, and to all that befel them in the wilderness, both at the giving of the law, and afterward till this time: so the Jerusalem Targum expounds these words, *In all that strong hand, and in all those great visions, which Moses managed.* And Onkelos to the same purpose.

In the sight of all Israel.] In the place forenamed Maimonides insists much upon this, that Moses wrought all his miracles publicly, the whole congregation being witnesses of them. And so our Saviour commonly wrought his (till they sought to kill him) in their synagogues, at their public feasts, when there was the greatest concourse of the people of Israel: so that in this he was a prophet "like unto Moses," though infinitely superior; which some of the old Jews could not but discern (as I observed upon chap. xviii.) when upon these words of Isa. lii. 13. "He shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high," they thus gloss in Tanchuma, which is an ancient book among them, "This is the king Messias who shall be exalted above Abraham, extolled above Moses, and be very high above the angels of the ministry." Upon which Conradus Pellicanus thus glosses, and concludes his commentary, as I shall do mine, with these words: "What it is to be above the angels, let the Jews explain: we can understand nothing by it, but the very Word of God, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, by whom all things were made, and without him nothing was made, *viz.* the Lord God of hosts: to whom, in perfect unity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory for ever." *Amen.*

Thus ends the Pentateuch, which, as our great primate of Ireland computes, contains the history of two thousand five hundred and fifty-two years and a half, from the beginning of the world to the death of Moses.

THE

BOOK OF JOSHUA.

THIS title doth not necessarily signify that this book was written by JOSHUA, as the five foregoing were by Moses, but only that it contains the acts done by Joshua. Yet there wants not arguments to prove that Joshua was the author of this book: for though Grotius and many other modern writers, with some of the ancients, think they find reasons in the book itself against this opinion; yet the ancient Talmudists, and several of the latter, ascribe it to him, being principally induced thereunto by those words in the last chapter of this book, ver. 26. which I cannot say are an evident proof of it (for those words may relate only to the covenant mentioned in that chapter); but thus they say expressly in Bava-bathra, cap. 1. "Joshua wrote his own book, and the eight last verses of the law;" and then concerning the five last verses of this book, they write after this manner in the same place; "Eleazar wrote the twenty-ninth verse, &c. of the twenty-fourth chapter, as Phineas did ver. 33." And there are men of excellent learning who have undertaken to answer all that can be objected unto this, (particularly Daniel Huetius, in his Demonstratio Evang. propos. 4.) Which objections I shall consider in their proper places, where they seem to arise in this book.

Which the Jews reckon among the first prophets (as they call them), though it contain only a history of what passed till the death of Joshua; which, in all likelihood, he would not neglect to write himself, as Moses did what passed in his time, that every tribe and every family might have an

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unquestionable title to their inheritance under his own hand, who had by God's order made a division of the land; and that all posterity might see the promises made unto them by Moses were so punctually fulfilled, that there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken, but all came to pass; as he observes xxi. 45. and that in a short time: for this book contains the history of the Israelites, from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua; that is, as some compute, for the space of seventeen years, or rather near twenty-seven. (See upon xiv. 10.)

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *NOW, after the death of Moses.*] Thus those books are wont to begin, whose argument relates to the book beforegoing. As the book of Judges is in this manner connected with this of Joshua, and the book of Ruth with that of Judges; and the LXX. make such a preface to join the book of Lamentations with the prophecy of Jeremiah.

After the death of Moses.] I suppose immediately after the days of mourning for him were ended, (Deut. xxxiv. 8.)

The servant of the Lord.] See Deut. xxxiv. 5.

It came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun.] Out of the sanctuary, it is most likely, from whence he had spoken to him a little before Moses's death, and made him a promise of what he orders him now to accomplish, (Deut. xxxi. 14. 23.) and where Eleazar was appointed long before to ask counsel for him, when there was great occasion, (Numb. xxvii. 21.)

Moses's minister.] Who had attended upon Moses from the beginning, in his highest employment, (Exod. xxiv. 13. Deut. i. 38.)

Ver. 2. *Moses my servant is dead.*] He hath finished his work, and can do me no farther service.

Now therefore arise.] Put an end therefore unto your mourning for him, and go about the business which he hath left thee to perform.

Go over this Jordan.] Within sight of which they lay encamped.

Thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.] As he promised when he changed his name from Oshea into Joshua, (Numb. xiii. 16. Deut. i. 38. Deut. iii. 28.)

Ver. 3. *Every place.*] Within the limits mentioned in the next verse.

That the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you, as I said unto Moses.] He would not have them doubt of what Moses said from him (Deut. xi. 24.) though he were dead.

Ver. 4. *From the wilderness.*] This was the bounds of the country on the south.

And this Lebanon.] Which was the bounds on the north. And Joshua seems now to have been in sight of it; to which the Divine Majesty directed his observation, as the most eminent mountain in those parts of the world.

Even unto the great river, the river Euphrates.] Which was the eastern bounds, and called by other authors the *great river*, as I have observed on Deut. i. 7.

All the land of the Hittites.] Who were a very powerful people in the country, dwelling, together with the Amorites, in the mountainous parts of it; (Numb. xiii. 29.) some of which were of the race of the giants, and are therefore particularly mentioned, to shew that the most terrible people should not be able to stand before Joshua; but he should either destroy them, or expel them, and make them flee their country, as these Hittites did; of whom we read, and of their kings, 2 Kings vii. 6.

Unto the great sea.] The Mediterranean, which was the western border, as it here follows.

Towards the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.] See upon Deut. xi. 24. and other places.

Ver. 5. *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life.*] Deut. vii. 24.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.] To subdue all the people of Canaan before him; as he did the Egyptians, the two kings of the Amorites, and the Midianites before Moses: to counsel also, and advise him in all difficulties, as he had done Moses.

I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.] See upon Deut. xxxi. 6. 8. On which promise they relied in future times, (1 Kings viii. 57.)

Ver. 6. *Be strong, and of a good courage.*] This charge he had given him before the death of Moses; (Deut. xxxi. 23.) and David gave the same to Solomon, (1 Chron. xxviii. 20.)

For unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them.] He had promised him, in the place beforenamed, that he *should bring them into the land*, &c. and here now adds, that he should settle them in the possession of it, by assigning every one their portion in it; which he did by such a Divine direction, as silenced all disputes about it.

Ver. 7. *Only be thou strong, and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee.*] It requires the greatest courage and resolution, especially in a governor, to be truly pious and religious, by observing the laws himself, and seeing them observed by others.

Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left.] By adding to it, or taking away from it, (Deut. xii. *ult.*) or, more simply, no way deviate from it; for it is a metaphor from men in a journey, who go straight forward in the plain highway, and turn not aside into by-paths, which lead they know not whither.

That thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.] Or *do wisely*, as it is in the margin; for it is the greatest policy to be truly religious.

Ver. 8. *This book of the law.*] The original of which was preserved in the sanctuary; from whence God now spake to him, (Deut. xxxi. 26.)

Shall not depart out of thy mouth.] He was to read in it continually, that he might instruct others, and be thereby an example to all future governors and kings, according to the law, (Deut. xvii. 18, 19.) By which it is evident, that Joshua had a copy of the law; which was then written and extant in his time.

But thou shalt meditate therein day and night.] His other weighty employments were not to hinder him from pondering, as well as reading, the law of God; because it was to be his rule in all his private transactions and public administrations.

That thou mayest observe to do according to all that is

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written therein.] Which was not possible, without the serious and attentive consideration beforementioned.

For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.] Or *do wisely*. Prudence and prosperity go together; but no prudence comparable to the strict observance of the laws of God, upon which the felicity of kingdoms and states depends.

Ver. 9. *Have not I commanded thee? Be strong, and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.*] He confirms him in the resolution he had put into him, (ver. 6.) by two arguments, the Divine vocation, and the Divine presence with him. (See Deut. i. 29, 30. xxxi. 6—8.) The latter of which the Targum thus expresseth, *For the Word of the Lord thy God shall be for thy help, in every place where thou goest.* (See ver. 14.)

Ver. 10. *Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying.*] I have often observed, that as *schophetim* were judges, who heard causes in their courts, and pronounced sentence; so *schoterim* were inferior officers belonging to the court, who summoned people to attend, and executed the sentence: for after Moses had mentioned (Deut. i. 15.) the chief of their tribes, captains over thousands, and hundreds, and fifties, and tens, he at last mentions these officers among their tribes; who were employed, it appears by this place, in the *camp*, as well as in the *courts* of justice.

Ver. 11. *Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals.*] They were to make proclamation not only in all the four camps of Israel, but in the several tribes who were under those standards, to provide themselves with such victuals as the country of Sihon and Og, which they had lately conquered, afforded. For being, after three days, (iii. 1.) to remove very early in the morning, perhaps they might not have had time to gather manna sufficient, and to prepare it before they began their march.

For within three days.] See iii. 1, 2.

Ye shall pass over this Jordan.] Which was not so far from Shittim, where they now lay, but they could see it.

And go to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it.] He constantly remembers them of this donation from God; both to strengthen their faith, and to excite their thankfulness. "For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their arm save them; but his right hand, &c. because he had a favour to them," as the Psalmist speaks, xliv. 3.

Ver. 12. *And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying.*] Here he begins to do according to the command of Moses, as God before directed him, ver. 7, 8. For Moses had given this charge to the Reubenites, &c. when he gave them their possession on this side Jordan, Numb. xxxii. 20, 21, &c. and put them in mind of it again, Deut. iii. 18, &c.

Ver. 13. *Remember the word which Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded you, saying.*] It is very observable, how gently and not imperiously Joshua exercises his authority, at his first entrance upon his office. For he only puts them in mind of what Moses required from them, and leaves them to reflect upon the promise they made to him.

The Lord your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.] That is, actually bestowed upon them a country to settle in. For here their wives, and children, and cattle remained (with a sufficient number of persons to look after them), when they marched into Canaan, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 14. *Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed.*] March in the front of them, to shew their forwardness to bring them into the same happy condition with themselves.

All the mighty men of valour to help them.] Such as Joshua picked out; for it is evident they did not all go over, but only forty thousand of them, (iv. 13.) The rest, though fit for war, were left to defend their wives, children, and flocks, while those mighty men of valour went to *help* their brethren.

Ver. 15. *Until the Lord have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you.*] A settled possession of the land of Canaan, as they had of the land of the two kings of the Amorites.

And they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them.] He would have them look upon the conquest of the land as certain, because God had made a grant of it to their brethren.

Then ye shall return to the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses, the Lord's servant, gave you on this side Jordan, towards the sun-rising.] According to the agreement which Moses had made with them, (Numb. xxxiii. 20—22.)

Ver. 16. *And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go.*] It is likely, this was the answer not only of the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, but of all the rest of the tribes; before whom Joshua put these two tribes and a half in mind of their duty: which they all engage to perform exactly; these words containing a full recognition of Joshua's authority, and their absolute submission to it.

Ver. 17. *According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee.*] Here they acknowledge his authority to be equal to that of Moses, who was undoubtedly set over them by God, as they now own Joshua to be.

Only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.] These words are not a restriction of their obedience, which did not depend upon his successes, but a solemn prayer to God, of whom they desired no other governor than Joshua, that he would make him as victorious as Moses was over all their enemies. Therefore, some translate the words, not *only*, but *may the Lord thy God*, &c. or, *Since the Lord thy God hath promised to be with thee.* The Targum paraphrases these words as he did ver. 9. *Only let the Word of the Lord thy God be thy helper, as he was to Moses.*

Ver. 18. *Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death.*] This seems to be the voice of all the people, and of their elders, or a decree made by the elders, as the Jews understand it: who, looking upon Joshua to be a king, as Moses was, extend this to all the kings of Israel in following times. So Guil. Schickard observes out of Maimonides in his Mischpat Hammelech, cap. 4. Theor. 14. p. 101. But it should rather be said, that Joshua was a king and a prophet as

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Moses was; and the law, as Rasi observes, ordered him to be put to death that transgressed the orders of Moses, and of a prophet.

Only be strong, and of a good courage.] He had the greater reason to be courageous, since they resolved, as one man, to stand by him, and never to disobey him. And therefore the word *rak*, which we translate *only*, should rather be translated *therefore*, as it plainly signifies, xiii. 6. where, speaking of the land that remained to be possessed, God promises to drive out the inhabitants, and *therefore* bids Joshua to divide it to the Israelites for an inheritance.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AND Joshua the son of Nun sent.*] Or *had sent*, before the directions given to the officers, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 10, 11. which best agrees with the twenty-second verse of this chapter, and the rest of the story.

Out of Shittim.] Which was in the plains of Moab, where Israel now lay, (Deut. xxxiv. 1.) called Abel-Shittim, Numb. xxxiii. 49.

Two men.] Which were sufficient for the business they went about.

To spy secretly.] So that none were privy to it among the Israelites but Joshua; who, it is probable, did not send them without an order from God, who intended to dispose things so, that they should bring back to him a great encouragement to his faith.

Saying, Go view the land.] Not the whole country of Canaan, but only that part of it which lay about Jericho, as it here follows: whose fortifications they were to observe, and the approaches to it, with the strength that was in it.

And they went.] Over the fords of Jordan, I suppose, mentioned ver. 7.

And came into a harlot's house, called Rahab.] Who kept a public house, or an inn, to entertain strangers: by going into which, they thought they would be less suspected of any design. The word *zonah*, which is commonly translated a *harlot*, the Chaldee paraphrase renders *pundakitha*; which is plainly the Greek word Πανδοχία, signifying she kept a house of public reception. And so St. Chrysostom calls this woman, in his second sermon of repentance, πανδοχεύτριαν· for there is no doubt she kept a public house. But such persons, in those days, made their bodies as public as their houses; and, therefore, she is constantly called Rahab the harlot by the ancients; and even by two apostles, who call her πόρνη, (Heb. xi. 21. James ii. 25.) For so she had been, though now, it is probable, converted by the faith which was wrought in her. Which was so eminent, that she was not only admitted into the society of God's people, but married into a noble family of the tribe of Judah, from whom Christ sprung, (Matt. i. 5.) and is propounded as an example of lively faith unto all Christians, (Heb. xi. 31. James ii. 25.)

And lodged there.] Took up their lodging in her house, by a Divine direction, as appeared afterward.

Ver. 2. *And it was told the king of Jericho.*] Who was not negligent, we may well think, to set a watch to observe who came in and went out of the city.

Saying, Behold, there came men in hither to-night.] In the evening, which was the most proper time to come into the city undiscovered, because then the people, whose business lay out of the city, were generally going home to their own houses.

Of the children of Israel.] As they judged by their habit, or language, or aspect.

To search out the country.] For they could not think they came for any other end.

Ver. 3. *And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which entered into thy house: for they be come to search out all the country.*] He sent some officers with a warrant to apprehend them, and to require her to deliver them up into their hands, as enemies of their country.

Ver. 4. *And the woman took the two men, and hid them.*] Or rather *had hidden* them before the officers came; having heard, it is likely, a rumour that they were discovered, and search would be made for them.

And said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were.] She could not deny that she received such strange guests, but would not own that she knew from what country they came; nor was it her business to make such inquiry, her house being open unto all.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass, about the time of shutting of the gate.*] The gate of the city, next to her house, which was wont to be shut (as they are now in all well-governed cities) at a certain hour.

When it was dark.] And consequently few or none stirring in the streets.

The men went out; whither they went I wot not.] She would have them think they went both out of the house and out of the city; though she knew not which way they went, it being dark.

Pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.] Yet it was so little a while since they went out, that she would have them believe they could not, if they made haste, but overtake them before they got over Jordan. For if they were Israelites, it might be certainly concluded they went that way. Nobody can say that Rahab did not tell an untruth; but this may be said in her excuse: that it is no wonder if she thought it lawful, if not necessary, so to do, for the saving of the life of innocent men. Since several great philosophers have been of that opinion, and some of the ancient fathers of the church; particularly St. Austin confesses it to be a very difficult question, cap. xv. ad Consentinum: and Arius Montanus upon this very place, makes it one's duty to elude those who we think intend to do mischief to others: which he pretends to justify by many examples, in a discourse concerning Men's true and certain Duties. But that is too bold an undertaking; since the fathers before St. Austin, and all the Jews, condemn this practice.

Ver. 6. *But she brought them up*, &c.] Or rather, *she had brought them up to the roof of the house.* Which was made flat, so that men might lie or walk upon it in those countries. (See Deut. xxii. 8.)

And hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.] Covered them all over with the stalks of flax, which I suppose were newly cut, and laid upon the roof of the house to be dried by the sun, till they were fit to be peeled. Or, as some think, these were stalks of flax cut the year before; and made use of now to shew

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that nobody was gone upon the roof, where she laid them.

Ver. 7. *And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan, unto the fords.*] Where Jordan was so shallow that men might wade, or so narrow that they might soon swim over it. There the pursuers lay three days, waiting to catch them in their return.

And as soon as they which pursued them were gone out, they shut the gate.] Which, being opened to let the pursuers out, was immediately shut again; that if the spies lurked in the city, they might not escape in the dark; and that no other person might enter, who they might possibly think lay watching an opportunity to get in.

Ver. 8. *And, before they were laid down.*] To compose themselves to sleep; which after their journey they might be glad to take any where.

She came up unto them upon the roof.] To bring them down, it is likely, to a more commodious lodging.

Ver. 9. *And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land.*] Wonder not that I have taken such care of your preservation; for I believe in the Lord as you do, and know that he hath bestowed this country upon you for your possession.

And that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.] She was the more confident of their success; because she observed the people of the land were struck with such a dread of them, as not to be able to defend their country against them. (See Deut. xi. 25.)

Ver. 10. *For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when you came out of Egypt.*] And there overthrew Pharaoh and his host, after he had smitten him and his country with divers miraculous plagues. The report of which was come to them, as well as their passing through the sea: which, though it was forty years ago, was remembered with astonishment.

And what you did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.] This was a thing of fresh memory, and could not but strike them with consternation; these two kings being very potent; and their near neighbours and allies. For they were part of the Amorites, who dwelt in the mountainous parts of this country; as was before observed.

Ver. 11. *And as soon as we heard these things.*] As Moses prophesied they would, (Exod. xv. 14, 15.)

Our hearts did melt.] The same phrase in Deut. i. 28. where we translate it *discouraged;* and so it is here explained in the next words.

Neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you.] The most valiant among them were utterly disheartened.

For the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath.] This is a plain confession of the true God, the creator of heaven and earth; wherein he rules and governs all things according to his pleasure. This is her faith celebrated by the apostle to the Hebrews, which moved her to entertain the spies, and to preserve them with the danger of her own life, if she had been discovered.

Ver. 12. *Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord.*] The Targum hath it, *by the Word of the Lord.* An oath was the greatest security that could be desired for the performance of what they promised. For all nations expected grievous punishments would fall upon perjured persons; which they that feared the Lord, the true God, above all men dreaded. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 11. n. 4.)

Since I have shewed you kindness.] As they could not but acknowledge.

That ye will also shew kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token.] She asked two things of them; first, that she and her whole family might be preserved, as she had preserved them; and then, that they would give her such a token, as should not fail her; but upon the sight of it, the Israelites should abstain from doing them any hurt.

Ver. 13. *And that you will save alive my father and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters.*] This is a particular explication of what she meant by *her father's house,* in the foregoing verse; and shews that she had no husband, nor children.

And all they have, &c.] All her *kindred,* as we translate it, vi. 23. Or the children of her brethren and sisters: or, perhaps, all their cattle, that they could bring with them into her house.

Ver. 14. *And the men answered her, Our life for yours.*] They sware to her (it appears from ver. 17.) and wished they might perish, if they did not preserve her and her family. For they did not doubt but Joshua would ratify what they promised; though without his authority, for the public good and safety.

If ye utter not.] Do not divulge or declare to any one.

This our business.] In the Hebrew, *this our word; i. e.* this agreement they had made with her. Lest others should shelter themselves under her roof, or use that token they intended to give her; and thereby secure themselves from destruction. In this they shewed great prudence and management; taking care that their gratitude might not prove an obstruction to the public justice.

And it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.] Upon this condition, they promise, when they had taken Jericho, (for that is here meant by *the land,* ver. 1.) they would keep their word faithfully with her, and be as kind to her as she had been to them.

Ver. 15. *Then she let them down by a cord, through the window.*] Which in those countries were large, as appears by the story of Jezebel, whom her eunuchs threw down out of a window, 2 Kings ix. 30. 33.

For her house was upon the town-wall.] Both the time (which was in the night) and the place were very commodious to contrive their escape; because her house was adjoining to the wall of the city.

And she dwelt upon the wall.] I take the meaning to be, that the apartment she reserved for herself was next to the wall, and built upon it; the rest of her house towards the street being kept for strangers. This gave her the fair opportunity, without any noise, to let them down.

Ver. 16. *And she said unto them, Get ye to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you.*] This was prudent advice, not to go towards Jordan presently, but first to one of the mountains, wherewith the plain of Jericho was surrounded, as Josephus tells us: (lib. i. de Bello Judaico, cap. 12, 13. and lib. v. cap. 4.) and the Scripture itself informs us as much, 2 Kings ii. 15, 16.

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And hide yourselves there.] In some of the caves, which were frequent in the mountains.

Three days.] For so long she thought the pursuers might stay about Jordan, waiting for their return.

Until the pursuers be returned; and afterward may ye go your way.] Which she thought probably would be within that time; and perhaps she understood their orders were to stay no longer.

Ver. 17. *And the men said unto her.*] As she was about to let them down; for it was not safe to have this discourse together after they were down; which might have been overheard by the watch.

We will be blameless of this thy oath which thou hast made us to swear.] The meaning is, that it should not be their fault if their oath was not kept; and therefore they now name the token, upon which the preservation of her family should depend; with some other conditions that were reasonable to be observed. Which they mention, to shew how studious they were not to be guilty of violating their oath.

Ver. 18. *Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread.*] It is called a *cord* before, ver. 15. and no doubt consisted of so many threads twisted together, as made it a line strong enough to hold the weight of a man's body, and not break. But there are those who doubt whether the Hebrew word *scheni* signify any thing of the colour, but only *a twined* or *twisted* cord, *funiculum conduplicatum*, or *contortum*; from *shanah* to double. (See Gataker in his Miscellanea, cap. 40.)

In the window which thou hast let us down by.] Or rather, *dost let us down by.* For she was about to do it, but had not done it, when they had this discourse with her. Some refer this to the *window* at which she let them out; but it is most natural to refer it to the *line.* For by that they were let down; and it was to remain in the window, that the Israelites might see it, as the token that that was the house which was to be saved. Procopius Gazæus compares this scarlet line with the blood which Moses ordered to be struck upon the side-posts of their doors, which was a token they should be preserved, (Exod. xii. 7. 13.)

And thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household home to thee.] That is, all their children; and perhaps near relations, such as uncles, aunts, and cousins; as we seem to understand it, vi. 23. And one cannot but think, that great-grandfathers and grandmothers, if she had any alive, were comprehended in these words.

Ver. 19. *And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the door of thy house into the street, his blood shall be on his head, and we will be guiltless.*] They would be bound to preserve none but those who kept in the house. Which was but reasonable, for they did not know how to distinguish them from others, if they were in the street.

And whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.] They would as soon die themselves, as let any of those perish. An emblem of our safety and salvation, by continuing constantly in the church in faith and holiness. For her house was a very fit figure of the church, especially of the gentiles; who, like her, had gone a whoring after idols, but were converted to serve the living God.

Ver. 20. *And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of the oath which thou hast made us to swear.*] They repeat the condition mentioned ver. 14. as of great importance. (See there.)

Ver. 21. *And she said, According to your word, so be it.*] She agreed to all the conditions they imposed upon her.

And she sent them away, and they departed.] After this mutual agreement, confirmed with an oath.

And she bound the scarlet line in the window.] Immediately, as some think; that the spies might know where to look for it hereafter, and that she might have always before her eyes such a comfortable pledge of her safety. It was more prudent also, as Arius Montanus observes, to do it now, than when the Israelites came to besiege the place; for that novelty might have made the people of Jericho suspect some correspondence.

Ver. 22. *And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned.*] Being furnished, it is likely, with sufficient provision by Rahab. Many think they stayed there but one whole day, and part of other two, which, according to the style of the Scripture, may be called three days: but their only reason for it is to make these three days, and those mentioned in the first chapter, ver. 11. to be the same, which is not probable.

And the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, &c.] Which led to the fords of Jordan. This expresses their diligence, though it wanted success; and, perhaps, there were more ways than one that led thither; in all which they placed themselves, or some other persons, to watch for them.

Ver. 23. *So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain.*] From whence, perhaps, they could see when the pursuers came back; or they had some intelligence of their return; or, as I said before, that they had commission only to search for them three days.

And passed over.] The river Jordan.

And came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befel them.] Since they left him. This shews that Joshua sent them so privately, that it was unknown to the people, (as I expounded, ver. 1.) for they give him alone an account of what had happened unto them. (See vi. 17.)

Ver. 24. *And they said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land: for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.*] This was part of what they had learned from Rahab, (ver. 9, &c.) who had strengthened their faith by her own.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *AND Joshua rose early in the morning.*] The next morning after he had commanded the officers to warn the host to prepare for their removal, (chap. i. 10, 11.)

And they removed from Shittim.] Where they had lain now above two months; for they came hither on the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year after they came out of Egypt. (See Deut. i. 3.)

And came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel.] Which river, as Josephus tells us, was sixty *stadia* from Shittim; but it is so uncertain what his *stadia* or *furlongs*

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were, that one can only guess how many of our miles threescore of them made. Most think about seven.

And lodged there before they passed over.] The Hebrew word *jalinu* doth not necessarily signify that they lodged there only one night, for it often denotes a longer time of abode; and, therefore, the Vulgar Latin translates it *morati sunt, they stayed there; viz.* three days, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass, after three days, that the officers went through the host.*] In the end of the three days beforementioned, (chap. i. 10, 11.) he sent the same officers there mentioned to make a new proclamation; for it seems to me most reasonable to take all this story in the order wherein it is related, only supposing the spies to have been sent before the first proclamation made by the officers (as I observed, ii. 1. the words may be translated). And thus our great primate of Ireland understands it: After Joshua was confirmed in his office, (chap. i. ver. 1, 2, &c.) he sent out the spies, and then commanding the people to provide themselves victuals, he marched from Shittim to Jordan; and the third day (after that command to provide themselves victuals) he gave a new command to prepare themselves to pass over Jordan the next day.

Ver. 3. *And they commanded the people.*] By order from Joshua, and in his name and authority.

Saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it.] "Hitherto (saith Kimchi, upon this place) the Levites (that is, the children of Kohath) carried the ark; but now the priests are appointed to that office, for the greater sanctification or honour of it, and because of the miracle which was to be wrought before it. Our rabbins say, that the priests carried it thus three times; now in this place, and when they compassed Jericho, and when Zadok and Abiathar brought it back to Jerusalem, when David fled from Absalom," (2 Sam. xv. 29.) Unto which he adds a fourth, when it was brought into the temple which Solomon built; for the Levites were not permitted to go into the sanctuary, much less into the most holy place, into which it was carried by the priests, (1 Kings viii. 6.)

Then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.] By this it appears the ark was carried in the front of them; whereas usually it was ordered to be carried in the middle of their camps, as we read Numb. ii. 17. But at their first removal from Mount Sinai, which was a time extraordinary, it marched before them for three days, (Numb. x. 33.) and so it did now (and at no other time), when they were to enter into Canaan, for a special reason also, as I shall observe on the next verse. Concerning the phrase *the priests the Levites*, see Deut. xvii. 9.

Ver. 4. *Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits.*] This is a demonstration that it was not usual for the ark to go before the whole army; for if it had, there would have been no need to instruct them at what distance they should keep from it, which would have been constantly observed.

By measure.] It is likely they measured the distance by a line, at which the people were at first set; and then walking in equal paces with the priests, kept at the same distance, though, perhaps, not precisely; for they might chance to move a pace or two faster, or take larger paces; and therefore he saith *about* two thousand cubits.

That ye may know the way by which ye must go.] There was the very same reason for the ark's going before them now, that there was when they came from Mount Sinai; for then it was *to search out a resting-place for them; i. e.* to shew them where they should rest; and now it was to lead them in the way they were to march, unto their long-expected settlement in the promised land. If it had not been for this, it would have been carried in its usual place; but the pillar of the cloud, which hitherto conducted them, having now left them, as R. Solomon observes, this supplied its place, and went before them, as that had been wont to do.

For ye have not passed this way heretofore.] They were to be led in an untrodden path, which the power of God (of whose presence with them the ark was the symbol) made for them.

Ver. 5. *And Joshua said unto the people.*] The night before they went over Jordan, as appears by the latter part of the verse; and, perhaps, he spake this himself, at the head of every one of their tribes, it being of great importance.

Sanctify yourselves.] Other places tell us what was their usual sanctification. (See Exod. xix. 10, 11. Numb. xi. 18.) But, besides the legal purifications, one cannot but think that he intended they should dispose their minds by holy meditations and prayer to God to receive his benefits, and to be more sensible of them when they were bestowed on them.

For to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.] Which he would have them be in a condition to observe, and to lay to heart; and, in order thereunto, prepare themselves by serious thoughts of God, and of his providence, as well as by washing their bodies, and abstaining from their wives, which were a part of the sanctification here intended.

Ver. 6. *And Joshua spake unto the priests.*] The next morning.

Saying, Take up the ark of the covenant.] Upon their shoulders, for so it was to be carried, (Numb. vii. 9.)

And pass over before the people.] This precept had been unnecessary, if they had been wont to carry it before the people.

And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.] After Joshua had spoken what follows, ver. 7, 8, &c. But it is mentioned now to shew the readiness of the priests, as well as of the people, to obey the commands of Joshua; whom they looked upon as a prophet, as Moses was, who had power to give extraordinary orders from God. Such were these for the priests to carry the ark, and to march with it before the people, not in the midst of their camps.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord said unto Joshua.*] By an audible voice, I suppose, from the sanctuary, near unto which he now was; the priests being about to take out the ark from thence, to carry it before the people.

This day.] The tenth day of the first month, on which the paschal lamb was, by the law, to be set apart, to be offered four days after, (Exod. xii. 3.)

Will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel.] By doing such wonders before them all, as should convince them Joshua was appointed by God to be their supreme governor, who should give them possession of the land of Canaan. (See iv. 14.)

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That they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.] See i. 5. From the time of Moses to the days of Saul, God declared, by some extraordinary things, whom he would have to be the supreme governor of his people, whose authority he established by doing wonders.

Ver. 8. *And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying.*] Every thing was done by his order, that it might appear he was powerful with God, who wrought those wonders at his word.

When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan.] Jordan then overflowed beyond its banks; therefore they were not to go to the brink of the river, but of the water.

Ye shall stand still in Jordan.] And there stop till the waters above were suspended, and those below run away; and then they went and stood in the midst of the river, (ver. 17.)

Ver. 9. *And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither.*] To the sanctuary, I suppose, where he now was, (ver. 7.)

And hear the words of the Lord your God.] Which Joshua reported to them from God, who was about to demonstrate himself to be the omnipotent Lord of all creatures, and in a peculiar manner their God, in covenant with them, and full of kindness to them.

Ver. 10. *And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you.*] These are the words of the Lord their God, who is called the *living* God, in opposition to the idols of the heathen; who could do nothing, much less such miracles as demonstrated the God of Israel to be the eternal Lord of heaven and earth, who giveth life to all things; and he is said to be *among them* (or *in the midst of them*) whom he takes into his protection, to defend and preserve them from all evil.

And that he will without fail drive out from before you.] Most certainly make good his promise made to Abraham long ago, (Gen. xv. 18, &c.) because he lives for ever to perform his word.

The Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.] Here all the seven nations are mentioned, (as they are Deut. vii. 1.) though sometimes only six of them are mentioned, the Girgashites being omitted. (See Exod. iii. 17.)

Ver. 11. *Behold, the ark of the covenant.*] So called, because in it were the two tables of the covenant between God and them. It is frequently called *the ark of the testimony*, (Exod. xl. 20, 21. Numb. iv. 5. and here in this book, iv. 16.)

Of the Lord of the whole earth passeth before you.] To take possession of the land of Canaan, which he gave them as Lord of the whole earth, and as particularly engaged by his covenant to bestow upon them. The author of the book Cosri understands this, as if the ark of the covenant was called *the Lord of the whole earth;* because God was so present with it, that where the ark was, there were wonders wrought, which ceased in its absence. (Par. iv. sect. 3.) D. Kimchi and Jos. Albo say the same; and I find Andreas Masius following this fancy; because there is an accent after *the ark of the covenant,* distinguishing those words from what follows, which (say they) are therefore added by apposition. But Bonfrerius hath confuted this very judiciously, observing, that the accent is not of that nature; and, therefore, the LXX. the Chaldee, Vulgar Latin, Symmachus, Aquila, the Syriac, and Arabic, translate it as we do, *the ark of the covenant of the Lord of the whole earth.* (See Buxtorf, de Arca, cap. 1.) And yet, I know not how it came to pass, some have been so bold as to alter our translation in some printed copies, which I have met withal, where these words are thus translated, *the ark of the covenant, even the Lord of the whole earth.*

Into Jordan.] By which miracle they were confirmed in their belief of his promise, when they saw the waters of Jordan flee before him.

Ver. 12. *Now therefore take ye twelve men out of the tribes of Israel.*] To do what he should command them, (iv. 2, &c.)

Out of every tribe a man.] The tribe of Levi was one of the twelve, upon all accounts but only in the dividing of the land: Ephraim and Manasseh being but one, *viz.* the tribe of Joseph.

Ver. 13. *And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of the whole earth.*] Here the ark of the covenant is called the *ark* of Jehovah (not *Jehovah*), who is the Lord, or governor and ruler of the whole earth: in which is comprehended the sea, and the rivers, and all waters, which he commandeth as he pleaseth.

Shall rest in the waters of Jordan.] Dip their feet in the brim of the waters, as it is explained ver. 15.

That the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above.] The waters which now ran in one stream, were divided over against the place where the priests trod; so that the lower part of them ran down the channel towards the Dead Sea; and those above not coming down to supply their place, the ground was left dry.

And they shall stand on a heap.] *viz.* The waters above, towards the head or springs of the river, were made to stand still, as if they were congealed; rising in a heap, piled one upon another, but not running down at all.

Ver. 14. *And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people.*] The priests moved first, and then the people followed them, at such a distance as Joshua had prescribed, (ver. 3, 4.)

Ver. 15. *And as they that bare the ark of the covenant were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water.*] Which had overflown, as it here follows, beyond the bounds of the channel.

For Jordan overfloweth all his banks at the time of harvest.] This is meant of barley-harvest; which began about the Passover, as many have observed; and particularly Hermannus Conringius, in his book De Initio anni Sabbatici. (See upon Deut. xvi. 9.) And it appears by the next chapter, (iv. 19.) that it was in the first month, or the month Abib, when the Passover was to be kept; and therefore must signify that harvest. (See also 1 Chron. xii. 15.) This was likewise a time when the river was more likely to overflow than in wheat-harvest; because now the snow began to melt that was in the neighbouring mountains, especially in Lebanon; at the foot of which was the fountain of Jordan. By which the river was always swollen at this time, and thereby the miracle increased. Such overflowings of other rivers, greater than this, are observed by authors, at certain seasons; with which I shall not trouble the reader.

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Ver. 16. *And the waters, which came down from above, stood.*] Stopped, and ran no farther; but were driven back unto those that were coming down.

And rose up upon a heap.] Instead of flowing down the channel, were lifted up into the air; and appeared like a mountain, as the Vulgar Latin translates it.

Very far from the city Adam.] At a great distance from a city then called Adam, which lay upon the river.

That is beside Zaretan.] The former was a small city, and therefore its situation is described by a place of greater note called Zaretan, which lay on one side of it, in the plain of Jordan, as we read 1 Kings vii. 46.

And those that came down towards the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off.] Those waters of the river, which were below, towards the salt sea, into which Jordan emptied itself, ran all thither, and so left the channel perfectly dry, that the people might pass over, which they did, directly over against Jericho.

And the people passed over right against Jericho.] Having that famous city in their view; from whence, perhaps, the people on the walls might, with amazement, see the Israelites walk through the river on dry ground. It was a great refreshment also to the Israelites after their march, to pitch their tents in so goodly a plain as this before Jericho.

Ver. 17. *And the priests, that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, stood firm on dry ground, in the midst of Jordan.*] In one and the same place and posture, with their faces towards Jericho.

And all the Israelites passed over on dry ground.] Keeping, I suppose, the same distance, of two thousand cubits from the ark; for there was room enough on either side to march by it, and not come near it.

Until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.] Which they could not do in a short time, unless we suppose them to have marched all in a-breast, which is not likely. For there was a certain place called, ever after, by the name of Bethabara, to preserve the memory of their passing over there; which is mentioned John i. 28. It made, therefore, the faith and constancy of the priests very remarkable, who remained so long in the middle of the river, till the whole multitude were got over, without fear of that great mountain of waters from above coming tumbling down upon them.

They who look upon this part of the Divine history as improbable, if not incredible, should consider, what a shame it is to have less faith than the heathens: who, lest their gods should be thought less powerful than the God of Israel, forged those stories which the Persians tell of Zoroaster's passing over rivers; and the Greeks of Inachus dried up by Neptune; and other such-like; which Huetius hath collected in his Quæstiones Alnetanæ, lib. ii. cap. 12. n. 15. Why then do they call in question the power of the true God; who, either by himself, or by his angels, could easily stop the course of a river which he himself made; and both make the waters rise up in a heap, as high as he pleased; and also stand so reared up, in a firm hardness, as if they had been congealed?

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying.*] It is likely he went to return thanks unto God for so wonderful a mercy; and then God spake to him what follows:

Ver. 2. *Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man.*] He bids him now call together the twelve men formerly chosen, iii. 12.

Ver. 3. *And command you them.*] I suppose Joshua had some of the elders, or heads of the tribes, that joined with him in this office.

Saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan.] Which continued perfectly dry for some space after they were all gone over; that is, till the priests removed from thence.

Out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones.] Some understand this so precisely, as if they were to take them from under the very soles of the priests' feet, which is not probable; but only near to the place where they stood. For the priests did not stir a step from the place where they first stood; and therefore none can tell how they should take these stones from under their feet, and place others in their room, (ver. 9.) while they remained standing fixed in the same place.

And ye shall carry them over with you.] In the sight of all the people, to make the miracle more known among them all.

And leave them in the lodging-place where you shall lodge this night.] As a monument of this miraculous work of God; which remained ever after in Gilgal; the place where they lodged that night, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 4. *Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared,* &c.] Before they passed over Jordan, (iii. 12.)

Ver. 5. *And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord God into the midst of Jordan.*] This is a Divine order to go back again into the river, to the very place where the priests stood with the ark; by which these twelve men were dispensed withal, to come nearer to the ark than the rest of the congregation.

And take ye up every man a stone upon his shoulder.] Great stones, as big as they could well lift and carry. So the Hebrew word imports, ver. 3.

According unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel.] That they might publish in every tribe this evident testimony of the power of God; which laid the bottom of the river dry for so long a time, that they not only all went over on dry ground, but some of them returned again, and took up these stones, and laid others in their room, (ver. 9.)

Ver. 6. *That this may be a sign unto you.*] A token of what God had now done for them.

That when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?] It was natural for men, in future ages, seeing great stones (in a place, perhaps, where there were no more), and just twelve of them, laid together, or one upon another, to ask how they came there, and for what end they were brought thither, and by whom.

Ver. 7. *Then shall ye answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off, before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off.*] This was to give them occasion to report, at large, what God had done for them at their entrance into Canaan; that their posterity might be affected with it, no less than themselves.

And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel for ever.] To keep in memory this miracle in all

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ages to come, as long as this nation lasted. All people have been wont to erect monuments of stone to preserve the memory of covenants or victories, or other great things. And though there was no inscription upon these stones, yet the number of them, and the place where they lay, which was not stony, was sufficient to signify some memorable thing; which, upon inquiry, would be made known to those that saw and observed them.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded,* &c.] That is, the twelve men did according to his order, both in taking up the stones and carrying them to the place where they lodged.

And laid them down there.] Which, perhaps, were erected into a kind of pillar, that they might look like a monument of something done thereabout. Or, they were so placed, as to be so many little monuments of God's mercy. (See ver. 20.)

Ver. 9. *And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests that bare the covenant stood.*] This renders it probable, that the other twelve stones taken out of Jordan were set up in Gilgal, as these, taken out of some of the fields thereabouts, were erected in the midst of the river, to testify to all posterity their miraculous passage over it at this place.

And they are there unto this day.] From hence, not only such men as Mr. Hobbes, but Masius, and Grotius, and divers others, have argued, that this book was not written by Joshua, but by some person who lived at a great distance from his time, as these words, they fancy, import. But this is a mere fancy; for if Joshua wrote this book in his old age, or, at least, then added his last hand to it (as it is probable he did), he might as well use these words as one that lived a hundred years after. And, at this rate of arguing (as Huetius observes), Moses must not be the author of the book of Deuteronomy, (where he speaks in the same style, x. 5. xi. 4.) nor St. Matthew the author of the gospel, which he wrote not many years after our Saviour's death; who uses the very same words, xxvii. 8. xxviii. 21. (See Demonstr. Evang. propos. iv. cap. 24.)

Ver. 10. *For the priests that bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan.*] It is remarkable in this whole relation, that when the priests are mentioned, these words are still added, *that bare the ark,* or, *the ark of the covenant,* (both in this chapter, ver. 9. 16. 18. and in the foregoing, ver. 13—15. 17.) to shew that this miracle was not to be ascribed to them, but to the power of the Lord, unto whom they ministered.

Until every thing was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people.] Concerning the taking up of the twelve stones, and placing others in their room; and all that preceded concerning their passing over the river; which, it is likely, he exhorted them to do cheerfully.

According to all that Moses commanded Joshua.] We do not read that Moses gave any particular directions about the foregoing matters; therefore the meaning is, that Joshua strenuously executed all that God ordered, as Moses had admonished him, Deut. iii. 28. and other places.

And the people hasted, and passed over.] This doth not refer to all the people, as if they went a swift pace over the river, out of fear of the waters overwhelming them (as some think), but to such as remained still behind the ark, to attend its motion. Who now seeing all that Joshua commanded was finished, made haste to get over the river, as their brethren had done before them. It is said, indeed, (ver. 1.) that when all the people *were clean passed over,* Joshua gave order about the twelve stones: but the meaning is, when the main body of the people were gone over: for it appears by the next verse, that they had not all entirely passed over until now.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, that when all the people were clean passed over.*] So that none were remaining in the plains of Moab, from whence they came.

That the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests.] They who went first into the river came last out: it being by the power of the Lord, whose ark the priests bare, that the course of the river was stopped, and a way made for all the people to pass over.

In the presence of the people.] Who beheld the water standing still on a heap, while the ark was in the river; but come tumbling down when it was gone. Which demonstrated that it was God's presence with them, to which alone they owed this miraculous mercy.

Ver. 12. *And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them.*] They were the first that passed over, (according to their engagement, Numb. xxxiii. 20, 21. 27. of which Joshua had put them in mind, i. 13.) ready to encounter any enemy that might have opposed their landing.

Ver. 13. *About forty thousand, prepared for war.*] Or, *ready armed* (as it is in the margin), and prepared to fight, in case they met with any opposition. It is observable, that in the last muster, made not long ago, of those that were fit for war, in their several tribes, there were above *forty thousand* in the tribe of Reuben alone; and above fifty thousand in that of Manasseh, (Numb. xxvi. 7. 34.) And therefore it is likely, Joshua picked out only this number of chosen men; and left all the rest to look after their families and flocks.

Passed over before the Lord unto battle.] Being passed over the river, they stood in battle array before the ark; at the distance, I suppose, of two thousand cubits.

In the plains of Jericho.] Where it might be supposed the people of Jericho would have encamped, to hinder their passage.

Ver. 14. *On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel.*] As he promised, iii. 7.

And they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.] This wonder gained him the like respect and reverence, that the dividing the Red Sea did to Moses. (Exod. xiv. 31.)

Ver. 15. *And the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying.*] All this business was managed purely by the Divine direction.

Ver. 16. *Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.*] The midst of which river, where they stood, being the lowest and deepest part of it, they are properly said *to come up* when they left that station.

Ver. 17. *Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.*] Where they waited for the Divine order, and did not stir till they received it.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the river Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up*

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unto the dry land.] Where the waters of Jordan, when it overflowed farthermost, were never wont to come.

That the waters of Jordan returned into their place.] The channel was filled again by the descent of the waters. Which for some time had stood heaped up, and could not stir; but now were let loose to keep their ancient course.

And overflowed all his banks, as they did before.] Which was done, it is likely, by a gradual descent of the water, and not by the tumbling down of that great heap all at once.

Ver. 19. *And the people came out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month.*] In which month they came out of Egypt, upon the fifteenth day of it: so that there wanted just five days of forty years since their coming from thence.

And encamped in Gilgal.] A place very famous in after-times, because of their first encampment here; where they seem to have continued for several years, during the wars of Canaan. Here also they were circumcised (from whence the place had its name, ver. 9.) and kept the first Passover; the tabernacle and the ark remaining here, as long as the Israelites kept their station in this place. See ix. 6. x. 6. 43. xiv. 6. which was, I suppose, till the war was ended; and they had also begun to divide the land. (See xiv. 6.) After which the tabernacle was fixed in Shiloh: (xviii. 1. xxii. 9. 12.) though still Gilgal continued a famous place, as appears from Judg. ii. 1. 1 Sam. xi. 14, 15. xiii. 4, &c.

In the east border of Jericho.] That is, between Jordan which lay behind them, and Jericho which lay before them.

Ver. 20. *And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.*] We are not told in what form they were pitched; whether they remained single and distinct, or, as Josephus will have it, joined together in the form of an altar. It seems to agree best with the end and intention of them, if we conceive them to have been set down single, but in some order (suppose three in a row), representing, like so many little pillars, the twelve tribes of Israel; who passing over Jordan on dry ground, a man out of each tribe was ordered to bring a stone, and place them here, for a perpetual memorial (ver. 7.) of what God had done for them. For stones, every one knows (especially some sorts of them), are of a very durable nature, and therefore used by all nations in the monuments they have made to preserve the memory of persons and things. Insomuch, that if it be true which Procopius reports (in his second book de Bello Vandalico) concerning the two pillars erected by the Canaanites, who fled into Africa before the face of Joshua, with an inscription signifying their expulsion by him; I conclude it to have been done in imitation of these stones, whereby Joshua preserved the memory of the miraculous way which was opened to him, for their expulsion.

Ver. 21. *And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?*] See ver. 6. where he had said this, at the time they took up the stones; and now repeats it, when they pitched them. For then he may be thought to have spoken only to the twelve men; but now to all the twelve tribes.

Ver. 22. *And ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.*] That it might not be left to every man's liberty to give what answer they pleased to their children, when they inquired the meaning of these stones, he sets down the very words they should speak unto them; that they might be sure to be duly instructed in the wonderful mercy of God to their nation.

Ver. 23. *For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before ye, until ye were passed over.*] He would have posterity made sensible it was a Divine benefit bestowed on them by the Divine Power: which alone could stop the course of a river, till a whole nation passed over on dry ground.

As the Lord your God did to the Red Sea.] At the same time he would have them take occasion to remember them of another miraculous mercy, like unto this, though superior to it. Which the prophets, in after times, delighted to commemorate together, as appears from Psal. cxiv. 5.

Which he dried up before us, until we were gone over.] What he did for their forefathers he did for them, who reaped the happy fruit of it: just as the saving of Noah and his family in the ark was the saving of all mankind, who sprang from them.

Ver. 24. *That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord.*] All nations round about, who heard of this, might be made sensible of the power of the God of Israel.

That it is mighty.] Which can do all things.

And that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.] The people of Israel, especially (for whom these wonders were wrought), might religiously worship and serve him: for so the *fear of God* frequently signifies in Scripture: and therefore the LXX. here translate these words, ἵνα ὑμεῖς σέβησθε Κύριον τὸν Θεὸν ὑμῶν, *that ye may worship the Lord your God;* which includes in it all the duty owing to him. And so they translate the last words *for ever*, ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ, *every thing that you do.*

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites.*] These were the principal inhabitants, and the most valiant in all the country; as hath been formerly noted.

Which were on the side of Jordan westward.] This seems to be added, to shew, that, besides the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og, whom they had already subdued on the other side of Jordan, eastward, there were other kings of the same nation on that side of Jordan, where the Israelites now were. And it is not improbable, that these kings commanded the Hittites, Hivites, and Jebusites, as well as the Amorites.

And all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea.] *i. e.* The Mediterranean, where the people properly called Canaanites dwelt; though there were colonies of them spread in other places. The LXX. here call them βασιλεῖς της Φοινίκης, *the kings of Phœnicia:* for upon that sea were the principal cities of the ancient Phœnicians, *viz.* Tyre and Sidon. But though the people that lived upon the sea-coast were peculiarly called by this name of Phœnicians, yet they were so powerful, that the whole country was called χώρα τῶν Φοινίκων, *the country of the Phœnicians;* as the LXX. call the land of Canaan, ver. 12. of this chapter.

Heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over.] This sounds like the language of Joshua, or of some other

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person then present, when this wonder was wrought; which astonished those that lived in the remotest parts of the country; who little thought of an invasion on that side (which, it is likely, made them not draw any forces that way), imagining the river, especially when it overflowed all its banks, was a sufficient security unto them on that frontier.

That their hearts melted; neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.] They quite lost their courage; which began to fail them before, as we read chap. ii. ver. 11. Or, as the LXX. expound it, *their understanding failed them;* and they were in such a consternation, that none knew what to advise for their safety. In which the providence of God is much to be observed, that, by this means, the Israelites were securely circumcised (as it here follows); whereas, if the people of Canaan had been courageous and watchful, they had taken them at a great advantage, if they had then fallen upon them; as appears by the story of the Shechemites, Gen. xxxiv. 25. They had leisure also, without any disturbance, to celebrate the Passover, (ver. 10.)

Ver. 2. *At that time the Lord said unto Joshua.*] The next day, which was the eleventh day of the first month; as our primate Usher and others judge most likely.

Make thee sharp knives.] Or, as it is in the margin of our Bibles, *knives of flints:* which stones were plentiful, it is likely, in the mountains thereabouts. And, after they had marched forty years in the wilderness, it is probable (as Theodoret notes) that they were not provided with such knives as we use, of iron. By the very words also of Joshua it appears he speaks of knives they were now to provide; and not of such as they had already. Nor is it strange such knives should be used, for they were common in the eastern countries, as may be gathered out of the Talmud, in the treatise of the Sabbath; where they say, *in the killing of beasts, they use either a flint-stone* (so they interpret the word *tzur*), *or glass, or a quill.* From whence Theodoric Hackspan concludes, that if sharp stones sufficed for the killing of beasts, there was no need of any other in circumcision. Who observes also, that the Jews say, they might circumcise with any instrument, made either of stone or glass, but not of a quill; because there was danger it might slit and hurt so tender a part. And at this day they do circumcise in the east with knives made of stones, such as Zipporah, it is supposed, used in the circumcision of her son, (Exod. iv. 25.) See this question debated in Sixtinus Amama's Antibarbarus, lib. ii. p. 282. Justin Martyr thinks there was some mystery in the use of these knives. (See his dialogue with Trypho, p. 341, 342.)

And circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.] This doth not signify that they who had been circumcised heretofore, were to be now circumcised again (from whence some have drawn an argument for the repeating of baptism, as St. Austin tells us), but that there had been such a general circumcision heretofore ordered, as there was to be now after a long omission of that rite. And it is probable that it was at Mount Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they came out of Egypt. When they kept a Passover on the fourteenth day of that month, (Numb. ix. 1—3.) and before they kept it, circumcised all that had not been circumcised in Egypt, or since they came out of it. For no uncircumcised person, nor any one who had a son, or a man-servant in his house uncircumcised, was capable to be admitted to it. We do not read, indeed, of the neglect of circumcision in Egypt, or in that year wherein they came out of it; but, considering the great oppression they lay under in that country, and the several distresses they were in, after their deliverance, for three months, till they came to Sinai; and the absence of Moses a long time after they came thither; it is very probable this rite was omitted, till God called upon them (as he did now) to celebrate the Passover; and then they were constrained to take care of it, because otherwise they could not have kept it. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 2. n. 1.)

Ver. 3. *And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel.*] Ordered every one that wanted it to be circumcised; and, it is probable, not only all those that came over Jordan, but such of the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, as were left on the other side, were circumcised also, and all in one day, that they might be in a condition to eat the passover: nor need it seem strange that it was dispatched in such a short time, for they might employ as many hands as they pleased in this work, there being no necessity that a priest or a Levite should do it, but it might be performed by their fathers or mothers, or any other person.

At the hill of the foreskins.] In the Hebrew, at *Gibeah Naaraboth;* which some take to be the name of the place where they were circumcised; but then that place was so called from the foreskins that were there thrown; which were so many, that being laid upon a heap and covered with earth, they made a little hillock, as the Jews conceive. (See Pirke Eliezer, cap. 29.)

Ver. 4. *And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise.*] The reason of this order, and of the execution of it, is here given.

All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.] That is, all that were then twenty years old, for such only were reputed men of war, and were guilty of the sedition mentioned in Numb. xiv. for which they were doomed to perish in the wilderness.

Ver. 5. *Now all the people that came out were circumcised.*] Not only those that died for their rebellion, but all the rest under twenty years old, were generally circumcised, except some infants, who (as I said upon ver. 2.) might have been neglected during their heavy oppression there.

But all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.] Never since they removed from Mount Sinai, where it is likely there was a general circumcision, as there was now to be before their celebrating the Passover, which had not been kept since that time.

Ver. 6. *For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed,* &c.] These words seem to give the reason why they were not circumcised, because they were in a wandering condition, while they remained in the wilderness, and did not know when the cloud would remove from the tabernacle to lead them to another place; which if it had done when children were newly circumcised, their lives might have been endangered by motion, while they were sore. This, a great many

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think, made Moses dispense with circumcision by God's direction. We do not find him, indeed, consulting God about it; but he was satisfied that God approved of this reason for the omission of it. R. Jose, as Mr. Selden observes, gives this account of the whole business: "The Israelites kept but one Passover all the time they were in the wilderness; the reason was, in that year (which was the next to that wherein they came out of Egypt) their tents were pitched in a place where they might safely circumcise the males that had been lately born, lest the neglect of it should hinder the legitimate eating of the passover. But in all the time following, wherein they wandered in the desert, they did not circumcise their children, because of their incommodious journeys, and the danger of circumcision by the way;" so that they could keep no more Passovers till they came to Canaan. This is a far better reason than what many of them give, who say circumcision was omitted, because the north wind never blew all the time they were in the wilderness; and wounds are very dangerous when it doth not blow. Whence their medical maxim mentioned in the Talmud: "In cloudy days, and when the east wind blows, we neither circumcise nor open a vein." (See Buxtorf. Synagog. Judaica, cap. 4.) But if this matter be well considered, we cannot rest satisfied with the foregoing reason; for all the time they were in the wilderness, children were born, and women lay in; and there was greater danger by their motion, while they were in labour, and when they were newly brought to bed, than there was in their children's being circumcised, who were sore but for a few days; whereas the others were not fit to go abroad, or to travel, in a great many. For which, and for several other reasons, Fortunatus Scacchus thinks this was not the cause why they were not circumcised during their travels in the wilderness; but the true reason was, that they did not look upon the precept of circumcision as obliging them, till they came to settle in the land of Canaan: for in the covenant which Moses made with them at Mount Sinai, there is nothing said about circumcision, unto which they were bound by the covenant made with Abraham, (as our Saviour observes, John vii. 21.) and that runs thus: "I will give unto thee, and unto thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, &c. Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, &c. Every man-child shall be circumcised," Gen. xvii. 8—10. (See Sacror. Elæochrysm. Myrothec. 2. cap. 54.)

Ver. 7. *And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised.*] Now that they were come to their rest in the land of promise.

For they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.] For the reason abovementioned: to which this may be added, that several great men (such as Theodoret and St. Jerome among the ancients) think that circumcision, being a note of distinction between the Israelites and other people, there was no need of it in the wilderness, when (as Cedrenus speaks) they were παντὸς ἀλλόγενους κεχωρισμένοι, separated from all strangers by the wilderness itself. Others think, that the mixed multitude of Egyptians, who, moved by the miracles they had seen done in their country, went out of it with the Israelites, and joined themselves to them, were the cause of this omission; for they could not presently incorporate with them by receiving circumcision; and therefore it was suspended, that these Egyptians might not look upon themselves as quite a different people: but longer than till they came to Canaan they would not have it discontinued, when all, Egyptians as well as Israelites, received it, that they might not be upbraided as a people of a different original. And as the omission of it in the desert made the proselytes who came out of Egypt equal with the Israelites, while they stayed there; so, as a most learned friend of mine (Dr. Alix) suggests to me, it shewed, that there was no absolute necessity of this rite, and that it could not be of eternal obligation.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp.*] Lay still without motion (which would have hindered the healing of the sore), and had not the least disturbance given them by the people of Canaan.

Till they were whole.] Which they were against the Passover; for, reckoning the eleventh day for one, there were four days between their circumcision and the Passover, which was not kept till the fourteenth day at even, when the pain was pretty well over, for it was smartest on the third day. (See upon Gen. xxxiv. 25.)

Ver. 9. *And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you.*] It is commonly thought, that by *the reproach of Egypt* is meant nothing else but uncircumcision, with which the Israelites always reproached other people, particularly the Egyptians, among whom they had long dwelt, and with whom they were best acquainted. But our learned Dr. Spencer thinks *the reproach of Egypt* is the slavery to which they had been there long subject, but now were fully declared a free people by receiving the mark of the seed of Abraham, and made heirs of the promised land. This he very often repeats, lib. i. de Leg. Hebr. Ritual. cap. 4. p. 44. 51. 55. And no doubt Joshua now chose, immediately upon their entrance into the land of Canaan, to cause them to be circumcised, not only as a token they peculiarly belonged to him, but to oblige them to be careful to observe all the laws of God; many of which could not, and others were not observed in the wilderness, but were now to be regularly practised, because they held the land of Canaan by this tenure. To this purpose also Theodoret discourses, in his questions upon this book; They were made now lords of the promised land, who were lately slaves in Egypt; for they could not be the legitimate children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and heirs of the promises made to them, till they were circumcised. Ralbag hath another notion of it; That the Egyptians seeing the Israelites wander so long as they did in the wilderness, reproached and flouted them, as if they were brought thither to be destroyed, and not to possess the land of Canaan; from which reproaches God now delivered them, when he assured them, by enjoining their circumcision, that they should shortly enjoy that country which God promised; but which no uncircumcised person might inherit: but the first is the plainest and most unconstrained sense.

Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.] This was the first original of the name, which this place had ever after; for *Galal*, in Hebrew, from whence this word comes, signifies to remove, take away, or devolve. And so here the LXX. translate the word *gallothi (I have rolled away)* by ἀφεῖλον, and the Vulgar

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Latin by *abstuli (I have taken away);* which makes it strange that Josephus should say (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 1.) that this word *Gilgal* signifies *liberty*, whom Theodoret follows; as if this place was so called, because now they found themselves perfectly freed from the Egyptians, and from all the troubles they endured in the wilderness.

Unto this day.] These words are alleged by some against Joshua's being the author of this book; to which an answer hath been given, iv. 9.

Ver. 10. *And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal.*] Continued their camp there, as they were enjoined, ver. 8.

And kept the Passover.] Which was the second Passover that had been kept since its first institution, the first being observed the second year after their coming out of Egypt at Mount Sinai; after which it had been omitted thirty-nine years, because many of the people were uncircumcised.

On the fourteenth day of the month at even.] According to the command of God, (Exod. xii. 6.)

In the plains of Jericho.] Where the tabernacle was in the midst of their camp, unto which they brought their lamb, for it could be sacrificed no where else, (Deut. xvi. 2.) And therefore hither the Reubenites, and Gadites, and Manassites, on the other side Jordan, came to offer this sacrifice; which was easier for them, than it was in aftertimes to go up to Jerusalem.

Ver. 11. *And they did eat the old corn of the land.*] Which the people of the country had left in their barns when they fled into Jericho, and other strong holds.

The morrow after the Passover.] There is a great dispute among the Jews, whether this were the fifteenth day of the month, which was properly the next day after the Passover, or, as others take it, the sixteenth day, which was the solemn sabbath kept on the first day of unleavened bread, (Lev. xxiii. 10, 11.) when they were to wave the sheaf of the first-fruits before the Lord. The former are in the right.

Unleavened cakes.] That is, they kept the feast of unleavened bread, which was distinct from the Passover, as I observed, Exod. xii. 15, &c.

And parched corn on the self-same day.] This was new corn, which was growing that year they entered into Canaan, of which it was not lawful to eat, till they had offered the sheaf beforementioned, (Lev. xxiii. 14.) and therefore it is made an argument by some, that it was the sixteenth day of this month when this corn was parched.

Ver. 12. *And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land: neither had the children of Israel manna any more.*] Because they had no need of it (as Kimchi and others interpret it), being supplied by the store of old corn which they found in the land of Canaan, and by what was growing upon the ground.

But they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.] After they had offered the sheaf beforementioned, (Lev. xxiii. 11.) So that manna ceased on the sixteenth or seventeenth day of the first month, having continued with them forty years, wanting about a month. So R. Bechai truly interprets these words, (Exod. xvi. 35.) not to signify *forty years* complete, but *near* forty years; for it began to fall on the fifteenth day of the second month, and ceased on the sixteenth or seventeenth day of the first month of the fortieth year after they came out of Egypt; and therefore, to shew that they were not to expound those words, *They did eat manna forty years*, in a strict and precise sense, Moses immediately adds, *until they came to a land inhabited;—they did eat manna until they came to the borders of the land of Canaan;* which was exactly fulfilled, Gilgal being on the *borders of the land*, where it now ceased; but it continued till that time, though they came *to a land inhabited*, when they conquered the kingdoms of Sihon and Og.

Ver. 13. *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho.*] After he had performed these solemn rites of circumcision and the Passover, Joshua went to take a view of Jericho, and to observe, as generals are wont to do, the approaches to it.

That he lifted up his eyes and looked.] These words signify a sudden apparition of a person to him; for so this phrase is used, when something new and unexpected presents itself, as one is intent upon something else, (Gen. xviii. 1. Dan. x. 5.)

And, behold, there stood a man before him.] Whom he took to be a man.

With his sword drawn in his hand over against him.] He seemed to be a soldier, or rather a great commander, and stood directly opposite to him.

And Joshua went unto him.] Such was his undaunted courage, with which God had inspired him.

And said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?] He demands of him, whether he came to help the Israelites, or the people of Canaan; for whom (it appears by the answer) Joshua suspected he came to fight.

Ver. 14. *And he said, Nay.*] *i. e.* I am not on the side of your adversaries.

But as captain (or *prince*) *of the host of the Lord am I now come.*] By the *host of the Lord* is here meant the whole body of the people of Israel, whom the Lord himself led forth out of Egypt, as his army, (see Exod. xii. 41.) and now appeared in this manner, that he might shew he would still conduct them, as their chief commander and leader, by whom they should be victorious over their enemies: for though many take this to have been a created angel (Michael, suppose, the chief of them), yet it is evident that Joshua did not think him so to be, for he fell down and worshipped him, as we read in the words following.

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth.] With the profoundest reverence.

And did worship.] Which he durst not have given (for God alone is to be adored), nor would an angel have received, without such a check as an angel gave St. John, (Rev. xxii. 10.) if he had not taken him to be the Divine Word that was come to fight for them. So the Chaldee paraphrase upon Josh. x. 42. "It was the Word of the Lord that fought for them," according to God's promise, i. 9. 17. This a most learned friend of mine (Dr. Alix) shews was the judgment of the ancient Jewish church, (see his late book on that argument, p. 234.) and it is most certain was the judgment of the ancient Christians, particularly of Justin Martyr, Eusebius, and Theodoret. (See Valesius in his Annotations upon Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, lib. i. cap. 2. p. 7.) And therefore our great primate of Ireland fears not to say in his Annals, "Jesus Dominus noster, princeps militiæ patris sui, Jesu typico ad Jerichuntem gladio stricto apparens, promittit se popu-

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lum defensurum;" that is, *Jesus our Lord, the Prince of his Father's host, appearing to him who was a type of him at Jericho, with a drawn sword, promised to be the defender of the people:* where he seems by the *captain of the Lord's host* to understand our Lord, who commands angels themselves; for they are sometimes called *the host of heaven.* (1 Kings xxii. 19. Luke ii. 13.) And it may very well be thought the meaning here.

And said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?] Joshua was possessed of such a deep sense of the greatness of this person, that he humbly desires to receive his commands, and he would obey them.

Ver. 15. *And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place where thou standest is holy.*] This is the fullest evidence that can be given of the Divinity of this person that appeared to him; who was so far from reproving him for doing him too much honour, that he commanded him to do much more; for that which he here requires, is the highest acknowledgment of a Divine presence that was used among the eastern nations, as the same Dr. Alix observes. And considering that these are the very same words which were spoken to Moses, Exod. iii. 2, 3. we learn the reason why God commanded this to Joshua; which was, for the strengthening of his faith, that as now he was placed in Moses's stead, so God would be with him, as he had been with Moses. And thus Joh. à Coch discourses very reasonably upon the Gemara of the Sanhedrin, cap. 6. n. 3. "This angel, who suffered himself to be worshipped, and by whose presence the place where he appeared was sanctified, so that Joshua was commanded to put off his shoes, no doubt was He whom all the angels in heaven worship."

And Joshua did so.] Put off his shoes, in token of reverence to that place; which was holy, while that Divine presence remained there, though not after it was gone: and it continued there for some space of time, to give Joshua advice, and to encourage him to hope for his protection and assistance; as appears from ver. 2. of the next chapter.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *NOW Jericho was straitly shut up, because of the children of Israel.*] The Targum understands it as if he spake of the strong fortifications of Jericho, which made it needful Joshua should be encouraged in his enterprise against it. But the words in the Hebrew are literally (as is noted in the margin of our Bibles) *did shut up, and was shut up,* which plainly relates to the strict guards which were kept, that none could get into the city, nor get out of it: so it is explained in the next words.

None went out, and none came in.] They shut up their gates so close, that none could go out to carry intelligence to Joshua; and they were blocked up so close by the Israelites (to which the latter part of the foregoing words may perhaps refer), that none could get in to bring any intelligence or relief to the inhabitants of Jericho.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said unto Joshua.*] The same person speaks to him (all agree) who is called the *Prince of the Lord's host* in the foregoing chapter; and here is called Jehovah. Which shews he was not a created angel, but God himself; who alone could promise and perform what follows.

See, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.] Who were gathered together in this place out of several nations: it being a frontier city, which they made as strong as they were able, and defended by the most valiant men they had in the country. (See xxiv. 11.) For we are to suppose that they had refused the offers of peace, which God ordered to be first sent unto them, (Deut. xx. 10.) and, trusting to their forces, took up a desperate resolution not to yield upon any terms.

Ver. 3. *And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round the city once.*] At such a distance, I suppose, that they could not reach them from the city, with their arrows or stones slung against them.

Thus shall ye do six days.] Once every of those days, in such order as is described, ver. 6—9. This looked not like making war; but appeared to the besieged, it is probable, as a pastime.

Ver. 4. *And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns.*] Such trumpets as they used to blow withal in the year of jubilee, (Lev. xxv. 9.) for so the phrase is in the Hebrew, *trumpets of Jobel:* and I have observed elsewhere, that rams' horns not being hollow, trumpets could not be made of them.

And the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times.] The seventh day's march differed in two things from the other six; that they compassed it but once on other days, and made not the least noise, but now seven times, and made a great shout at the end of the last circuit. Concerning this number *seven,* see Drusius upon this place, and upon Lev. iv. 6. Grotius saith of it, in short, (upon 2 Chron. xxix. 21.) *heptas sacris propria; the number seven is proper to sacred things:* as appears by the seven angels and seven trumpets, (Rev. viii. 2.)

And the priests shall blow with the trumpets.] All the time they marched so often round the city. (See Tertullian, lib. ii. adv. Marcion, cap. 21.)

Ver. 5. *And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the rams' horns.*] A loud sound, protracted after a rustic manner, as Bochart interprets it in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 43.

And when ye hear the sound of the trumpet.] And were commanded by Joshua to shout, (ver. 16.)

All the people shall shout with a great shout.] Such as soldiers use when they make an onset upon a place, or when armies meet to give battle.

And the wall of the city shall fall down flat.] Or, fall *under it,* as it is in the Hebrew; which seems to signify, that the foundations of the wall were subverted, so that it sunk and fell into the ditch, or (as the Jews explain it) sunk into the very ground on which it stood, so as to leave no ruins, as in the common fall of walls; in which they suppose another miracle.

And the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.] The whole wall did not fall down, for Rahab's house stood, which was upon the wall, (ii. 15.) But such wide breaches were made every where round about, that the Israelites went straight forward, and found an easy entrance into this city, which the amazed inhabitants had no heart to defend; or rather, the whole wall sunk into the earth, only

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Rahab's house was left standing, which made the thing more remarkable. And thus God demonstrated, that it was his wonderful power which overthrew the city, against which they brought no engines nor battering rams, &c. ἀλλὰ μόνη φωνῇ σάλπιγγος κεραίνης, καὶ εὐχῇ δικαίου, &c. as Epiphanius speaks, Hæres. lxvi. n. 83.

Ver. 6. *And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant.*] This is the second time that the priests are ordered to carry the ark, which belonged to the office of the Kohathites. (See iii. 3.)

And let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord.] As the Lord commanded, ver. 4.

Ver. 7. *And he said unto the people, Pass on and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass before the ark of the Lord.*] This explains ver. 3. where he seems to command only *the men of war* to compass the city. But the meaning is, that the whole body of the people should march in this circuit, the men of war going before the ark, and the rest of the people following it, as it is explained ver. 9.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people.*] By the priests, as the LXX. understand it.

That the seven priests, bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns, passed on before the Lord, and blew with the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them.] According to the direction given ver. 6.

Ver. 9. *And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets.*] Here the order of their march explains the command, ver. 7.

And the rear-ward came after the ark.] That is, the rest of the people who had no arms, old men, women, and children, came in the rear of the ark. Concerning the word *measseph* (which we translate *rear-ward*), see Numb. x. 23. From whence may be gathered, that by this *rear-ward* is meant the tribe of Dan; as the Targum, Rasi, and Kimchi, understand it; who by the *armed men* beforementioned, understand the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, who were engaged by Moses to go "armed before the Lord to war," Numb. xxxii. 20. and renewed this engagement to Joshua, i. 12, &c.

The priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.] The words *priests* is not in the Hebrew, which made the Vulgar to translate the words in such a manner as if the whole multitude beforementioned made a sound with trumpets, "Buccinis omnia concrepabant." But there being no order for any to blow with trumpets but only the *priests*, our translators have done well to supply that word from ver. 4. as they do also ver. 13. where this is again repeated.

Ver. 10. *And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth.*] They were not to talk to one another as they went along, but march in a profound silence, before and after the Lord, waiting on him, to see what he would do for them.

Until the day I bid ye shout, then shall ye shout.] That is, on the seventh day, after they had compassed the city seven times.

Ver. 11. *So the ark of the Lord compassed the city, going about it once.*] It is uncertain upon what day they began to do this; but it is very probable (as the Jews say in their larger Chronicle) that it was the next day after the seven days of unleavened bread were ended.

And they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.] They spent the rest of the day in the camp to refresh themselves, and lay there the following night.

Ver. 12. *And Joshua rose up early in the morning.*] *viz.* That morning of the first day of compassing the city.

And the priests took up the ark of the Lord.] These words, and those that follow in the next verse, give a particular account of what was done the first day, according to that which was said in general, ver. 8, 9.

Ver. 13. *And the seven priests, bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord, went on continually.*] Without resting or making any stop, in a continued motion, till they had finished their circuit.

And blew with the trumpets.] As soon as they began their motion.

And the armed men went before them, but the rear-ward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.] Till they had ended their circuit.

Ver. 14. *And the second day they compassed the city once.*] In the same order before described.

And returned into the camp.] As they had done the first day, (ver. 11.)

And so they did six days.] The remaining four days were spent in the same pompous show, without striking a stroke, or speaking a word, that the subversion of the city might be ascribed wholly to the power of God, which secretly undermined the walls, and threw them down.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass on the seventh day.*] The Jewish writers say this was the sabbath, as Raymundus observes in his Pugio Fidei, and Jos. de Voysin in his Annotations upon him, p. 625. But I shall only mention the words of Kimchi, which are these: "The ark of the Lord compassed the city the first time, on the first day of the week: so our doctors, of pious memory, have delivered, that the seventh day whereon the city was taken was the sabbath, though they killed and burnt upon that day; for he that commanded the sabbath to be observed, commanded it now to be profaned for the destruction of Jericho, as he commanded burnt-offerings to be sacrificed on this day:" which is the very instance whereby our blessed Saviour justifies his doing some works upon the sabbath-day. And here I cannot but note, that it was Jehovah, according to this explication, who gave this command to compass the city on this day as well as any other. That great Lord who gave the command to keep the sabbath now dispensed with it: he that spake from Mount Sinai was the person who appeared to Joshua: for, whether this day was the sabbath or not, it is certain, one of the seven days wherein they were thus employed was the sabbath, and consequently their resting on that day was dispensed withal, by the same authority that made the law of the sabbath.

That he rose early about the dawning of the day.] All the six days, I suppose, they rose early, as they did upon the first; (ver. 12.) but upon this day, very early, as soon as they could see, because they had seven times as much work to do as they had upon the other days.

And compassed the city after the same manner seven times.] Not with a continued motion, I suppose, but resting awhile (perhaps after each circuit) to refresh themselves; otherwise, by such motion, they might have been dispirited, and unfit to attack Jericho, when the wall of it fell down before them.

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Only on that day they compassed the city seven times.] For so the Lord ordered, ver. 4.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass at the seventh time.*] As soon as they had ended the seventh circuit.

When the priests blew with the trumpets.] Such a long sound as is mentioned, ver. 5.

Joshua said unto the people.] By such officers as he had appointed to give the order, when they heard that unusual sound of the trumpet.

Shout.] In assured hope of victory, as it follows in the next words, *for the Lord hath given you the city.*

Ver. 17. *And the city shall be accursed.*] All the commands given in this, and in the two following verses, could not be delivered just before he bade them shout; but they had been given some time before they began to march the seventh time about the city. And if any thing of these matters was repeated now, it was very briefly, by bidding them remember the orders they had received concerning the city and all that was therein.

I have observed elsewhere, that this word *cherem* (which we translate *accursed*) signifies sometimes the gift itself, which is devoted to God for his uses, (Lev. xxvii. 24.) sometimes that which is devoted to perpetual destruction, by the right which God hath to punish capital enmities to him, as here in this place. And thus, Mr. Selden observes, the great Sanhedrin might devote those to destruction, who in war did not observe such charges as were given them; of which they find an instance in Judg. xxi. 5. (See him, lib. iv. de Jure Nat. et Gentium, cap. 6.)

Even it and all that are therein to the Lord.] As the first-fruits of their victories, in the land of Canaan. All whose inhabitants God ordered to be exterminated; but thought fit to make such an example of the first that refused to submit, as to raze their very city, and command it never to be built again: for that this was done by a particular order from God, appears from 1 Kings xvi. 34. Thus he commanded even such cities in Israel to be destroyed, as should hereafter revolt to idolatry, Deut. xiii. 15—17.

Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house.] Which is explained in the execution of this order, ver. 23.

Because she hid the messengers.] Who sware unto her that she should be preserved: and therefore, both in justice and gratitude, Joshua was bound to take care of her; and, no doubt, had order from God to make good the oath of the spies.

That we sent.] This seems to import, that Joshua sent the spies by the advice or consent of the elders; though it may signify no more but that he sent them upon a public account. (See chap. ii. 1. 23.)

Ver. 18. *And you, in any wise, keep yourselves from the accursed thing.*] Take heed, lest you meddle with any of the spoils which are devoted to God, and appropriate them to your own use.

Lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing.] Bring yourselves under the same sentence of being devoted to destruction.

And make the camp of Israel a curse.] And, more than that, expose the whole camp to the same danger. For many times God takes occasion to punish the whole body of a people for their other sins, when some of them only have hig ly offended him.

And trouble it.] Disturb the course of their victories.

Ver. 19. *But all the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron.*] And other metals, I suppose.

Are consecrated to the Lord.] Except the gold and silver of their images, which were utterly to be destroyed, according to an express command of God, Deut. vii. 25, 26.

They shall come into the treasury of the Lord.] Which was in the tabernacle. To the service of which such things were wholly appropriated, and might not be applied to any other use. But it is very probable, that before such things were put into the treasury they were purified, by making them go through the fire: according to the law, Numb. xxxi. 22, 23. The Jews think these things were given to God, because the city was taken on the sabbath.

Ver. 20. *So the people shouted, when the priests blew with the trumpets.*] As they had been commanded, ver. 16.

And it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout.] This is repeated to shew, that this was all that the people contributed to the expugnation of this city: which they wholly ascribed unto God.

That the wall fell down flat.] As the Lord had promised, ver. 5.

So that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.] As it was easy to do, when the garrison was in such a consternation, at the sudden fall of the wall, without any visible force to throw it down; that, in all likelihood, they could make little or no resistance.

Ver. 21. *And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.*] See Deut. xx. 16, 17. Some have observed that there are no *camels* here mentioned, which were not commonly bred in this country; much less *mules*, which were not known in the land of Israel till the days of David. As Bochart concludes from the mention, upon several occasions, of oxen, sheep, and asses; but never of these creatures till his time. But if there were any other animals in Jericho besides these here named, they were all killed; for that was the law of the *cherem*. As for their killing of *infants* and *women*, see Grotius, lib. iii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 4. sect. 9. And it must also be remembered, that they were a people guilty of such foul idolatry, that it was fit the whole race of them should be destroyed, as Sodom was; where all the children perished, as well as others. And this was a type of the entire destruction of New Babylon, mentioned in the Revelation.

Ver. 22. *But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country.*] He had given this order before the falling of the wall; when they began their march on the seventh day, the seventh time, and before they shouted.

Go into the harlot's house.] Which, by the wonderful providence of God over her, was left standing, with part of the wall upon which it was built, when the rest sunk into the ground.

And bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath.] With her in the house.

As ye sware unto her.] Chap. ii. 14.

Ver. 23. *And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred.*] By

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this it appears, that all related to her, who took shelter under her roof, were preserved from destruction. Such is the great clemency of God, who, for the sake of one excellent woman, spared a great many that had nothing to deserve his favour.

And left them without the camp of Israel.] They were brought out of the house, because it was to be burnt, with all the rest of the city: which was to be laid desolate without inhabitant. And they were carried without the camp of Israel, because it was holy by the presence of the Lord there: which made it unlawful for them to enter into it, till they had abjured their gentile superstition; and by circumcision (and by baptism, as the custom was in after-times, if not now) admitted into the body of the Israelites.

Ver. 24. *And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein.*] By the just judgment of God upon it, for the horrible wickedness committed therein. (See Grotius, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. iii. cap. 12. sect. 2.)

Only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass, and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.] As had been enjoined before they took the city, ver. 19.

Ver. 25. *And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had.*] It is likely her father and his household gave credit to what she said; and consequently were converted, as she was, to the true religion, by what they had heard before, and now saw with their own eyes, of the wonderful works of God.

And she dwelleth in Israel unto this day.] Was incorporated with the Israelites, and made a member of their body; as all her kindred, it is likely, were: at least, they became proselytes of the gate (as they called those who renounced idolatry, and worshipped the God of Israel), though they were not circumcised. Concerning this phrase *unto this day*, see before, iv. 9.

Because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.] Which proceeded not merely from her humanity, but was a noble act of courageous faith.

Ver. 26. *And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying.*] He made the elders and heads of their several tribes (I suppose) bind themselves by a solemn oath, and they took the same security of all the people; adding a curse upon themselves and their posterity, if any of them broke this oath.

Cursed be the man before the Lord.] This shews that this *cherem*, whereby he adjudged him and his family to destruction who should rebuild Jericho, was a sentence pronounced by the Lord, and not by Joshua, without his order. And so we read expressly in the first book of the Kings, xvi. *ult.* See concerning this *cherem*, Mr. Selden, lib. iv. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 7. p. 505.

That riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho.] Whose ruins God would have remain, as a perpetual monument of his power and of his severity. So Maimonides, in his More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 50. "This anathema (saith he) was pronounced, that the miracle of the subversion of Jericho might be kept in perpetual memory: for whosoever saw the walls sunk deep into the earth (as he understands it), would clearly discern that this was not the form of a building destroyed by man, but miraculously thrown down by God."

He shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born.] That is, in the death of his first-born.

And in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.] The meaning is, in the progress of the work, the rest of his children should die: and when he had finished it (which was when he *set up its gates*) he should lose the last of them. Which was fulfilled exactly in the days of Ahab, as we read in the place beforenamed, (1 Kings xvi. 34.) Which, by the way, shews this book of Joshua to have been older than the book of the Kings.

We are not to imagine that this anathema reached any farther, than to the builder of Jericho and his family; not to those who should inhabit it after it was rebuilt. For there was a company of prophets who made no scruple to settle here in future times, (2 Kings i. 15.) And if it had been built in any other place, and not on the ruins of the old city (though they had given it the name of Jericho), one cannot think he that built it would have fallen under this curse. Which either he did not mind, or did not believe, otherwise he would not have adventured to restore this city: unto which he was tempted by its pleasant situation, (2 Kings i. 19.)

Ver. 27. *So the Lord was with Joshua.*] Thus God made good his promise to him, i. 5. 9. where the Targum, as I observed, hath it, *The Word of the Lord thy God shall be thy helper.* And so these words run in that paraphrase, *And the Word of the Lord helped Joshua:* that Divine Person who appeared to him, and encouraged him in this undertaking, chap. v. 13, 14, &c.

And his fame was noised throughout all the country.] There was no part of the country which did not hear of their wonderful entrance into it over Jordan; and of the miraculous taking of Jericho; and the execution done there; which made the name of Joshua famous among them, as a captain before whom rivers fled, and the strongest walls fell down flat.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *BUT the children of Israel.*] That is, one among them. Which is an usual form of speech in the Holy Scriptures, to ascribe that to many indefinitely wherein one alone is concerned; because, where men are united in a society, they are all to partake in the good or evil that every of their members doth. Instance of which we find in Gen. viii. 4. xix. 29. xxiii. 6. Judges xii. 7. Matt. xxvi. 8. See Bochart in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 17. p. 212. and a great many more instances he heaps up, par. ii. lib. v. cap. 3. p. 669.

Committed a trespass in the accursed thing.] Offended God by purloining to his own use some of the spoils which were devoted to destruction, or appropriated to God's treasury, with a curse upon him that meddled with them.

For Achan the son of Carmi.] Who is called Achar in 1 Chron. ii. 7. because he having troubled Israel (as the word *Achar* signifies, ver. 25. of this chapter), it is likely, that, in aftertimes, they turned his name into Achar, instead of Achan.

The son of Zabdi.] Who is called Zimri, 1 Chron. ii. 6.

The son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah.] For we find Zerah was the son of Judah, and came with him into Egypt when he was very young; for we read of no children he had, (Gen. xlvi. 12.) And if we suppose him to have

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begotten Zabdi when he was seventy years old, and allow as many years before Zabdi begat Carmi, and as many before Carmi begat Achan; we may make account (with Bonfrerius) that Achan was now about fifty years old; an age wherein many men begin to be more covetous than they were in their youth.

Took of the accursed thing.] What it was he himself confesses, ver. 21.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.] The sin of one member of the body provoked the Divine Majesty to express his displeasure against them all (which they deserved upon other accounts), that they might be awakened to find out, and to punish him who had brought them into great danger.

This preface is made to this chapter, to shew whence the ill success they had at Ai proceeded.

Ver. 2. *And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai.*] Called Hai in Abraham's time, (Gen. xii. 8.) Which Joshua, I suppose, had summoned to surrender, according to the precept in Deut. xx. 10. but they had refused. It was a city about three miles distant from Jericho, as the Jews say in Semoth Rabbah; which Masius takes to signify three leagues.

Which is beside Beth-aven.] Whether Beth-aven here signify a city, or a wilderness, is uncertain. (See xviii. 12.)

On the east side of Beth-el.] A place which was but one league from Ai, as Masius computes, and lay westward of it, (Gen. xii. 8.) for the war was carried on from the east, where Jericho was, to the western parts of the country. It was called Beth-aven in future times, by way of reproach, when the golden calves were set up in it; which made it not a *house of God* (as *Beth-el* signifies), but a *house of iniquity; i. e.* idolatry, which is the import of *Beth-aven.* But it is plain from hence, that these were two distinct places.

And spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.] How it lay, and how it was fortified, &c. And it seems to have been seated in the hilly country; and belonged to the Amorites, (ver. 7.)

Ver. 3. *And they returned unto Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up, and smite Ai,* &c.] They thought this number would be sufficient, because, as it follows in the end of the verse, *they were but few;* and therefore they would not have all Israel put to the trouble of marching thither. In which counsel a good providence of God interposed; for if the flight of three thousand men put the Israelites into such a consternation, (as we read, ver. 5, 6.) what a condition would they have been in, if all the people had been put to the worse? as they would have been, if they had attacked Ai, while this guilt remained among them.

Ver. 4. *So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; and they fled before the men of Ai.*] Who seeing so small a number, came out and engaged the Israelites; whose courage quite failed them, so that they seem not to have struck a stroke, but immediately ran away. For God had left them; to whom they owed all their valour and victories.

Ver. 5. *And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men.*] Of the hindmost of them, it is most likely, who could not run away so fast as the rest.

For they chased them from before the gate.] Of the city Ai.

Unto Shebarim.] A place, I suppose, between Ai and Jericho; which the Targum thinks had its name from the rout of the Israelites there.

And smote them in the going down.] Till they came to the plains of Jericho. For Ai standing on a hill, there was a descent from thence thither.

Wherefore the hearts of the people melted.] As wax doth before the fire, (Psal. lxviii. 2.) or as ice before the sun.

And became as water.] Weak and wavering, in uncertain resolutions, not knowing what to do.

Ver. 6. *And Joshua rent his clothes.*] As the manner was when they were full of grief, upon occasion of any great calamity, or the commission of any great crime. Which custom was very ancient, (Gen. xxxvii. 34. xliv. 13.) and continued in the times of the prophets, who make it a crime that men did not rend their clothes when grievous sins were committed.

And fell to the earth upon his face.] To make his supplication to God for mercy.

Before the ark of the Lord.] Not in the sanctuary, but with his face towards it. In imitation of which, the precentor in the Jewish synagogue, at this day, falls down before the chest, wherein they keep the book of the law, when he takes it out to read; as Buxtorf observes in his Synag. Judaica. And on solemn fast-days, as the Mischna tells, such prostrations were usual.

Until the even-tide.] Continued all day in fasting and prayer to God.

He and the elders of Israel.] Who rent their clothes, I suppose, as he had done; and then presented themselves in this mournful manner before God to implore his mercy.

And put dust upon their heads.] This was still a higher expression of great grief, and of a deep sense of their unworthiness to be relieved. Which was very usual in this nation, (1 Sam. iv. 12. 2 Sam. i. 2, &c.) and was imitated by the gentiles: as we see in the example of the Ninevites, (Jonah iii. 6.) and of Achilles, who bewailed the death of Patroclus by throwing dust on his head, and lying down in the dust, as Homer describes it in Iliad Σ. ver. 23, 24.

Ver. 7. *And Joshua said, Alas! O Lord God.*] A form of speech dolefully bewailing their forlorn condition: which did not misbecome so great a captain as Joshua was; for the most generous spirits have the most tender sense of humanity, as Arius Montanus excellently discourses upon this place.

Wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us?] This is not a sinful expostulation with God (for Joshua is not reprehended for it, but graciously instructed), but only a confession of his ignorance, why God should do such wonders for them as he had done, and now let them fall into the hands of those enemies whom they had conquered on the other side of Jordan. And it is as if he had said, I am confounded in my thoughts, being unable to understand why, &c. and consequently, he humbly desired to be informed in the reason of this change of his providence.

Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!] As far as he could apprehend, they had better have rested satisfied with what they had in posses-

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sion, than be thus defeated in their attempt to acquire more.

Ver. 8. *O Lord, what shall I say.*] What course shall I take? or, how shall I answer the reproaches of our insulting enemies?

When Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?] What hope is there of conquering them or preserving ourselves?

Ver. 9. *For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land, will hear of it.*] They that are at the greatest distance, by the sea-side, will hear the report of our defeat, which will soon be spread over the whole country.

And shall environ us round about.] Be encouraged thereby to gather all their forces together and surround us.

And cut off our name from the earth.] Utterly destroy us.

And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?] And, which was worse, God would lose the glory of all the miracles he had wrought, and be thought unable to accomplish what he had begun to do for his people. This argument Moses had formerly pressed, (Exod. xxxii. 12. Numb. xiv. 16. Deut. ix. 28.) and God himself, in the song which he bade Moses teach the people, makes use of it. (Deut. xxxii. 26, 27.)

Ver. 10. *And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; why liest thou thus upon thy face?*] These words are not a reproof, but a gracious answer to his prayers; for when a person who supplicates a prince is commanded to rise up from his knees, it is a token of acceptance.

Ver. 11. *Israel hath sinned.*] See ver. 1.

And they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them.] They had promised obedience to all God's commands, (Exod. xxiv. 7.) and assured Joshua they would do whatsoever he bade them, (i. 16—18.) And this was a late command delivered by him from God, that they should not meddle with any thing devoted to God, with a solemn curse.

For they have even taken of the accursed thing.] That which belongs to me, ver. 1.

And have also stolen, and dissembled also.] Not only purloined that which God reserved to himself, but denied it after the fact was done. For I suppose Joshua, after the destruction of Jericho, had made inquiry, whether the silver and gold, &c. were brought into the treasury, and whether they had destroyed all other things, as God commanded; and they all answered, that they had.

And they have put it even amongst their own stuff.] To conceal it from discovery: or, it is an expression of his impudent transgression of God's command, in converting it immediately to his own private use. For in this verse the crime is aggravated in a gradual manner, in that Achan had not only sinned, but against the covenant they had solemnly made with him; and that in a matter of great importance, in which he had lately laid his injunctions upon them: having not only taken to himself what belonged to God, but done it by way of stealth, as if he could not see it; and likewise denied the doing of it; and persisting in the sin, by mixing what he had stolen with his own proper goods.

Ver. 12. *Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed.*] By having a man among them who was fallen under the curse of God.

Neither will I be with you any more, except you destroy the accursed from among you.] These words shew that only one man among them was accursed, though they all suffered for it; and were to continue to suffer, till he was destroyed. For now that they knew there had been such a crime committed among them, they had been as guilty as Achan if they had not punished it.

Ver. 13. *Up.*] He was not still lying on the ground, for God had bid him rise before, and he, I suppose, had obeyed him: but this is a word whereby he quickens him to make all the speed he could, to do as he now directed him.

Sanctify the people.] Call upon them to sanctify themselves; as it here follows.

And say unto them, Sanctify yourselves.] As they did when they were to meet the Lord at Mount Sinai, (Exod. xix. 10, &c.) and as they were lately commanded to do when he led them over Jordan, (iii. 5.) For now they were to appear before his majesty, that an inquisition might be made who he was that had been guilty of this foul crime.

To-morrow.] For he would not have the guilt remain any longer upon them.

For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel.] He speaks in this style, both to awaken them to sanctify themselves, and also to appear before the Lord next morning.

Thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.] Both the person that had violated the anathema, and the thing he had purloined.

Ver. 14. *In the morning therefore ye shall be brought.*] Before the Lord.

According to your tribes.] Some principal persons of every tribe, representing the rest, were set before the Lord.

And it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man.] There is no difficulty in these words, but only to understand how this inquisition was made, and the author of the fact discovered: which is not here expressed, there being no words to signify how the Lord took one tribe, and family, and household, and person, from the rest. The Jews (who are never at a loss in these matters) tell us, that when they stood before the sanctuary, the high-priest was in it with the *urim* and *thummim;* wherein were twelve stones, with the names of the children of Israel engraven in them. And when that tribe, suppose, to which the guilty person belonged, was called, that stone in which was the name of that tribe changed colour; and so it did when the family, and the household, and the person, were called. But this is a mere fancy, of the stones shining, or becoming duskish; by which, I have shewn elsewhere, answers could not be given to inquiries by *urim* and *thummim.* And what others of them say is not much better: for instance, Kimchi, who tells us some are of opinion, that they being made to pass before the ark, the guilty could not stir a foot. (See several other conceits in Buxtorf's Historia Urim et Thummim, p. 304, &c.)

But the plainest account of this matter is this, that they were discovered by casting of lots, in the presence of God;

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which was an usual way in aftertimes of discovering noxious persons, (1 Sam. xiv. 41, 42. Jonah i. 7.) So Josephus, lib. v. cap. 1. and Ralbag.

Ver. 15. *And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire.*] After they had stoned him to death with stones, (ver. 25.)

He and all that he hath.] His children, and his cattle; his tent, and all his goods; as it is explained ver. 24.

Because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord.] See ver. 11.

And because he hath wrought folly in Israel.] Committed a very heinous sin.

Ver. 16. *So Joshua rose up early in the morning.*] It is probable he acquainted nobody with these orders; but made all the haste he could to put them in execution: for if they had been known abroad, Achan's guilt might have made him flee from so terrible a sentence.

And brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken.] Who, if we may believe the Jews, immediately stood to their arms, and would not lay them down, till they saw the man apprehended and punished who had done this thing.

Ver. 17. *And he brought the family of Judah,* &c.] Every family of that tribe, till that of the Zarhites was taken.

And he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man.] That is, every head of their several households, as he was directed, ver. 14.

And Zabdi was taken.] That is, the lot fell upon his household.

Ver. 18. *And he brought his household man by man; and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.*] Here the Samaritan Chronicle tells the very same story with the Talmudists, that the stone in the breast-plate of the high-priest, in which was engraven the name of Judah, was darkened when Achan was named. (See Hottinger's Smegma Orientale, cap. 8. p. 505.)

Ver. 19. *And Joshua said unto Achan, My son.*] All great minds are full of tenderness and compassion; and nothing more unbecomes a prince than violent passion: which Joshua was so far from expressing on this occasion, that he speaks to him with the greatest mildness imaginable.

Give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel.] The Samaritan Chronicle, beforenamed, paraphrases this not amiss: *Lift up thine eyes to the King of heaven and earth, and acknowledge that nothing can be hid from him; who knows the greatest secrets.*

And make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done.] Openly confess thy guilt; and relate to me what it is, that thou hast converted to thine own use.

Hide it not from me.] Who thou seest have God at hand, to discover that which none of us know but thyself.

Ver. 20. *And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel.*] Which the Samaritan Chronicle thus expresses; *I acknowledge that I have grievously sinned before God, who knows all secret and hidden things: for I have prevaricated against the covenant of God, and against his ambassador.*

And thus and thus have I done.] Committed this sin, with such circumstances as here follow.

Ver. 21. *When I saw among the spoils.*] He doth not say in what place; but the forenamed Chronicle saith, it was as he entered into one of their temples.

A goodly Babylonish garment.] There are a great many opinions about this garment; which Bochartus most probably judges to have been a *various garment,* as the LXX. translate it; that is, of *divers colours,* wherein were several figures either woven or wrought with a needle: for which sort of work Babylon was famous, insomuch that they were called *painted garments;* which made a most glorious show, and therefore was very inviting to the eye of Achan: who was tempted by its lustre, to reserve one of these garments for his own use, or to sell; for they were of an immense price. See him in his Phaleg. lib. i. cap. 6. where he hath a long dissertation about this garment.

And two hundred shekels of silver.] Which is as much as a hundred German dollars, as Masius observes.

And a wedge of gold.] In the Hebrew a *tongue;* for it had that shape.

Of fifty shekels' weight.] This may be understood two ways; either that it was worth so many shekels in value, that is, fifty dollars; or, that it weighed as much as fifty shekels, that is, three hundred dollars. The last sense Masius thinks most probable.

Then I coveted, and took them.] To his own use; when he should have brought them into God's treasury, (James i. 15.)

And, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent.] Till he could have time to dispose of them to his best advantage.

And the silver under it.] The silver was immediately under the Babylonish garment, and the gold under that: for both silver and gold are here meant, though one only mentioned.

Ver. 22. *Then Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent.*] Lest any one should remove them, and render the fact dubious; and that the children of Israel might be speedily expiated.

And, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.] They found the Babylonish garment (as was said before) hid in the earth, and the silver and gold under it. The LXX. indeed, understand it, as if the gold and Babylonish garment were uppermost, and the silver under them: for so they translate these words, both here and in the foregoing verse, τὸ ἀργύριον ὑποκάτω αὐτῶν, *the silver under them.* The wedge of gold, perhaps, was wrapped in the Babylonish garment; and so the silver might be said to lie either *under it,* or *under them.*

Ver. 23. *And they took them out of the midst of the tent.*] Where he told them he had buried these things.

And brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel.] For they were all assembled at the tabernacle, waiting to see the issue of this matter.

And laid them before the Lord.] That the fact might be manifest, and the Lord acknowledged to be omniscient.

Ver. 24. *And Joshua, and all Israel with him.*] By an universal consent.

Took Achan the son of Zerah.] He was Zerah's great-grandchild.

And the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold.] Which God would not have put into his treasury, after they had been thus perverted to a private use.

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And his sons, and his daughters.] This seems very hard, that they should be executed in such a terrible manner, as here follows, for their father's fault. But the Jews in Pirke Eliezer say, they were punished because they were privy to their father's stealth, and concealed it. Others think this was a necessary severity in the beginning of a new empire, and of a plentiful fortune, upon which they now entered; that they might not wantonly abuse it. But there are those who think this is but a seeming difficulty; Achan alone being stoned (as we read in the next verse, *all Israel stoned him with stones),* and his children brought forth to be spectators of it. And when it is said, in the conclusion of the next verse, *they stoned them with stones,* it relates to his oxen, and asses, and sheep, which were stoned with him. (See Guil. Vorstius, in his annotations on Pirke Eliezer, p. 224.)

And his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had.] This was done, to represent to the people the heinousness of this offence; and to strike such a terror into them, that they should not dare to commit the like.

And they brought them unto the valley of Achor.] Which had its name from him, ver. 26. (See there.)

Ver. 25. *And Joshua said.*] He was the sole judge, as the Jews think, in this matter. And whereas, by the law, none might be condemned out of the mouth of one witness, nor was any judge to sit alone without assistants (according to their doctors), nor any man's testimony to be admitted against himself (because, in a mad fit, he might undo himself), yet their king had this singular prerogative, that he might try a man alone by himself, and condemn him out of the mouth of one witness, nay, from his own confession; as Joshua did here (who was their king or supreme governor) in Achan's case; and as David did afterward in the case of the Amalekite, 2 Sam. i. 15. (See G. Schickard, in his Jus Regium, cap. 4. Theor. 14.) But Joshua is impertinently alleged as a proof of this extraordinary power; for it was God who convicted Achan, and pronounced this sentence; which Joshua only put in execution.

Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day.] The doctors in the Jerusalem Talmud, in the treatise Sanhedrin, cap. 6. fancy there is a peculiar emphasis in these words, *this day.* As if he had said, *In this day thou shalt be troubled, but thou shalt not be troubled in the world to come.* For they think that he having given glory to God, by confessing his sin, had all his punishment here.

All agree Joshua alludes to his name; the word *Achar* signifying to *trouble* or *disturb.* Or rather, his name was changed from Achan unto Achar, because of this disturbance which he gave to all Israel.

And all Israel stoned him with stones.] Which was a punishment of great crimes, as I have observed elsewhere. See Lev. xx. 9. 11—13, &c. as I remember. This is said to be done by *all Israel;* because they were all present, and consenting to it.

And burnt them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.] Burnt their dead carcasses. Why they were both stoned and also burnt, Eliezer in his Pirke, and Vorstius upon him, gives a reason in the place abovenamed.

Ver. 26. *And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day.*] As a monument of his sin, and of God's judgment upon him. Thus they did with Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 17. And houses or cities which were destroyed, are said to be turned into a *heap,* (Isa. xxv. 2.) or *heaps,* (Jer. ix. 11.) as a token of their utter ruin.

And the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger.] Was reconciled to his people, after they had executed his sentence against him, that provoked his anger. So the Samaritan Chronicle: *Thus the anger of God was removed from the children of Israel, and he was pleased with what they had done.* (See Deut. xiii. 17.)

Wherefore the name of that place.] Where he was stoned and burnt.

Was called The Valley of Achor, unto this day.] From that time all the people called this place by that name, in memory of this execution done upon Achar: so he was also called ever after this. For though his name was Achan, yet from henceforward they called him Achar, the troubler of Israel. And so he is here called in the Syriac version, and by Josephus, Athanasius, Basil, and others mentioned by Bochartus; as Ezra himself also calls him, 1 Chron. ii. 7. See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 31. in the latter end.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *AND the Lord said unto Joshua.*] Who, it is likely, now consulted God about their progress in this war: which he had not done before, (vii. 2.) being sufficiently authorized by what God had often said to him, and by their success against Jericho: but this late defeat before Ai, might make him think it necessary to take advice of the Divine Majesty, before he attempted any thing farther.

Fear not, neither be dismayed.] Because of the late ill success; of which he now knew the cause; which was removed.

Take all the people of war with thee.] This order may seem strange, since the people themselves thought two or three thousand were sufficient, if God were with them. But God would have them all to share in the spoil of Ai; that they who had obeyed him in abstaining from laying their hands on any thing in Jericho, might be now rewarded for it, by the prey of this city; as it follows in the next verse.

And arise, go up to Ai.] Which it appears by this was in the hill country.

I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land.] He bids him be confident of a complete victory, as if he had already won it.

Ver. 2. *And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst to Jericho and her king.*] Only with such difference, as follows in the next words.

Only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves.] None of the silver or gold, or any thing else, was separated to God's use, nor ordered to be destroyed; but they were to enjoy it all entirely themselves.

Lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.] On the west of it; for they were now in Gilgal, which lay eastward.

Ver. 3. *So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai.*] In obedience to the Divine direction, (ver. 1.)

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And Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night.] When they were less liable to be observed.

Ver. 4. *And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city.*] Like a great general, he assigns their post to every part of the army.

Go not very far from the city.] Lie as close to it as you can, without being discovered.

But be ye all ready.] To seize upon the city, when all the people were drawn out of it.

Ver. 5. *And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city.*] As if they intended to assault it.

And it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first.] Which he rationally presumed they would, being flushed with such good success.

That we will flee before them.] Counterfeit a flight, as soon as they appeared.

Ver. 6. *For they will come out after us, till we have drawn them from the city.*] Pursue them, with all their force.

For they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them.] He gives the reason of their flight, without striking of a stroke (as we now speak), that all the people might be enticed out of the city, in pursuit of them, as he concluded they would be; because now there was a greater number of the Israelites than before; which would require their whole power to deal withal.

Ver. 7. *Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city.*] Upon the signal given, mentioned ver. 18.

For the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand.] He would not have them fear to enter the city; which he assured them God would put into their possession.

Ver. 8. *And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire.*] The gate where they entered, or some of the skirts of the city; as a token they were possessed of it. For they were to take the spoil of the city before they burnt it, (ver. 28.)

According to the commandment of the Lord shall ye do.] And not transgress, as Achan did.

See, I have commanded you.] Acquainted them with the will of God; in the observance of which they might be confident of success.

Ver. 9. *Joshua therefore sent them forth, and they went to lie in ambush.*] He selected these thirty thousand men out of the rest of the army; and when it was dark they went upon the forenamed design.

And Joshua lodged that night among the people.] The forenamed detachment (as we now speak) was commanded by some great officer, in whom Joshua confided; but he himself lay all night in the body of the army; that he might be ready in the morning to give the necessary orders.

Ver. 10. *And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people.*] He first gave orders to the officers (for he could not do it himself alone) to see that none of the people were wanting.

And went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai.] And when he commanded them to march, he was attended by the elders of Israel, leading them on towards Ai. But it is uncertain who are here meant by the *elders of Israel*. Some think, the chief commanders in the army; but they are never called *elders*, much less the *elders of Israel*. But the rulers and judges are called by this name, who, I suppose, waited upon Joshua as a council of war: being men authorized by God to assist the supreme governor, (Numb. xi. 16. 24, 25.)

Ver. 11. *And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up and drew nigh, and came before the city.*] The distance between Gilgal and Ai being but three leagues, it is likely, the people being mustered early in the morning, they got thither before noon. Those words, *even the men of war that were with him*, seem to be opposed to the thirty thousand, whom he had sent before to lie in ambush, (ver. 3.)

And pitched on the north side of Ai.] Here the main body of the army lay, behind the hills, it is likely, so that they were not discovered till the evening, or the next day.

Now there was a valley between them and Ai.] Where they of Ai, I suppose, drew up; when they resolved to engage them.

Ver. 12. *And took about five thousand, and set them to lie in ambush between Beth-el and Ai.*] Which places were but a league distant one from the other. (See vii. 2.)

On the west side of the city.] Where the former detachment was ordered to lie, ver. 4. But these seem to have been a distinct party from them, and sent, it is likely, for another purpose; to intercept all those that might think to save themselves, by flying through by-ways, which they were to guard. There are those, indeed, who think that there were but thirty thousand men in all employed in this expedition against Ai; and out of them these *five thousand* men were sent to lie in ambush, that they might, in convenient time, set fire to the city. (See Masius.) But this is so directly contrary to God's command, to *take all the people of war with him*, ver. 1. and to what is said ver. 3. 11. that I cannot think it to be true. One had better say, this party was added to strengthen the thirty thousand men in their undertaking.

Ver. 13. *And when they had set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liersin wait on the west side of the city.*] That is, when things were thus disposed about the evening.

Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.] To pray to God, it is likely, for a blessing upon their enterprise.

Ver. 14. *And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it.*] That is, was informed of their investing the city on the north side of it; which, it is likely, was in the evening, or late that night.

That they hasted.] He called a council, and they speedily resolved to dislodge the Israelites.

And rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people.] The meaning is, all that could fight went out, and their king at the head of them.

At a time appointed.] They had agreed all to issue out at several gates (it is likely) at a certain hour.

Before the plain.] He means, perhaps, the valley which lay between Ai and the camp of Israel; before which they drew up their army to engage the Israelites.

But he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city.] The king had no intelligence of that strong party, which Joshua had sent to lie behind the city; they keeping, I suppose, their gates shut, (as they did at Jericho, that none could get in or go out, vi. 1.) and suspecting no danger from the western coast where they lay,

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but only from the east, whence they knew the Israelites were to march.

Ver. 15. *And Joshua, and all Israel, made as if they were beaten before them.*] At the first onset, Joshua himself turned his back, and all the rest of his army; as if they durst not stand before them.

And fled by the way of the wilderness.] Which lay between Jericho and Ai.

Ver. 16. *And all the people that were in Ai.*] Who were able to fight.

Were called together to pursue them.] I suppose some of the men of war might be left in the city till they saw the Israelites fly, and then they were all called out (as ver. 14. is to be understood) together with those of Beth-el, who were come to their assistance; being near neighbours, and both under the same king.

And they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city.] They were so eager in their pursuit, that they were drawn to a greater distance from Ai than they would have been, if they had considered the danger of leaving it naked.

Ver. 17. *And there was not a man left in Ai.*] None that were able to fight.

Or Beth-el, that went not out after Israel.] For they of Beth-el, it appears by these words, were come to the assistance of Ai, before any of the army of Israel arrived: for afterward they could not, because the ambush lay between Beth-el and Ai, (ver. 9.)

And they left the city open, and pursued after Israel.] There was not so much as a man left to guard the gates; but all were engaged in the pursuit.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord said unto Joshua.*] God secretly suggested to him, that now was the time for the ambush to fall upon the city; when their army was drawn so far from it, that they could not return soon enough to relieve it.

Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand towards Ai.] He bids him face about (as we now speak) and stop the flight of the Israelites. It is much disputed what the Hebrew word *chidon* signifies; which the Vulgar Latin translates a *shield*. But Bochartus hath taken a great deal of pains to shew, that it every where signifies in Scripture a *spear* (as we translate it), or a *lance*, or some kind of such-like offensive weapon; especially in this place, he thinks, there can be no doubt of it: for it was a weapon he had in his hand, and was to stretch forth towards the city; that it might be a signal to those in ambush to rise and enter the city; and to those who fled to make a stand, and encounter the enemy. To which purpose, nothing could be more proper than a spear, with a flag, it is highly probable, at the end of it (like to our ensigns), which made it more visible. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 8. p. 135, &c.) The LXX. here translate it γαῖσον, which Suidas says signifies a kind of weapon, οἷον δόρατος, *like to a spear*. See the same most learned author, in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 42. p. 744.

For I will give it into thy hand.] As he promised, ver. 1.

And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand towards the city.] That all Israel might see it; as they did the rod of Moses, when they fought against Amalek.

Ver. 19. *And the ambush rose quickly out of their place.*] Being admonished by some Divine suggestion (as Masius thinks) as well as by the signal, that now was the time to execute their design.

And they came as soon as he had stretched out his hand.] Which they might see from some of the hills, at the back of which they lay. But why they should watch for this sign, or understand what it meant, unless Joshua had received this order, and told it them before they went, cannot be conceived.

And they entered into the city, and took it.] For there was nobody to oppose them.

And hasted and set the city on fire.] In one place; which, it is likely, was on the north side of the city; that both the Israelites and the people of Ai might see the smoke. This the Lord had strictly commanded, (see ver. 8.) which made them make such *haste*, as soon as they had possessed themselves of the city, to set fire to it.

Ver. 20. *And when the men of Ai looked behind them.*] I suppose there was a great shout made by all the Israelites, when they saw the smoke ascend; which made the men of Ai look about them.

They saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven.] The firing of any out-houses, or barns, was sufficient to make such a smoke; for it is certain the city was not yet burnt. (See ver. 28.)

And they had no power to flee this way or that way.] Either they were so dismayed, that they stood stock-still (as we speak), or found themselves so environed, that they could no way escape. For on the north and east sides, the great army came upon them; and on the west the ambush issued forth against them; and the other five thousand men blocked up their way on the south: which could not but very much amaze and perplex their minds; and the more, to see all their vain-glorious hopes vanished, which their king no doubt had entertained, of stopping the progress of the Israelites, and being the deliverer of his country.

And the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers.] Ver. 15. They counterfeited a flight no longer, but now boldly looked their enemies in the face.

Ver. 21. *And when Joshua and all Israel saw.*] By this it is plain the whole body of the men were here; and not only three thousand of them, as some suppose. (See ver. 12.)

That the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended.] Whereby they understood it was taken.

Then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai.] After they had made a stand awhile, and rallied, they fell upon the men of Ai, and made a great slaughter of them.

Ver. 22. *And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side; and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape.*] By this stratagem they were all entirely cut off.

Ver. 23. *And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.*] Perhaps they were ordered so to do, that he might be made a public spectacle of the Divine vengeance.

Ver. 24. *And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai.*] That is, the men of war.

In the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them.] By this it appears, that they fled before the Israelites as

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soon as they turned upon them, having no heart to fight them, (ver. 20.)

And when they were all fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed.] This is repeated to express a complete victory.

That all the Israelites returned unto Ai.] From whence they counterfeited a flight.

And smote it with the edge of the sword.] All the people that were left in it, as every one was that was not able to go to war.

Ver. 25. *And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand.*] By which it appears this was no great city; and that they who were sent to view the country had reason to think a small party sufficient to subdue it, (vii. 2, 3.) For the men of Beth-el seem to be included also in this number, being mixed with those of Ai, from whom the Israelites could not distinguish them.

Even all the men of Ai.] The inhabitants of the city (as it follows in the next verse) and the territory about it, great and small, men and women.

Ver. 26. *And Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.*] But kept his arm extended with the spear in it, as Moses's rod was lifted up during the fight with Amalek. Or, the meaning may be, that he himself charged them, and continued to fight as long as there was a man left.

Ver. 27. *Only the cattle, and the spoil of the city.*] *i. e.* Their silver and gold, and household-stuff, &c.

Israel took for a prey unto themselves according unto the word of the Lord, &c.] Who was so far from reserving any of these things to himself, that he made an express grant of them to the Israelites, (ver. 2.)

Ver. 28. *And Joshua burnt Ai.*] After they had gotten all the spoil of it, which had been lost if it had been burnt before by the liers in ambush. (See ver. 8. 19.)

And made it a heap, even a desolation, unto this day.] Laid it waste, so that it was known only by its ruins for a long time after, as it was at the time when this was written. (See ver. 11. 26.)

Ver. 29. *And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree.*] Being the head of a very wicked people, who was fit to be made a public spectacle of God's displeasure. Lipsius, in his book de Cruce, lib. i. cap. 11. produces this as an ancient instance of crucifying notorious malefactors. But that is a great mistake, crucifixion being no Jewish, but a Roman punishment. Nor were crucified persons hanged and strangled, as the king of Ai and Haman were, but fastened alive to a cross, with nails struck into their hands and feet. The LXX. indeed here expound it, *he was hanged,* ἐπὶ ξύλου διδύμου, wherein they seem to have respect to the figure of the cross; but there is no such thing in the Hebrew. (See Numb. xxv. 4.)

Until the even-tide; and as soon as the sun went down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree.] For so God had commanded, Deut. xxi. 22, 23. (See there.)

And cast it at the entering of the gate of the city.] Where he was wont to sit in judgment; and, in all probability, had exercised a great deal of injustice and cruelty.

And raised thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.] As they did upon Achan, vii. 26. and for the same end, to be a monument of his being hanged near to this place.

Ver. 30. *Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal.*] If this mount lay between Ai and Beth-el (as Gerardus Mercator endeavours to prove by many arguments), then this altar, we may well think, was built immediately after the taking of Ai, as soon as they came into possession of this mount: for they looked upon themselves, no doubt, as obliged to fulfil the command of God, given them by Moses, as soon as it was possible. But the Scripture plainly describes this Mount Ebal as near Shechem, for there was only a valley between Ebal and Gerizim, from whence Jotham spake to the men of Shechem, (Judg. ix. 7.) which was a great way distant from Ai. And therefore we must suppose that which is here related not to have been done till they had the country about Shechem.

Ver. 31. *As Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded the children of Israel.*] Deut. xi. 29, 30. xxvii. 2, &c. See in those places.

As it is written in the book of the law of Moses, An altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron.] The altar was built according to the direction given by God in a foregoing law of his, Exod. xx. 25. and repeated in Deut. xxvii. 5, 6. (See there.)

And they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace-offerings.] For now they renewed their covenant with God the third time, as I observed upon that chapter in Deuteronomy, ver. 10.

Ver. 32. *And he wrote there, upon the stones, a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.*] It is a great question what it was he wrote upon these stones. Some fancy all the five books of Moses; others only the book of Deuteronomy; which is more likely than the other; but too long for these stones to contain, or for him to write, *in the presence of all Israel.* Others, therefore, think only the ten commandments, or a compendium of the law of Moses; or, perhaps, the *blessings and cursings:* but Fortunatus Scacchus, with some probability, conjectures, that he only wrote the *words of the covenant,* by which the children of Israel acknowledged they held the land of Canaan of God, as their great Lord; upon condition they observed his laws, to which they and their posterity were obliged. And this he principally grounds upon those words, (Deut. xxvii. 3.) *Thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law.* Where the Hebrew word *hazoth (this)* he thinks hath a particular respect to what he is speaking of; *viz.* their going over Jordan to possess the land which God gave them, upon condition they observed his statutes. (See Sacror. Elæochrysm. Myrothec. lib. ii. cap. 57. p. 570, &c. and my notes upon Deuteronomy, xxvii. 3.)

Ver. 33. *And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side of the ark, and on that side.*] With their faces towards the ark.

Before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord.] Who were to pronounce the blessings and the cursings prescribed by the law. (See Deut. xxvii. 24.)

As well the stranger as he that was born among them.] For the law made no distinction between them, (Levit. xix. 34.)

Half of them over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal, as Moses, the servant of the

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Lord, had commanded before.] In Deut. xxvii. 12, 13. (See there.)

That they should bless the people of Israel.] There were cursings, as well as blessings pronounced: but the intent of cursing was, that they might avoid those sins against which they were denounced; and thereby obtain a blessing.

Ver. 34. *And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.*] *viz.* In Deut. xxvii. ver. 15—17, &c. The word *afterward* is not to be neglected, which imports, that after the building of the altar, and the offering sacrifices thereon, and writing the law on the stones, and disposing the people in their place about the ark, then he read the law to them. Which was likely to be heard with the greater attention, when they were thus prepared to receive it, and had solemnly worshipped God, and owned his authority.

Ver. 35. *There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua did not read before all the congregation of Israel.*] *viz.* All that Moses directed in Deut. xxvii. or, as others will have it, the whole book of Deuteronomy, wherein these blessings and cursings are contained. (See Deut. xxxi. 13.)

With the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.] By the *strangers* here mentioned, (and in ver. 33.) are to be understood such as were proselytes to their religion: and had undertaken to observe this law, as well as themselves; and therefore were to be made acquainted with it. And that they might be moved to have the greater regard to it, Joshua himself, their chief governor, read it to them. So some of the Jews understand it; after the priests had read the blessings and cursings, then Joshua read all the commanding and forbidding precepts in the law.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea.*] By the *great sea*, is meant the Mediterranean; where those people, peculiarly called Canaanites, dwelt, as hath been observed. And the Amorites seem to have been the principal inhabitants of the hilly country, in the south of Judea. (See on Deut. i. 7. 19, 20.)

Over against Lebanon.] The LXX and the Vulgar understand this, as if he spake of those that dwelt near Lebanon.

The Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.] Thus they are reckoned up in Deut. xx. 17. where the Girgashites are omitted, as they are here. (See an account of it in my notes upon that place: and on chap. xvi. of this book, ver. 10.)

Heard thereof.] Of the taking of Jericho and Ai: for what is said, in the words immediately foregoing, concerning the Israelites meeting at Mount Ebal, is not inserted as a thing wherein these nations were concerned.

Ver. 2. *That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel.*] They entered into a confederacy to oppose Joshua's farther progress in the conquest of their country. But they did not gather themselves to battle, till they heard what Gibeon had done.

With one accord.] The whole country were unanimous in that resolution: and thereupon rejected the summons which Joshua had sent them to surrender themselves and their cities to him.

Ver. 3. *And when the inhabitants of Gibeon.*] Or, *But when*, &c. Gibeon was a city in the mountainous country; for we read afterward of a high place at Gibeon.

Heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai.] They being Hivites (ver. 7.) had at the first rejected the offers of peace which Joshua sent them, as the rest of their nation (ver. 1.) had done. But hearing that Joshua had taken Jericho and Ai, and destroyed all their inhabitants, they repented of that resolution; and consulted how they might, by some means or other, make their peace with the Israelites.

Ver. 4. *And they did work wilily.*] It being too late to surrender their city to Joshua upon such terms, as he is supposed to have offered (for there was no mercy to be shewn them, after they had stood out against the three proclamations, which the Jews say were made to them), they contrived how to put a fallacy upon the Israelites, and by craft and cunning procure their favour. (See my annotations on Deut. xx. 10, 11.)

And went.] They chose some from among them, who went in the name of the rest, towards the camp of Israel.

And made as if they had been ambassadors.] Pretending that they were sent upon an embassy to them, from a far country; as they affirmed, ver. 6.

And took old sacks upon their asses.] Wherein was their provision.

And wine-bottles, old, and rent, and bound up.] Where they were rent.

Ver. 5. *And old shoes clouted upon their feet.*] As if they had been worn out, and patched up, with long travel.

And old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.] It is observed by Arius Montanus, that nothing is said of the decay of their wine: which they pretended, it is likely, to have drank all up, in so long a journey. For it was not so easy to procure sour wine as mouldy bread.

Ver. 6. *And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel.*] They addressed themselves to him, as the head of the people; and he had his council about him: who, in all probability, are here called *the men of Israel.* Though some conceive, that they had laid hold of every one they met withal, and beseeched them to admit them to their friendship.

We are come from a far country.] To sue to you for your friendship.

Now therefore make ye a league with us.] As they might do with those that accepted the offers of peace, which they sent them, (Deut. xx. 11.) and therefore much more with those who came to seek to be at peace with them: and were not inhabitants of the land of Canaan, but came from a far country; which they gave as a reason, why they should make a league with them. And, indeed, they had been to blame, if they had denied their petition: as the Romans were, who, when they were grown great, refused to receive a remote nation into their protection (as Appian tells us), who by their ambassadors submitted themselves to their power, because they did not see they were likely to get any thing by them. Which Bodinus (in his book against Malestret-

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tus de Caritate Rerum) censures as a base action, and injurious to Almighty God. "As if (saith he) the majesty of ruling and administering justice, especially to miserable and ill-instructed people, were not the greatest gift of God; and the highest honour of which a man is capable in this world."

Ver. 7. *And the men of Israel said.*] This shews that *the men of Israel* beforementioned, were not ordinary persons, but such as had authority to treat with ambassadors.

Unto the Hivites.] Unto those who came from Gibeon, who were really Hivites, as is expressly said, xi. 19.

Peradventure you dwell among us.] Are some of the people of this land; which are commanded to rout out.

And how shall we make a league with you?] Then it is utterly unlawful for us to do what you desire: for God hath often forbidden it. (Exod. xxiii. 32, 33. xxxiv. 12—16. Deut. vii. 2, 3, &c. and other places.)

Ver. 8. *And they said unto Joshua.*] With whom alone they had a desire to treat.

We are thy servants.] This doth not signify that they were ready to yield themselves to be tributaries to the Israelites, or accept of any terms that should be imposed on them: but are only expressions of great humility and civility; acknowledging the Israelites to be superior in power and strength, and therefore desiring their protection in their liberties. Thus Abraham addressed himself to the travellers, whom he entertained as greater persons than himself, (Gen. xviii. 3, 4.) And Jacob calls himself and his household the servants of Esau, (Gen. xxx. 20.) And thus Batricides understood their language here; who says the king of Gibeon wrote a letter to Joshua, wherein he desired security from him; and presented him with great gifts, as Hottinger observes in his Smegma Orientale, cap. 8. p. 507.

And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?] They being backward to name the country from whence they were sent; it begat a reasonable suspicion in Joshua, that they were some of the people of Canaan.

Ver. 9. *And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come.*] They still avoid giving a particular account of their country, but answer in general terms; in which commonly lies deceit.

Because of the name of the Lord thy God.] To divert him from pressing them to give a more satisfactory answer, they pretend religion had invited them to take this long journey: which they knew would procure them a favourable audience.

For we have heard of the fame of him, &c.] Of his miraculous works, particularly those which he did to deliver them from the Egyptian slavery; which, as it is evident, were come to their knowledge: so it is very reasonable to believe such wonderful things were the motives that made them seek for the Israelites' friendship; they being wrought upon, as Rahab was, to embrace their religion.

Ver. 10. *And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth.*] They say not a word of the drying up of Jordan, and of the taking of Jericho and Ai: but prudently conceal their knowledge of those things, because they would have it supposed the tidings of those wonders could not yet be arrived at a country so far off, as they pretended theirs to be.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore our elders.*] The principal persons in their country: who were the rulers and governors of it.

And all the inhabitants of our country.] With the unanimous consent of all the people.

Spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey.] Made choice of us for this embassy; and ordered us to provide ourselves with necessaries for so long a journey.

And go to meet them.] To prevent the Israelites from entertaining any hostile intentions against them.

And say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us.] The Samaritan Chronicle saith, they had orders to tell Joshua that they would embrace the Jewish religion; and refuse nothing, great or small, that he should desire of them. And, indeed, one would think, by what they said before, that they had a sense of the God of Israel, as superior to all other gods: and consequently, were disposed to become worshippers of him. For which reason he was pleased to dispose things so, that, by their wiles, they should compass their end, and be entertained into the friendship of the Israelites.

Ver. 12. *This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses.*] When it was newly come out of the oven.

On the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy.] This they say to demonstrate that they came from a country far distant from Canaan. Which, though it was not true, yet there are those (particularly Puffendorf) who think it was not culpable, nor properly a lie; being a device to save their lives. For who will reprehend a person (saith he), who by a fiction preserves himself from being killed by an enemy? especially in such a case as this, wherein the Israelites suffered no damage by their craft? for what loss doth he sustain who is hindered from shedding another man's blood, but hath it in his power to despoil him of all he hath, and bring him into perpetual servitude, so disarmed and weakened that he can never rise up against him? Thus he. Which is a doctrine that ought not to be allowed.

Ver. 13. *And these bottles of wine which we filled were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.*] They use thus many words, to divert him from making any farther inquiry, what the name of their country was (lest some among the Israelites, who had many strangers in their camp, should have been able to disprove them), and mention only the long time they had spent in their journey, that he might be moved to be kind unto those who had taken so much pains to beg the favour of the Israelites.

Ver. 14. *And the men.*] That is, the persons mentioned ver. 7. who were the οἱ ἄρχοντες (as the LXX. here say), the *princes* or *rulers* of Israel.

Took of their victuals.] Not to eat them, but to inspect and examine them, whether their provision was so dry and mouldy as they pretended. For the word we translate *victuals*, is the very same with that we before translate *provision*, (ver. 5.) Which shews he doth not speak of victuals now prepared, but which they brought along with them. Some, indeed, think the meaning is, that they entered into a league with the Gibeonites, by tasting their victuals. But as this must suppose that they had made a feast for the entertainment of these princes, and invited

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them to it (which is altogether unlikely), so the making a league with them follows after this, in the next verse, and therefore was not made by taking of their victuals.

And asked not counsel of the mouth of the Lord.] These words may seem to favour the sense now mentioned; that by eating with them (which was a token of friendship) they had performed part of the ceremony which belonged to the making of leagues, without consulting the Divine Majesty about it, but hastily believing an improbable story. (See Gen. xxvi. 30, 31. xxxi. 44, 45.) But the meaning of these words may be no more than this; that they depended wholly upon their own judgment, and that founded on such slight examination of the truth, as only taking their victuals into their hands, and inspecting them, when God was near at hand to give them advice if they would have consulted him; and, it is probable, would have allowed them to make a league with the Gibeonites on such conditions as he directed.

Ver. 15. *And Joshua made peace with them.*] Following the opinion of the princes; who took them to be what they pretended.

And made a league with them, to let them live.] Not merely to spare their lives (which, supposing them to belong to a far country, they had no warrant to take away), but to let them continue in the enjoyment of all they had. For *to live*, in Scripture, signifies to be happy; and therefore he promised not to hurt, but to protect them in their rights and liberties.

And the princes of the congregation sware unto them.] Ratified the league by a solemn oath: the violation of which, in future times, was severely punished, (2 Sam. xxii. 6.)

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.*] Speedy news being sent by the pretended ambassadors to Gibeon of their good success (as we may well think), there were great rejoicings made there, as Arius Montanus supposes. The report of which came to the Israelites three days after the league was concluded.

Ver. 17. *And the children of Israel journeyed.*] Not the whole body of the people, but a party was sent to understand the truth.

And came unto their cities on the third day.] On the third day after they began their march thither.

Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim.] The capital city was Gibeon, (called a *royal city*, x. 2.) upon which the other three were dependents. The three first of which fell afterward to the tribe of Benjamin, (xviii. 25, 26.) as the last was in the tribe of Judah, (xv. 60.)

Ver. 18. *And the children of Israel smote them not.*] Though they were not such as they supposed, but Canaanites, who were under the curse of God; yet they did not destroy them, for the reason following.

Because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel.] Some think their oath did not bind them, because it was made upon a false supposition, that the Gibeonites were no part of the seven nations of Canaan. But if this were true, as it is not, (see Grotius, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 13. sect. 4.) the princes judged right, that it had been very scandalous, and would have highly dishonoured the name of God, by whom they had sworn, if they had broken their oath. By the keeping of which, the reverence which the Gibeonites had already to the Divine Majesty was very much increased; whereas it had been vile in all people's eyes, if the Israelites had not expressed this great regard unto it.

And all the congregation murmured against the princes.] Or, *But all the congregation murmured*, &c. because they were hereby deprived of the spoil of those cities.

Ver. 19. *But all the princes said unto all the congregation.*] Their unanimity in this opinion was of great moment to quiet the people's discontent.

We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel.] Especially since they had engaged themselves, by a solemn oath, to their great and glorious Lord, who fought for them, and gave them all their victories, (ver. 13, 14.) For so the Targum here expounds these words, *We have sworn by the Word of the Lord God of Israel.*

Now, therefore, we may not touch them.] That is, do them any hurt; which we cannot do without breaking our oath, and forfeiting his favour.

Ver. 20. *This we will do unto them, we will even let them live.*] As they had covenanted, ver. 15.

Lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.] Lest God be very angry with us for breaking our oath. Which Joshua, as St. Ambrose observes, religiously observed, " Ne, dum alienam perfidiam arguit, suam fidem solveret," *that he might not be guilty of so shameful a thing as to break his faith, whilst he reproved their perfidiousness.* (Lib. iii. de Officiis, cap. 10.)

Ver. 21. *And the princes said unto them.*] But they added this.

Let them live.] Though we let them live, because we must be as good as our word, which is the meaning of the last words of this verse (which must be joined with these), *as the princes had promised them.*

But let them be hewers of wood, and drawers of water.] Yet they shall not be equal to us in all privileges, but we will make them in some sort serviceable to us; in such employments as will save us a great deal of labour.

Unto all the congregation.] They were not to be hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for every private person, but for the benefit of the whole congregation of Israel, who were bound to find wood and water for the service of God at the tabernacle. Which burden it was now resolved should be laid upon the Gibeonites; and thereby the children of Israel eased of it, ver. 23. where they are said to be made *hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of the Lord.* This was no breach of their oath, for they did not make them absolutely slaves, but only a sacred kind of servants (as Josephus calls them), being employed about the house of God, which was in itself honourable, and not base and contemptible. Some think they were afterward called *Nethinim*, which signifies persons given to God for his service; of whom we read in 1 Chron. ix. 2. Ezra viii. 20. and other places.

Ver. 22. *And Joshua called for them.*] For the ambassadors, with whom he had made a league.

And he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, &c.] Imposed upon our belief by a false story.

Ver. 23. *Now therefore ye are cursed.*] Notwithstanding our oath, you must not quite escape that curse of God

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which hath long lain upon all the people of Canaan, part of which you are. For a servile state of any sort, to which they were reduced, was no small punishment (called here a *curse*), and so much the more grievous, because it was to be perpetual.

And there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen.] None of them were to continue freemen, but have a servitude imposed upon them: not, indeed, such an one as made them entire slaves, but only condemned them to the laborious employment which here follows.

And hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the house of my God.] This is the limitation of their servitude; which did not extend to all things, but only to these and such-like (it is probable); to hew stones, for instance, for the reparation of the temple after it was built, and to carry them to those who were employed in that work. Grotius hath well expressed their condition, "Addicti sunt personali cuidam servituti," *they were addicted to certain personal servitude;* whereas, if they had dealt plainly and openly with the Israelites, they might have been admitted only to pay a certain tribute. (Lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 13. sect. 4. n. 3.)

Ver. 24. *And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all its inhabitants, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.*] They first give an answer unto Joshua's demand, *Wherefore have ye beguiled us?* Which was done to save themselves, if they could, by any shift, from that destruction which they believed God had decreed against all the inhabitants of their land; and they did not know how to evade it, but by this artifice; which, since it arose from some degree of faith, God suffered to take effect, that they might remain for ever among the Israelites, as an unquestionable witness of their miraculous conquest of the land of Canaan.

Ver. 25. *And now, behold, we are in thy hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.*] Here they humbly submit to the doom he had passed upon them, or to any other imposition he should think fit to load them withal.

Ver. 26. *And so he did unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.*] But Joshua would take no farther advantage of their submission, but contented himself with this burden alone; which, by a public decree, he laid upon them. It appears by this, that some gentiles had more goodness in them than many of the children of Israel; who would have destroyed these well-disposed people (if Joshua had not hindered) who were better believers, being struck with a greater fear of God's threatenings than themselves.

Ver. 27. *And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood, and drawers of water.*] He passed this sentence into a law; that, from henceforth, they should be subject to this servitude; in which they served God faithfully even to the times of Nehemiah: who tells us great numbers of the Nethinims (who many great men make no doubt were of the posterity of these Gibeonites) returned from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, (Nehem. vii. 46, &c. 73.)

For the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, even unto this day.] They served the congregation (who otherwise must themselves have done it) by serving the altar with wood and with water. Which, that they might do regularly, it is probable, they were dispersed throughout all the coasts of Israel, where the priests and Levites were settled, and came and served with them in their courses, and (as Conradus Pellicanus thinks) were maintained out of the public stock, and the profits of the altar. For they did not keep possession of their cities, but surrendered them to the tribe of Benjamin and Judah, to whose lot they fell; as we read in the following part of this book.

Concerning these words, *unto this day*, see iv. 9.

At the place which he should choose.] Which was now at Gilgal; afterward at Shiloh; and some time in Gibeon it fell; which was a city given to the priests; (Josh. xxi. 17.) and, as Maimonides saith (in his treatise of the Building of the Temple), after Shiloh was destroyed, the tabernacle was placed in Nob, and then in Gibeon: in which two places it continued fifty and seven years.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem.*] Who seems to have been the most potent prince in Canaan, and carried in his name an honourable title, which had been anciently given to the kings of this place; who had been famous for doing justice. For, it is probable, that ever since Melchizedeck, who was king of Salem (the same with Jerusalem), and truly king of righteousness, as his name signified; they affected this title, though they did not always answer their character: for this Adonizedek (whose name imports the *law of righteousness*) had none of the virtues that were in Melchizedeck.

King of Jerusalem.] It is probably thought that this city held the name of Salem, which it had in Abraham's time, till the Israelites came into the land of Canaan; and then they called it Jerusalem, when they first took possession of it. Which they did not so fully, but that still the Jebusites dwelt there with the children of Benjamin, (see Judg. i. 8. 21.) who were so weak, that the Jebusites, in time, recovered it wholly to themselves, and expelled the Benjamites; see Judg. xix. 10. where it is called Jebus, though the other name is also acknowledged; because the Israelites called it Jerusalem, while the Jebusites, having prevailed, called it Jebus.

Heard how Joshud had taken Ai.] By which means the Israelites were come nearer to him, than when they took Jericho.

And had utterly destroyed it, (as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king.)] And therefore it highly concerned him to provide, the best he could, for his own safety.

And how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel.] Especially, since one of the prime cities of the country had submitted to the Israelites.

And were among them.] Joined in society with them, or come as we now speak) into their interest.

Ver. 2. *Then they feared greatly.*] All his people thought themselves in great danger; they as well as their king having heard of the terrible execution Joshua had made at Jericho and Ai.

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Because Gibeon was a great city.] Having others depending on it.

As one of the royal cities.] The Vulgar Latin takes no notice of the particle *caph* (*as*), but saith it was a royal city. And, indeed, that particle doth not always denote *likeness*, but only the truth of the thing spoken of; as in Hosea iv. 4. and many other places of the New Testament, as well as the Old, (John i. 14. Phil. ii. 7.) But I think here it should be expressed, as we do in our translation; because Gibeon was not a royal city, that is, had no king in it that we read of; but was, notwithstanding, equal to those cities that had kings, being governed by elders, (ix. 11.) who were persons of very great authority.

And because it was greater than Ai.] More populous.

And all the men thereof were mighty.] The inhabitants were esteemed men of great valour; which made their revolt to the Israelites the more considerable.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying.*] All these cities afterward belonged to the tribe of Judah; as appears from the following part of this book.

Ver. 4. *Come unto me, and help me.*] He was the most active in the war, and seems to have been of greatest power; calling the other kings only as auxiliaries to him.

That we may smite Gibeon.] He thought to discourage others from yielding, by making this city an example of their vengeance.

For it hath made peace unto Joshua, and with the children of Israel.] Forsaken the interest of their country, and gone over to our enemies.

Ver. 5. *Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem,* &c.] It is certain that Hebron belonged to the Hittites; as Jerusalem did to the Jebusites. But the Amorites being the most powerful people in Canaan, (as appears from Gen. xv. 16.) had, it seems, brought them under their power, and set kings of their own nation over them. Whence it is, that the Gibeonites, who were originally Hivites, (ix. 17.) are said to be of the *remnant of the Amorites,* (2 Sam. xxi. 2.) because they were fallen under their power, when Joshua conquered their country.

Gathered themselves together.] Had a general meeting, and sent out a summons to all their people, who were fit for war, to rendezvous (as we speak) at the place they appointed.

And went up.] Though they lived in the high country, yet Jerusalem was still higher; where they seem to have all met, according to Adonizedek's desire, ver. 4.

They and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon.] Laid siege to it.

And made war against it.] Began to assault it.

Ver. 6. *And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal.*] Or, *had sent,* as soon as they heard of their march towards them.

Saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants.] They doubted not of his succour, because they were his servants who had put themselves under his protection; but begged it might be speedy, for fear they should be overpowered by such numerous forces as were coming against them.

Come up quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites, that dwell in the mountains, are gathered together against us.] They did not hope to be preserved without his help; nor unless it arrived quickly.

Ver. 7. *So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.*] These last words are the explication of the former, as if he had said, *All the people of war, even all the mighty men of valour.* For it is not likely he took along with him all the fighting men (some of which were necessary to guard the camp at Gilgal), but only the choicest of them; on whose valour he could most rely, and who could march most swiftly to the relief of their confederates.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord said unto Joshua.*] Before he stirred a foot, he consulted the Divine Majesty about this expedition; who encouraged him to undertake it.

Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.] He promised him an entire victory; which emboldened him to fall upon them undauntedly.

Ver. 9. *Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night.*] Accordingly, Joshua made all the haste he could towards them, marching all night, that he might surprise them in their quarters (as I suppose he did) before they could draw out their army against him.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord discomfited them before Israel.*] The suddenness of the attack, no doubt, put them into great confusion. And besides, God struck a terror into them, which made them seek for safety by flight, rather than fighting.

And slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon.] Near to the city, as the particle *beth* signifies in many places; particularly in the second chapter of this book, where Rahab's house is said to be upon the wall (we translate it, near or adjoining to the wall), and v. 13. where Joshua is said to be *Bejericho,* near to that city, for he was not in it when the Captain of the Lord's host appeared to him. (See Bochart's Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 50.)

And chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon.] To the place which was called by this name, when this book was written; for there was no such place now; it being built after they were settled in Canaan by Sherah, daughter or grand-daughter of Ephraim; as we read in 1 Chron. vii. 24.

And smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.] Two cities afterward in the tribe of Judah, (xv. 35. 41.) For, in the great confusion wherein they were, by the hailstones falling upon them (as it here follows), they fled backward and forward, as we speak, sometimes this way, sometimes the quite contrary (for Beth-horon lay northerly, and these other towns in the south), according as the hailstones, by the shifting of the wind, flew in their faces.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon.*] Which was seated on the side of a hill; and seems to have taken its name from this wonderful storm here mentioned: for Beth-horon signifies as much, as the house or place of fury or anger.

That the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them.] The LXX. call them λίθους χαλάζης, *hailstones of a vast bigness;* which some think were accompanied with thunder and lightning. And thus the ancient heathen say, that Hercules was assisted in his war against Albion, &c. (See Vossius, lib. i. de Orig. et Progressu Idolol. cap. 26.)

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And that raining of stones is not a fable, but a real truth, see him also, lib. iii. cap. 12. Plutarch also, in the life of Timoleon, relates how a terrible storm, in the face of the Carthaginian army, gave him a great victory over them, with a very few forces which he had to encounter them. They that desire to see more to this purpose may look into Huetius's Quæstiones Alnetanæ, lib. ii. cap. 12. sect. 12.

Unto Azekah.] This storm meeting them at Beth-horon drove them back to Azekah, as I observed on the foregoing verse.

And they died.] They upon whom the hailstones fell were killed by them.

They were more that died with the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.] For they could not flee from the stones which came from heaven, as they did from the sword of Israel.

Ver. 12. *Then spake Joshua unto the Lord.*] This song, as the Hebrews call it, (see Masius.)

In the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel.] It is not certain at what time of the day he spake what follows. Many think, when the sun was declining; others, rather in the morning. For he marched all night to surprise them, and in all probability fell upon them by break of day; and having routed and chased them for some hours, and killed great numbers of them, and seen others fall by the hailstones, concluded he should destroy them all, if he had but time enough before night came to favour their escape. Which made him pray that he might have light to continue his pursuit, and gain a complete victory over them.

And he said, in the sight of Israel.] It is a frivolous observation of Maimonides, that, because it is not said *in the sight of all Israel* (before whom Moses did his miracles), Joshua was inferior to him, even when God wrought this stupendous miracle at his request: for all Israel did not hear him speak these words, but only some few; as many, perhaps, as were with Elijah at Mount Carmel, when he brought fire down from heaven to consume his sacrifice. But there is no question that Israel signifies all the army; who heard, or were told what he said.

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon.] He desired it might stand immoveable, in that part of the heavens where he saw it now shining upon Gibeon.

And thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.] There were more Ajalon's than one; and it is not certain which it is he means: but it is most likely that in the tribe of Dan, (xix. 42. Judg. i. 35.) which was farthest from Gibeon; for we must suppose these two places to have been at some distance, otherwise Joshua could not have seen the sun and the moon both appear at the same time; as it is probable they were both now in his eye, when he spake these words. It is not fit to enter into such questions as these; in what sign the sun now was, and whether the moon was in her increase or decrease, &c. They that can make, and are disposed to such inquiries, may consult Bonfrerius.

Ver. 13. *And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed.*] Thus Callimachus represents the sun as stopping the wheels of his chariot, to behold a chorus of nymphs; which so highly pleased him, that it made him prolong the day (ver. 181, 182. of his hymn to Diana):

Ἦλθε παρ' Ἠέλιος καλὸν χορὸν, ἀλλὰ θεῆται
Δίφρον ἐπιστήσας, τὰ δὲ φάεα μηκύνονται.

Where Ezek. Spanhemius excellently notes, that what the poets only fancied might be, was really done in the days of Joshua; and wishes Grotius had not followed some of the Jews, who make this only a poetical phrase to express a long summer's day: for the prophet Habakkuk represents it otherwise, and so do many of the Talmudic doctors. They that can consult Huetius also, in his Alnetanæ Quæstiones, (lib. ii. cap. 12. sect. 27.) will find enough to shame those who disbelieve this history: when they read a great number of stories among the heathen, which shew they thought it within the power of their gods to do such things. And, among other memorable things, he doth not forget the ancient tradition of the Egyptians, related by Herodotus, (in his Enterpe, cap. 142.) concerning the stupendous alteration of the course of the sun. And our Dr. Jackson hath observed, that the heathen people of those times did note this miraculous event, and deliver the tradition of it to their posterity; who, as men are wont to do, endeavour to assign some cause of it. And the poets in ages following ascribe it (with some additions) unto that unnatural murder which Atreus committed: at which the heavens blushed, and the sun stood still. For this bloody fact, if Statius mistake not, was in the time of the Theban war; and that is placed, by good chronologers, about the time of Joshua's conquest of Canaan. (See book i. upon the Creed, chap. 15.) But in this he was deceived, for Atreus lived in the days of the Judges.

Until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.] Till they had gained a complete victory, and utterly destroyed their enemies.

Is not this written in the book of Jasher?] The Targum expounds it, *in the book of the law:* as if the meaning was, that there God had foretold what wonders he would do for his people. But from the marginal translation (which is, *the book of the upright,* or *of righteous men*) others take it for a book where was recorded the wonderful things done by or for the religious heroes. And there are some probable arguments that it was written in verse, to fix these things in the memory of the people. Grotius is of this opinion: for we find mention of it no where else, but only in 2 Sam. i. 18. and there it is mentioned upon account of a song made upon the death of Saul and Jonathan by king David, who caused it to be recorded in this book. Which was not accounted sacred (being written by several hands and in several ages), and so not preserved with such care as this and the other canonical books were. As for their opinion who think this book contained the ancient annals of the Jews more largely than they are recorded in this and the following books, it hath no ground at all; but is invented merely to frame an argument from thence, that Joshua was not the author of this book; but that it was collected in aftertimes, out of this great Chronicle, by somebody who made an abridgment of it. But Du Pin hath well observed, that it is not said here the wars of Joshua were related in the book of Jasher; but only that mention is made therein of the miracle by which the moon stood still.

So the sun stood still.] There is no more mention of the moon; for it was the light of the sun that made the day.

In the midst of heaven.] This doth not necessarily signify that it stood still precisely in the meridian point; but that it appeared visibly to every body, fixed in the same place where it was, when Joshua spake the foregoing

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words, to which he was moved, no doubt, by a Divine inspiration.

And hastened not to go down about a whole day.] It may be simply translated, *a whole day*: the particle *caph*, as I observed before, signifying oftentimes nothing of similitude, but the very thing itself. Therefore I look upon Maimonides's explication as ungrounded; who by *kajom thamim (as a whole day)* understands only as the longest day in summer, (More Nevochim, par. xi. cap. 35.) Which was a poor business, it being now summer-time, when this miracle was wrought: and, as Lyra thinks, in the month of June.

Ver. 14. *And there was no day like that before it, or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man.*] That is, did at his desire (or rather command) such a stupendous thing as this. Whereby he gave an evident demonstration, that he who did such wonders in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and the river Jordan, had an absolute power not only over the *elements* (as we call them) and all inferior creatures, but over the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, whom the heathen worshipped. They have strange love to cavilling, who would hence have it thought this book was not written by Joshua: when, if he wrote it in his old age, there were many days passed since this prodigy, as Huetius well observes in his Demonstr. Evang. p. 186. See various opinions about the length of this day in Sixtinus Amama's Antibarbarus Biblicus, lib. iii. p. 381, &c.

For the Lord fought for Israel.] By throwing stones from heaven upon their enemies; and giving the Israelites strength to pursue them; and stopping the sun's course, that they might not want light for their pursuit; and preserving them from the stones which fell upon their enemies, and not upon them, though mingled with them in the fight.

Ver. 15. *And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.*] The LXX. in the common copies wholly omit this verse; because Joshua did not return to Gilgal, till he had done what follows: and then he speaks of his return, in the same words and syllables, ver. 43. but it is in the edition of Hervasius, 1540. as my most learned friend Dr. Alix informs me; and the meaning of it here, therefore, is no more than this; that he was about to return, till he heard where the five kings were; and that many of the enemies were still remaining.

Ver. 16. *But these five kings.*] Mentioned ver. 3.

Fled.] Escaped the sword of the Israelites by flight; being provided, perhaps, with swift beasts for that purpose; and taking some by-ways, separate from their scattered forces, so that the hailstones did not fall upon them.

And hid themselves in a cave.] Which they knew to have secret lurking-places in it; where they could not be easily discovered.

At Makkedah.] In the confines of that city. Which not being yet taken, Joshua could not command great stones to be rolled upon the mouth of the cave, if it had been in the city itself.

Ver. 17. *And it was told Joshua, saying, That the five kings were hid in a cave at Makkedah.*] It is likely Joshua had given a particular charge about them; and they made no inquiry what was become of them, till it was discovered, that they were in this place.

Ver. 18. *And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave.*] To hinder their coming out.

And set men by it for to keep them.] He ordered a guard also, to see that none removed the stones.

Ver. 19. *And stay you not, but pursue after your enemies.*] They that brought this intelligence, were, it is likely, some officers in the army; whom he would not have to stop their pursuit of the scattered Canaanites, by looking after these kings; but leave it to others to take care to keep them safe shut up in the cave.

And smite the hindermost of them.] He means all that they could overtake in their flight.

Suffer them not to enter into their cities.] And hinder the rest from retreating into their own cities; by which means they would not remain in a body together; but dispersed here and there, where they could save themselves.

For the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hand.] Given you an opportunity to complete their destruction.

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel.*] *i. e.* The children of Israel, by the command and direction of Joshua, who sent out strong parties to pursue them; but he himself seems to have gone to lay siege to Makkedah.

Had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed.] Till there was none of them to be seen in a body together.

That the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities.] Those few that escaped got into such fortified cities as they could reach.

Ver. 21. *And all the people.*] Who had been sent out, and engaged in pursuit of the enemy.

Returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah.] Where, no doubt, he had ordered a general rendezvous, as we now speak, of the whole army that had been employed in this war.

In peace.] The LXX. translate it ὑγιεῖς, *sound and safe*; and the Vulgar, "sani et integro numero;" *sound and without the loss of a man.* Which is to be understood of that detachment sent to pursue them, (ver. 19.) who came all safe to the camp, and not a man of them lost, or so much as wounded.

None moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.] There was not so much as a dog that barked at them. For that word *dog* is to be supplied (as Bochartus thinks) according to what we read, Exod. xi. 7. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 55.) It is an expression of the great tranquillity wherein they were, and of an entire victory, there being not so much as a dog left to disturb them.

Ver. 22. *Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave.*] The wisdom of Joshua is here observed by Arius Montanus, who would not do this execution till all the people were returned to the camp to be witnesses of it. And he might have added, that he executed them before he assaulted Makkedah, that the inhabitants of that city might see there was no hope of any succour from those kings who had been very powerful.

Ver. 23. *And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron,* &c.] They are named in the same order as in ver. 3. according to their rank and quality; for next to the king of Jerusalem, who was the chief, the king of He-

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bron seems to have been of greatest note; and so of the rest. The same Montanus thinks it probable, that as they brought them forth and set them before Joshua, they said, This is the king of Jerusalem; and then, This is the king of Hebron, &c.

Ver. 24. *And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel.*] That is, all the men of war.

And said unto the captains of the men of war which were with him.] That is, the great officers of the army.

Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings.] Who lay bound, I suppose, prostrate upon the ground.

And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.] Not out of insolence and pride; but in token that these kings and their countries were brought in absolute subjection to them; and that God had fulfilled his promise, (Deut. xxxiii. *ult.*)

Ver. 25. *And Joshua said, Fear not, nor be dismayed; be strong, and of good courage.*] The same that Moses had said to them all long ago, Deut. i. 21. 29. and God had lately said to Joshua, i. 6, 7. 9. and might be said with greater reason now, when they saw their greatest enemies lie prostrate under their feet.

For thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom you fight.] To all the inhabitants of Canaan.

Ver. 26. *And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them.*] After they had trampled upon them he ordered them to be killed.

And hanged them on five trees.] As a mark of infamy, whereby a terror was struck into all others.

And they were hanging on the trees till the evening.] Exposed to this contempt all that long day; which God made on purpose that they might do all the great things beforementioned, and what follows, before the night came upon them. Then their bodies were taken down, not in honour to them, but in honour to the land of Israel, where God now dwelt. So Aben Ezra.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid,* &c.] He had given this order as soon as they were hanged, according to the law of Moses, by which he acted before at Ai, (viii. 29.) And with their bodies he cast all the instruments of their punishment (the trees, and whatsoever fastened them unto them) into the cave, as Maimonides saith, and the Samaritan Chronicle here particularly observes.

Ver. 28. *And that day Joshua took Makkedah.*] The same day the king of it was hanged; and it seems to be probable it was on that long day (as I said before) which God made that they might complete their conquest of these kings; and when they had done, take this city also. Our great primate of Ireland indeed, by *that day*, understands the same day that he set down before the city; which he thinks was some time after what is before related.

And smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed.] He was slain among the rest, and not taken alive as the king of Ai was.

Them, and all the souls that were therein.] All the fighting men, together with the women and children; because they had refused the offers of peace, sent them from Joshua, before he invaded their land.

He let none remain.] But saved the cattle, which they took, with their goods, for a prey.

And he did to the king of Makkedah as he did to the king of Jericho.] What he did to the king of Jericho is not recorded; but by what is said of other kings, it is probable that he hanged him up after he was found dead.

Ver. 29. *Then Joshua passed from Makkedah.*] This only signifies what was their next expedition; for it is likely they refreshed themselves awhile before they left this place.

All Israel with him.] All that he brought along with him to the relief of Gibeon. (See ver. 7.)

Unto Libnah.] A city which fell to the share of the tribe of Judah, in the division of the land, (xv. 42.) and was one of the cities given to the priests, (xxi. 13. 1 Chron. vi. 57.)

And fought against Libnah.] Laid siege to it, and planted their batteries against it.

Ver. 30. *And the Lord delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel.*] They made an easy conquest of it, because God gave it up into their hand.

And he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, &c.] The same words whereby the destruction of Makkedah is described, ver. 28. For both these cities favoured the five kings beforementioned, and therefore (as Conradus Pellicanus thinks) were destroyed utterly, not only by the command of God, but by the right of war. But the command of God was the only ground, as it is expressed, ver. 40.

Ver. 31. *And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish.*] Another city which fell to the tribe of Judah, (xv. 39.) and was not far from Libnah.

And encamped against it, and fought against it.] This, it seems, was a stronger city than either of the former; for there is no mention of an encampment against them before they began their assault.

Ver. 32. *And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel.*] He doth not add, *and the king thereof,* as he doth of Makkedah and Libnah, (ver. 28. 30.) because he was one of the five kings which he had lately hanged, and they had not, it is likely, set a new one on his throne, (ver. 23.)

Which took it on the second day.] After they began the siege; or, the second day after the taking of Makkedah and Libnah. The former is most likely, because their encampment against it signifies they spent some time before it.

And smote it with the edge of the sword, &c.] These words, and the following, are the very same with what he said before of the two forenamed cities; only he doth not add, *he let none remain,* which is to be supposed.

Ver. 33. *Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish.*] This was a city afterward in the tribe of Ephraim, (xvi. 10.) belonging to the Levites, (xxi. 21.) and not far from Gibeon, as may be guessed from 1 Chron. xiv. 16.

And Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining.] If he destroyed his city at this time, he returned to Lachish. And it is probable, he sent forth a detachment to fight Horam and his army; who having routed them, destroyed also their city, and then went on with the siege of Lachish.

Ver. 34. *And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon.*] Which also belonged afterward to Judah, (xv. 39.) and seems to have been as considerable as Lachish; for it

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follows, that *they encamped against it, and fought against it,* as they had done against the other. Their king was one of the five who were killed and hanged before, (ver. 23.)

Ver. 35. *And they took it on that day.*] The same day they set down before it; for none came to their relief, as Horam did to help Lachish, which may be one reason that city was not taken till the second day, (ver. 32.)

And smote it with the edge of the sword, &c.] The same he had said of the forenamed cities; only he saith, he *utterly destroyed all* that were therein on the same day, which is the same with those words, *he let none remain.*

Ver. 36. *And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it.*] This was also a city of Judah, (as every one knows, xv. 54.) and was seated in the mountainous country, as the former were in the plain, which is the reason he is said *to go up* to it from Eglon.

Ver. 37. *And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof.*] Their king was one of the five whom Joshua had lately killed and hanged. But, it seems, they had set up a new one, being a city of great note, which had other cities depending on it, as it follows in the next words.

And all the cities thereof.] It was not only one of the royal cities, which had other cities subject to it (as Gibeon had, which was a kind of royal city), but of very great power. For these words import, as if there were many cities under its jurisdiction.

And all the souls that were therein: he left none remaining, &c.] In this conquest, Caleb was very instrumental, and signalized himself (as we now speak) by driving out the three sons of Anak (xv. 13, 14.) who were slain there, (Judg. i. 10.) Thus we must understand this history; or else say, as some do, either that Joshua only took the city and destroyed it, but could not take the citadel, or strong fort, on the top of the mountain, (which doth not seem to be exactly true, for we read in the next chapter, ver. 21, 22. that he cut off the Anakims from the mountains, &c.) or that, after he had destroyed it, as is here related, the Anakims came from Gaza, and other cities of the Philistines, whither they now fled, and peopled it again, but were expelled again by Caleb, as some understand xiv. 12. (See Judg. i. 10.)

Ver. 38. *And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir, and fought against it.*] He had not been there before, but having gone as far south and west as he thought fit, (even as far as Gaza, which was in the western coast, ver. 41.) he turned his course towards the camp at Gilgal, which was now north-east from him, and in his way thither took Debir, which also was a city of Judah, (xv. 49.) and one of the cities of the priests, (xxi. 15. 1 Chron. vi. 58.) called also Kiriath-Sepher, and Kiriath-Sanna.

Ver. 39. *And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof,* &c.] It was a great city (we may gather from hence, like to Hebron), in the conquest of which Othniel the brother of Caleb did great service, and therefore it was given to him, as we read, xv. 15—17. and Judg. i. 11.

Ver. 40. *So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings.*] He forbears to name all the cities he took, and, in short, saith he subdued the whole country that lay south and west (as it is explained in the next verse), of whatsoever sort it was; both the hilly and the low country: for they that describe countries are wont to have respect to two things; the condition and quality of the soil, and then the situation: the first of these he expresses in this verse, and the other in the next. For here he describes it as partly hilly and dry, and partly plain and full of springs.

He left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed.] Which must be restrained to mankind; for they kept their cattle as a prey to themselves.

As the Lord God of Israel commanded.] This is added as a justification of the Israelites, from all imputation of cruelty or severity; for they only executed a Divine sentence against this people for their abominable wickedness, (Lev. xviii. 24, 25, &c.) wherewith the Israelites would have been in danger to be infected, if they had not been extirpated.

Ver. 41. *And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea.*] Which was in the south of Canaan, as appears from Numb. xxxiv. 4. and chap. xv. of this book, ver. 3. where it is mentioned as belonging to the tribe of Judah.

Even unto Gaza.] A city of the Philistines, in the west part of Canaan, towards the south.

And all the country of Goshen.] There was a city in the tribe of Judah of this name, which lay in the mountains, as Hebron did, in the southern part of the country, (xv. 51.) From which city, the region thereabouts was called the country of Goshen: which had excellent pasture-ground in it, and was well watered (like that country in Egypt of the same name), and thence was called Goshen, as Conradus Pellicanus conjectures; because the Hebrew word *geshem* signifies large showers, which make the earth fruitful.

Even unto Gibeon.] Which was in the more northerly part of the country. And therefore, as before he gave an account of his conquest from the south to the west; so here of his conquest from the south to the north.

Ver. 42. *All these kings, and their land, did Joshua take at one time.*] In one expedition.

Because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.] Which made their conquest easy and speedy. The Targum hath it, *The Lord God of Israel, by his Word, fought for Israel.* That is, by him who appeared to Joshua as the captain of the Lord's host, ver. 13, 14.

Ver. 43. *And Joshua returned, and Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.*] To refresh themselves with the company of their wives and children; and to make those who were left to defend them partakers of their booty; but especially to return solemn thanks to God for their victories at his house, which was now settled at Gilgal.

Our great primate of Ireland thinks, that this war with the five kings, that came against Gibeon, &c. concluded this famous year. In the first part of which Moses took the kingdoms of Sihon and Og on the other side Jordan; and in the latter part of it Joshua conquered a great part of the land of Canaan; and in the middle of it the manna ceased, and they ate of the fruit of the country. So that in the autumn of this year they began to sow, and consequently, from this time, they began to number their sabbatical years. (See him in his Annals, A. M. 2554.) But another great man (Dr. Alix) admonishes me, that this is against the opinion of the ancient Jews, who suppose that the first year of the *semitah* was the fourteenth after

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their entrance into Canaan: for the land must have been divided before it was cultivated; and so the sabbath of the land must be seven years after the division.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, that when Jabin king of Hazor.*] This city was the metropolis of the northerly part of Canaan, (ver. 10.) and fell to the share of the tribe of Naphtali in the division of the land, (xix. 36.) Jabin was the name of the king of the Canaanites in this part of the country in future times, and reigned in this very city, (Judg. iv. 2.)

Heard of these things.] Of the conquest Joshua had made of so many kings, and their kingdoms, in the south and the west part of the land.

That he sent to Jobab king of Madon.] This is the name of a place we read of no where else, but was subject, no doubt, unto Hazor, as the rest were.

And to the king of Shimron.] A place afterward in the tribe of Zebulun, near to the country of Naphtali, (xix. 15.)

And to the king of Achshaph.] In the tribe of Asher, (xix. 25.) These two last places Arius Montanus thinks were more remote from Hazor than Madon, and lay towards the south near Mount Tabor, being the only southern people that remained after the five kings were destroyed. But towards the north, and the east, and the west, there were many still left, whom Jabin now gathered together.

Ver. 2. *And to the kings that were in the north of the mountains.*] Or, mountainous country, near Lebanon; for that was in the north part of Canaan.

And in the plains south of Cinneroth.] In the flat country, which lay south of the lake called afterward Gennesaret, now Cinneroth. (See Numb. xxxiv. 11.)

And in the valley.] Some conjecture he means that pleasant valley between Mount Hermon and Mount Gilboa, called the valley of Jezreel.

And the borders of Dor.] A city, with a country belonging to it, in the tribe of Manasseh, (xvii. 11.)

On the west.] Upon the midland sea. Where Josephus mentions (in his second book against Appion) a city called Dora, near Mount Carmel. (See Bochartus in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 41. p. 752.)

Ver. 3. *And to the Canaanite.*] The people peculiarly so called.

On the east, and on the west.] It hath been noted before, that some of this people lived in the east near Jordan; and other of them in the west, near the midland sea. (See Numb. xiii. 29.)

And to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite.] There were other Amorites scattered up and down the country, besides those who were subject to the five kings mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 5. who were all now assembled together by Jabin, with the rest of the Hittites and Perizzites (who were in several parts of the country), that they might make as powerful an army as could be raised.

And the Jebusite, in the mountains.] About Jerusalem, where they kept a strong hold till the time of David; as the Perizzites lived in other mountainous and woody countries, as Bochartus observes.

And to the Hivite under Hermon.] This was a mountain in the north-east part of the country, where some Hivites were settled, as others were about Gibeon. That Hermon was easterly, appears from Psal. lxxxix. 12. whence it is that the Hivites are called Kadmonites, that is, *easterlings*, (Gen. xv. 19.) as Bochart hath observed in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 36. and in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 19.

In the land of Mizpeh.] There were several cities of this name; one in the tribe of Judah, (xv. 38.) another belonging to Benjamin, (xviii. 26.) and two more beyond Jordan in the land of Gilead; one in the tribe of Gad, the other in the tribe of Manasseh, or very near it; which gave name to the country about it, and seems to be here intended.

Ver. 4. *And they went out.*] The kings of all these people.

They and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea-shore in multitude.] A vast army, which could not easily be numbered; or, which covered the place where they were encamped, as sand doth the sea-shore; so that nothing could be seen but armed men, horses, and chariots, &c. It is a proverbial speech in Scripture for vast numbers of men, or great quantities of corn; or exceeding much knowledge and wisdom, as every one knows.

With horses and chariots very many.] This made them the more formidable, because the Israelites were all footmen: who might easily be beaten by a strong body of horse; especially when they had chariots also, which carried men in them, (see upon Deut. xx. 1.) and they had great numbers also of them, as these words intimate. Josephus makes their chariots alone to have been twenty thousand. The land of Canaan, indeed, did not breed horses (as I have often observed), but they might easily procure them out of Egypt, and they trusted much to this kind of forces, wherein the Egyptians excelled most people. (See Deut. xvii. 16.)

Ver. 5. *And when all these kings were met together.*] In some place which the king of Hazor appointed for a general rendezvous. For though this multitude were of different nations, yet they all now combined against the Israelites. But it was a great providence of God, that as all this country was not united under one head, but divided into several petty kingdoms; so they did not all enter into a confederacy at the first against Joshua, but fought severally; only five of their kings joining together. Though now they seem to have seen their error; and therefore, all that remained, joined, as one man, to oppose Joshua's further proceeding.

They came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.] They marched to these waters, and there formed a camp, to prepare, and set themselves in order, to give Israel battle. These waters, all agree, were that lake which Josephus calls Σάμα χωνίτιδα, from the abundance of fishes that were in it: for *Samachon*, or *Semechon*, in the Arabic language, signifies a fish, (as Bochart observes in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. i. cap. 6.) and Joshua here calls the *waters of Merom*; that is, the *upper waters*; for this lake was near the fountain of Jordan, which ran through the lake of Tiberias, and fell into the lake Asphaltites, or the Dead Sea. With respect to which waters, these were called the *upper*, they being *lower*. And here they pitched rather than any other place,

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being under the jurisdiction of Jabin, who had called them together: for Hazor, where he reigned, was situate upon this lake, as Josephus tells us, lib. v. Antiq. cap. 6.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said unto Joshua.*] Who went, it is probable, (as he had done formerly, x. 8.) to consult the Divine Majesty, how he should manage himself upon this great occasion.

Be not afraid of them.] Some collect from hence (even Josephus himself) that Joshua was possessed with some fear, when he heard of such a numerous army, and so well appointed, coming against him. But I do not think it at all probable, that after so many late assurances and signal demonstrations, as God had given him of his presence with him in this war, he should be capable of this passion. (See the first chapter of this book, ver. 2, 3. 6, 7. 9. iii. 7. 9, 10. v. 13—15. x. 8.) Therefore these words were spoken to him, that he might animate the people, whose hearts were apt to fail them, when they saw such terrible enemies.

For to-morrow, about this time.] It is not certain what this time was; but it is likely in the morning after he had marched all night, (as he did against the five kings, x. 9.) that he might fall upon them unexpectedly.

I will deliver them up all slain before Israel.] The LXX. translate it τετροπωμένους, *put to flight.* Which agrees with what follows; for it is certain they were not all *slain,* but many of them fled, and the Israelites pursued them: and therefore other copies of the LXX. have it τετρωμένους, *wounded;* so broken and shattered, that they were all in effect dead men.

Thou shalt hough their horses.] Cut their hamstrings, and thereby render them unfit for future service.

And burn their chariots with fire.] That they might be no more used; no, not by the Israelites themselves.

Ver. 7. *And Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them, to the waters of Merom.*] He did not wait for their motion; but attacked them as they lay in their quarters; for that is signified by the next word.

Suddenly.] When they thought not of an enemy near them; but were consulting, perhaps, how to manage the war against the Israelites.

And they fell upon them.] When they were unprovided to make such resistance as they would have done, if they had been ready to receive them.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them.*] Routed and killed a great many of them.

And chased them to great Zidon.] This, it seems, was a large city, and of great note in these days (for there was no Zidon the less), built by the eldest son of Canaan (as Josephus thinks), from whom it had its name. (See Gen. x. 15.) It lay in the north-west part of Canaan, upon the sea.

And unto Misrephoth-maim.] It is thought by some that this was a place where there were hot waters, which I shall not examine, but only note it is a probable conjecture, from xiii. 6. that it was a place in the country of Zidon where they made salt.

Unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward.] See ver. 3. This signifies, that, in their confusion, some of them fled westward to Zidon and Misrephoth-maim, and others eastward towards Mizpeh.

And they smote them, till they left them none remaining.] As they divided themselves, and fled several ways; so did the Israelites send out several parties, both to the west and to the east, who pursued them so close, that they let not a man of them escape.

Ver. 9. *And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.*] We do not read, as Kimchi notes upon this place, of any horses or chariots which the five kings, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, brought into the field; because they went only to besiege Gibeon, and hoped to take it presently by an assault, in which there was no use of horses and chariots; which they did not want, no more than these kings, who abounded in them, and placed their principal confidence in their horsemen and chariots. Which was the reason God commanded them to hough their horses; that is, to cut their nerves and sinews in their hams, which Josephus translates ἀχρήστους ποιεῖν, *to make them useless and unprofitable:* for God would not have his people place their safety and security in this, but in himself alone, as good people always did, (Psal. xx. 7.) Accordingly, when David had conquered Hadedezar, and taken from him a great number of horses and chariots, he disabled all the horses, after this example of Joshua (as if God intended by him to teach all future rulers of his people what to do), reserving only as many as would serve for a hundred chariots, (2 Sam. viii. 4.) And Schickardus observes, out of the Jewish authors, that they were wont thus to enervate all the horses they found in the king's stables after his death, that they might not be of use to his successor. (See his Mischpat Hammelech, cap. 6. Theor. 19. and Bochart's Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 11.)

Ver. 10. *And Joshua at that time.*] Before he thought of returning to his camp at Gilgal.

Turned back.] From pursuing those that fled towards the western coast.

And took Hazor.] Which was in the eastern part of the country, upon the lake beforementioned.

And smote the king thereof with the sword.] This was one reason, it is likely, why he made haste to invest Hazor; because the king thereof, who was the chief author of this war, had escaped out of the battle, and thought to defend himself there.

For Hazor before-time was the head of all those kingdoms.] Not of all the kingdoms of Canaan; but of all those mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Which was another reason why he fell upon it *at this time;* that by taking the most considerable city of this part of Canaan, all the rest might be disheartened to hold out against him.

Ver. 11. *And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there was not any left to breathe.*] See x. 40.

And he burnt Hazor with fire.] Which the Canaanites afterward rebuilt, and possessed it for some time; another king of the same name reigning in it, (Judg. iv. 2.) For the kings of this city were called Jabin in many successions, as the Egyptian kings were called Pharaoh, and the kings of the Philistines Abimelech, &c.

Ver. 12. *And the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take.*] *viz.* Those mentioned ver. 2, 3. whom Jabin drew into confederacy with him; and perhaps were his dependents.

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And smote them with the edge of the sword; and he utterly destroyed them.] That is, all their inhabitants.

As Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded.] Deut. vii. 2. and many other places.

Ver. 13. *But as for the cities that stood still in their strength.*] The Hebrew words *all thillam* (which we translate *in their strength*) literally signify *on their heap*, as is noted in the margin of our Bibles; that is, were seated in an eminent place, and therefore of greater strength than those that stood in the plain. Thus Bochart interprets it in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 29. from whence he thinks came the names of Thelasar, (2 Kings xix. 12.) and of Thelabib, (Ezek. iii. 15.) And thus I observe the prophet Jeremiah speaks, xxx. 18. Jerusalem shall be built on her *own heap*, or high hill. But the meaning may be, according to our translation, the cities whose walls were not battered down in the taking of them.

Israel burnt none of them.] Because they intended to dwell in them; and would not be at the charge and pains of building new walls for their safety.

But Hazor only; that did Joshua burn.] Because it was the capital city, and began this war against them; which being laid desolate by the Israelites, without inhabitant, the Canaanites took their opportunity to rebuild it, and settle themselves there again.

Ver. 14. *And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves.*] As the Lord allowed them to do at Ai, (viii. 2.)

But every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, &c.] Because God had often commanded these nations should be rooted out for their abominable wickedness; lest the Israelites should be drawn in to imitate them in their filthy lewdness, as I observed from Lev. xviii. 24—26, &c. See also xx. 22, 23, &c.

Ver. 15. *As the Lord commanded Moses his servant.*] See Exod. xxxiv. 11, 12, &c.

So did Moses command Joshua.] See Numb. xxvi. 19. Deut. xxxi. 7.

And so did Joshua: he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses.] Which is a demonstration that Moses left in writing what we read the Lord commanded in the foregoing books, and that they were not written (as some pretend) in later times: for then it would have been impossible for Joshua to have executed every thing that he commanded, unless he had had the book of the law before him for his direction. But so desirous are some men to weaken the authority of these holy books, that from hence they argue this book of Joshua could not be written by himself, but some other; because he gives himself this high commendation. So the author of Theolog. Polit. who by the same reason might have rejected St. Paul's Epistles as none of his, and Cæsar's Commentaries; for both of them relate their own virtues, and the noble things they did.

Ver. 16. *And Joshua took all that land.*] Belonging to the kings beforementioned.

The hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain.] This is a description of his whole conquest, as appears from x. 40.

The mountain of Israel.] It is very uncertain what place this was; but many think it probable to be Beth-el: where God appeared to Jacob as he went to Padan-Aram, and promised to give him this land, (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.) and where he dwelt, by God's direction, after he came from Padan-Aram, and God appeared again to him there, and made him the same promise, and changed his name from Jacob to Israel, (Gen. xxxv. 1. 9, 10, &c.)

And the valley of the same.] Belonging to the same mountain. But Conradus Pellicanus thinks the singular number is put for the plural, and thus explains the whole verse: The land of Israel was partly in the hill-country, partly in the south towards Egypt, partly in the plain near the great sea, and the sea of Sodom, and the spring of Jordan, near Tabor, in Galilee. And moreover, the mountains of Israel were the two Carmels, Hermon, Gilead, Lebanus, those about Jerusalem, and many other.

Ver. 17. *Even from the Mount Halak.*] Or the stony mountain, as Bochart interprets it, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 5.

That goeth up to Mount Seir.] Which was the bounds of the country of Edom.

Even unto Baal-Gad, in the valley of Lebanon, under Mount Hermon.] As in the foregoing words he expresses the bounds of Joshua's conquest southward; so hither they reached northward. And this seems to be a description of the length of the country which he took from the king of Hazor, and all those that joined with him, as Archbishop Usher understands it.

And all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.] So that none appeared to make head against him.

Ver. 18. *Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.*] But those kings were so many, and made such great opposition, that he spent six years (as the forenamed great person computes) in this war before he could finish it.

Ver. 19. *There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel.*] This is the reason the war continued so long, because there was but one city that surrendered on such terms as had been offered them; but all the rest obstinately refused to yield unto Joshua.

Save only the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon.] See viii. 3. Who, if they had truly discovered who they were (which out of fear they concealed), and begged peace, they might have obtained it on such conditions as were proposed to all.

All other they took in battle.] By force of arms.

Ver. 20. *For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle.*] Being a people obstinately wicked, God ordered things so in his providence, that they were emboldened (notwithstanding the wonders they had certainly heard were done for Israel) to fight with them. By which it appears the Gibeonites were a better sort of people, who considered what God had done in favour of the Israelites.

That he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour.] Which they might have found, if they had not been so fool-hardy (as we speak) as to imagine they could withstand those before whom the river Jordan fled, and the walls of Jericho fell down flat.

But that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses.] In many places, particularly in Deut. vii. 2. xx. 16, 17.

Ver. 21. *And at that time.*] That is, in the war beforementioned, and perhaps in the conclusion of it; after he had left none to oppose him in other places, but only in those mountainous countries which were of difficult access.

Came Joshua.] Either from the camp at Gilgal, or from

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destroying the kings and their countries, of which he had been speaking in this chapter.

And cut off the Anakims.] Who were a distinct people (Arius Montanus thinks) from the Canaanites; of a fierce, cruel, and tyrannical disposition, who oppressed all their neighbours.

From the mountains.] Where they had settled, and, it is likely, strongly fortified themselves: which moved Joshua to let them alone till he had finished his other conquests. Concerning these Anakims, see Numb. xiii. 22, 23.

From Hebron.] Called also Kiriath-Arba, the city of Arba, who was a great man among the Anakims. (See Bochartus, in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 1. p. 363.)

And Debir.] Called also Kiriath-Sepher, as I noted before.

And Anab.] This, as well as the two forenamed cities, fell to the tribe of Judah, (xv. 50.)

And from all the mountains of Judah.] All the mountainous country which afterward fell by lot to that tribe.

And from all the mountains of Israel.] All the mountainous country which was in the rest of the tribes of Israel, where these people, it is likely, fled for safety.

Joshua destroyed them utterly, with their cities.] Which it seems they had in those mountainous countries of Israel; besides Hebron, Debir, and Anab, in the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 22. *There were none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel.*] He rooted them out of the whole country which the Israelites conquered.

Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.] Three cities of the Philistines; unto which either some of them escaped, and there took shelter, or they had been there from ancient time, and the Israelites could not yet expel them. For they did not possess themselves of the country of the Philistines till the time of David; when we find some of these giants still there; particularly in Gath. But, that there were any of them at Ascalon, the famous Bochart shews to be an error in the place beforementioned, (lib. i. Canaan, cap. 1.)

Ver 23. *So Joshua took the whole land.*] Which either the Canaanites or the Anakims possessed; that is, subdued it so that none rose up against him, though many places were not yet in the possession of the Israelites. (See xiii. 1, 2, &c.) For which were many reasons; one of which was, because the Israelites were not yet so many as to be able to people the whole country, and keep the beasts of the field from multiplying upon them: (Exod. xxiii. 29.) and two more reasons are added, Judg. iii. 1. 4.

According to all that the Lord said unto Moses.] Deut. xxxi. 7, 8.

And Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel.] Deut. iii. 28.

According to their divisions by their tribes.] Numb. xxvi. 53. xxxiii. 54.

And the land rested from war.] None of the lords of the Philistines, or any other, adventured to give any disturbance to the Israelites in their possessions; but they enjoyed them quietly: and thereby had liberty to make a division of the country; which God ordered them to go about, chap. xiii.

Now began the seventh year from the time the Israelites first ploughed and sowed in the land: and therefore was the first sabbatical year that they observed after Joshua had brought them to their rest in the land of promise. An emblem (as our great primate of Ireland observes) of that eternal sabbatism, or rest, unto which the true Jesus will bring his people, (Heb. iv. 8, 9.) And from this they were to reckon unto their jubilee, mentioned Lev. xxv. 8. 13. But that was not from their entrance into Canaan, but from the seventh year after the division of the land, as I observed before upon the last verse of the tenth chapter.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *NOW these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land.*] Before he gives an account of the division of the land, he thinks fit to lay before every one's eyes, as in a table, the land they had conquered; which was to be divided.

On the other side Jordan, towards the rising of the sun.] There they began their conquests, before they passed over Jordan.

From the river Arnon, unto Mount Hermon.] So the bounds of this conquest are described by Moses, Deut. iii. 8. iv. 48. (See there.)

And all the plain on the east.] That is, on the east of Jordan, (see Deut. i. 1.) called the plain of Moab, Deut. xxxiv. 1.

Ver. 2. *Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.*] He was the first king whose land they conquered and possessed. (See Numb. xxi.)

And ruled from Aroer, which is upon the banks of the river Arnon.] See Numb. xxi. 24.

And from the middle of the river.] In which stood the city called Aroer. For Ar never was in the hands of Sihon; but his kingdom was bounded by it, on that side. (See Deut. ii. 36. iii. 16.)

And from half Gilead.] In the Hebrew, *and half of Gilead;* there being nothing to answer to the word *from:* which being left out, the sense is plain, that half of the country of Gilead belonged to Sihon, as the other half did to Og, (ver. 5.)

To the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon.] Thus his country is constantly described; particularly in Numb. xxi. 24. Deut. iii. 16.

Ver. 3. *And from the plain,* &c.] There is nothing answering to the word *from* in the Hebrew; which may most clearly be translated, *and the plain:* and so the LXX. only retaining the word *araba,* which we translate *plain.* This was another part of Sihon's country, a great plain, which lay eastward of the sea of Cinneroth, and the salt sea; by which it was bounded on the west.

The way to Beth-Jeshimoth.] Which, by the next words, is thought to have lain towards the south.

And from the south, under Ashdod-Pisgah.] The meaning seems to be, that on the south it was bounded by Ashdod-Pisgah. (See Deut. iii. 17.) I do but touch these things, leaving them to a very learned friend and brother of mine, who hath most accurately considered every part and place of this country.

Ver. 4. *And the coast of Og king of Bashan.*] The next conquest they made was of the kingdom of Og, who was of the remnant of the giants. (See Deut. iii. 11.)

That dwelt at Ashtaroth and Edrei.] See Deut. i. 4. Some would gather from this place, and from xiii. 12. that

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he had two royal seats, one at Ashtaroth, another at Edrei; and that he lived sometimes in the one, and sometimes in the other.

Ver. 5. *And reigned in Mount Hermon.*] At the bottom of which some other people lived, who were conquered by Joshua, (xi. 17.)

And in Salcah.] This was one of his cities, in that part of his kingdom which was next to Hermon, as some conjecture from xiii. 12. But others think it was in the southern part of this country, possessed afterward by the Gadites; which they gather from 1 Chron. v. 11, 12. 16.

And all Bashan, unto the border, &c.] See an account of this, and of all that follows in this verse, Deut. iii. 13, 14.

Ver. 6. *Them did Moses, the servant of the Lord, and the children of Israel, smite.*] These two kings were conquered by Moses before they came into Canaan, (Numb. xxi.)

And Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave it for a possession to the Reubenites, and Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.] See Numb. xxxii. and Deut. iii. 12. xiii. 8. He gives Moses the title of *the servant of the Lord* twice in this verse, to make them sensible that this war against the two kings beforenamed was made by Divine authority; and that their land was afterward given to the Reubenites, &c. by the same authority.

Ver. 7. *And these are the kings.*] They that follow in the rest of the chapter.

Of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan.] In the late wars, beforementioned in this book.

On the west.] Westward of Jordan.

From Baal-Gad, in the valley of Lebanon, even unto the Mount Halak, which goeth up to Seir.] This was the northern and southern bounds of the country of these kings. (See xi. 17.)

Which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession, according to their divisions.] Unto the rest of the tribes, who had not their share on the other side Jordan, (xi. 23.)

Ver. 8. *In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains.*] This is a description of the condition of the country; in which *valleys* and *plains* differ only in this, that the former were such as lay between mountains, and the latter, the flat country, which was remote from mountains.

And in the springs.] Which commonly were at the foot of mountains.

And in the wilderness, and in the south country.] These are joined together, because their wildernesses were southerly, in the hottest and driest part of the land: whereby we are not to understand countries without people; but that were thinly peopled, in comparison with other parts of the land. For we read of houses and towns in the wilderness, 1 Kings ix. 18. xi. 34.

The Hivites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, &c.] This may relate either to the kings, or the countries, forementioned.

Ver. 9. *The king of Jericho, one.*] He is first mentioned, because first conquered.

The king of Ai.] He was the next.

Which is beside Beth-el, one.] The people of which place came to assist the king of Ai; and were conquered at the same time, (viii. 17.)

Ver. 10. *The king of Jerusalem, one.*] Who was the next that opposed Joshua, and therefore next mentioned, (x. 1.)

The king of Hebron, one.] He, and the three next, the kings of Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, (ver. 11, 12.) joined with the king of Jerusalem, and were vanquished at the same time.

Ver. 12. *The king of Gezer, one.*] He came out to help Lachish, and was smitten at the same time, (x. 33.)

Ver. 13. *The king of Debir, one.*] Mentioned x: 38.

The king of Geder, one.] We read not of him before; but we find several towns in the tribe of Judah of the same or neighbouring name, *viz.* Gederah, and Gederoth, and Gederothaim, and Geder, (xv. 36. 41. 56. 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.) All which, as Bochartus observes, have their name *à sepimento, from the fence that was about them,* (lib. i. Canaan, cap. 36.)

Ver. 14. *The king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one.*] We have no mention of these kings before; but we know that Hormah was a city in the tribe of Judah, (xv. 30. Judg. i. 17. 1 Sam. xxx. 30.) and afterward given to Simeon. (Josh. xix. 4.) Arad also was a place in the tribe of Judah, as appears by the story in Judg. i. 16.

Ver. 15. *The king of Libnah, one.*] Mentioned before, (x. 29.)

The king of Adullam, one.] This was a city in the same tribe of Judah, (xv. 35. 1 Sam. xxii. 1.)

Ver. 16. *The king of Makkedah, one.*] See x. 26.

The king of Beth-el, one.] We read not of any king here before; but it seems there was one depending upon Ai, (viii. 17.)

Ver. 17. *And the king of Tappuah, one.*] There were two cities of this name; one in the tribe of Judah, (xv. 34.) the other in the tribe of Ephraim, (xvii. 8.) It is probable the latter is here meant; because the king of it is mentioned next to the king of Beth-el, which was in the confines of Benjamin and Ephraim. And immediately follows the king of Hepher; which was a place not far off, in the tribe of Zebulun.

The king of Hepher, one.] We read of the *land of Hepher,* in 1 Kings iv. 10. Which St. Jerome saith was in the tribe of Zebulun, near Sephorim, or Diocæsarea.

Ver. 18. *The king of Aphek.*] There were two Apheks in this country which Joshua conquered, one in the tribe of Judah, (xiii. 53. 1 Sam. ix. 1. xxix. 1.) another in the tribe of Asher, (Josh. xix. 53.) Which of them is here intended, cannot certainly be determined.

The king of Lassaron, one.] This place is never named any where else in Scripture. But I take it for Saron (as the Vulgar Latin here doth, leaving out the first syllable), which was a city near Lydda, as we learn from Acts ix. 35. And the country about it was very pleasant and fruitful, (Isa. xxxiii. 9. xxxv. 2.) There was another Saron also on the other side of Jordan, in the east, in the country of the Gadites, (1 Chron. v. 16.) of which some think the prophet Isaiah speaks, lxv. 10.

Ver. 19. *The king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one.*] Both these are mentioned before, as conquered by Joshua, (xi. 1.)

Ver. 20. *The king of Shimron-Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one.*] These two are mentioned in the same place, (xi. 1.) And Shimron was in the tribe of Zebulun; and Achshaph in the tribe of Asher, (xix. 15. 25.) The former hath the addition of Meron to it in this place, to distinguish it from some other Shimron; which some think

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was in the tribe of Ephraim, called Shomeron, or Samaria.

Ver. 21. *The king of Taanach, one.*] A city given to the tribe of Manasseh, (xvii. 11.) and in the confines of Zebulun. It belonged to the Levites: (xxi. 25.) but the old inhabitants were not expelled out of it, (Judg. i. 27.)

The king of Megiddo, one.] This city fell to the same tribe, as we read in the same place; and was near the river Kishon; as may be gathered from Judg. v. 19. The Canaanites were not driven out of this city, (Judg. i. 27.)

Ver. 22. *The king of Kedesh, one.*] There were two cities called Kedesh, or Kadish; one in the tribe of Judah, (xv. 23.) the other in the tribe of Naphtali, (xix. 37.) The latter is here meant; for it was a fenced city, as we read there; but the other was of no note.

The king of Jokneam of Carmel, one.] A city in the tribe of Zebulun, at the bottom of Mount Carmel, near the river Belus, (xix. 11.) and one of the cities of the Levites, (xxi. 34.) It had its name from its delightful situation, as Bochart conjectures, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 28.

Ver. 23. *The king of Dor, in the coast of Dor, one.*] A city in the lot of the tribe of Manasseh, (xvii. 11.) which had a large territory belonging to it, called after its name: for it was a royal city, and one of the most ancient in Phœnicia, as Bochart observes. So strong, also, that the Israelites could not get possession of it (or could not keep out the ancient inhabitants), when it fell to the portion of Manasseh, (Judg. i. 27.) Nor could Antiochus Sidetes, in future times, take it, though he laid siege to it with a very great army, (lib. i. Canaan, cap. 41.)

The king of the nations of Gilgal, one.] This Gilgal is not the place where Joshua encamped when he came over Jordan; for there was no city there, nor any king of that country, but the king of Jericho. That place also had its name from the circumcision of the Israelites there, (ver. 9.) We have no mention indeed of any other Gilgal in Scripture; but St. Jerome says, in his time, there was a place called Golgol, about six miles from Antipatris, which was near the sea, not far from Joppa. Hither, it is likely, merchants from several countries resorted; and thence the chief ruler there was called *the king of the nations of Gilgal.* Some finding mention of *Galilee of the nations,* fancy that it is the place here meant. But that name, for some part of Galilee, was not known in the days of Joshua; being occasioned by Solomon's giving Hiram twenty towns in this country, (1 Kings ix. 11.) So the same St. Jerome.

Ver. 24. *The king of Tirzah, one.*] It is not certain in what part of the country this city was; but it is very probable in the lot of the tribe of Ephraim. For Jeroboam (who was of this tribe) and his successors, made it the royal seat until the building of Samaria, (1 Kings xiv. 17. xvi. 23, 24.)

All the kings, thirty and one.] Some cannot believe that in so small a country there were so many kings. But they should consider, that these kings were only petty princes, or lords of cities, which had a few villages depending on them, the inhabitants of which were their tenants. This appears by ver. 9. where we read of the king of Beth-el; which was so small a place, that he and the king of Ai, joined together, had but twelve thousand subjects, (viii. 25.) For kingdoms, like all other things, were anciently very small in their beginning. See upon Gen. xiv. 1. and Grotius upon the first verse of this chapter, and Masius upon the seventh. Unto which may be added, that Cæsar, in his fifth book of his Commentaries, speaks of four kings here in the county of Kent alone: how many then were there in all Britain? for it appears by Tacitus, that the Silures and the Brigantes had their own kings also. And Cæsar informs us, that in France there were as many kings as princes; and so it was in Spain, as Livy writes. And Vopiscus, in the life of the emperor Probus, relates, that when he was in Germany, "reguli novem ex diversis gentibus," &c. *nine petty kings came from divers nations, and threw themselves at his feet;* as he himself wrote to the senate of Rome, in a letter which is there recorded. In which he calls them *novem reges, nine kings.*

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *NOW Joshua was old and stricken in years.*] To what age he was advanced we cannot certainly know; because we do not know how old he was when they came out of Egypt. Some think three and forty; and then he was fourscore and three when they came into Canaan: and now, it may be gathered by probable conjectures, wanted not much of a hundred.

And the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.] Which, in his declining age, he could not hope to live to conquer; and therefore he would have him go about another business, (ver. 7.)

Ver. 2. *This is the land that yet remains.*] To be subdued hereafter.

All the borders of the Philistines.] Who lay in the south-west part of Canaan, near the sea.

And all Geshuri.] Which was a city, and a country in the north-east, not far from Hermon, belonging to the lot of the tribe of Manasseh. (See Deut. iii. 14.)

Ver. 3. *From Sihor, which is before Egypt.*] He describes more largely the borders of the Philistines, whose country extended along the sea-coast, south and north, from Sihor, which was a little stream from one of the branches of the Nile, whereby Palestine was bounded on that side. (See Gen. xv. 18. and Vossius de Orig. et Progr. Idolol. lib. ii. cap. 74.)

Even unto the borders of Ekron northward.] A famous city among the Philistines, where Baal-zebub was worshipped, called in the New Testament *the prince of the devils* (or *demons*), because he was the principal god of the people of Palestine. This city was given to the tribe of Judah at first, (xv. 45.) afterward to the tribe of Dan, (xix.) though neither of them could get possession of it.

Which is counted to the Canaanite.] For the Philistines were not original inhabitants of this country, which belonged to the offspring of Canaan, the youngest son of Ham; whereas the Philistines were descended from Misraim, his second son; who expelled the Avites out of this country; as we read Deut. ii. 23. and see my annotations on Gen. x. 14. 19.

Five lords of the Philistines.] Which country was under the government of five *lords,* as they are constantly called in Scripture; in the Hebrew, *seraim,* or *seranaim;* which

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seems to be an ancient Phœnician word (the same with *sarim*) for a ruler of a province, or city. The LXX. call them Σάτραπαι, and the Vulgar Latin, *reguli, petty princes.* But they are never called *melakim*, i. e. *kings*, in Scripture, as the rest of the princes of Canaan are. Which inclines me to think that their government was not so absolute, as that of the rest of the kings of Canaan. Only we read in future times, that Achish was king of Gath; having, it seems, in David's days, made himself more absolute than the former lords of that place.

The Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites.] These people had their names from the five principal cities in this country, where they inhabited; which are commonly known.

Also the Avites.] These were a people mixed with them, being a remnant (as I said before) of the ancient inhabitants of this country. But there was no distinct lord of them; there being but five in all; and so many without one over these. Some have confounded them with the Hivites; but their name is quite different in the Hebrew, and so is their country. For the Hivites lived in Hermon in the north; and these here in the west. From whence, though they were driven by the Caphtorites, (Deut. ii. 23.) yet some of them, it seems, remained; as several of the Canaanites did, when the Israelites dispossessed them of their country. See Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 36. who thinks they were not the offspring of Canaan; but it is manifest they inhabited part of the country belonging to him: for Sidon was the first-born of Canaan, who was settled on that coast; and the border of the Canaanites is said to be from thence unto Gaza, (Gen. x. 19.)

Ver. 4. *From the south.*] Of the Philistines' country.

All the land of the Canaanites.] All that tract of land which belonged to the people properly called Canaanites; who lived upon the sea-coast.

And Mearah.] We find no mention of this place elsewhere: some translate it, *a cave.*

That is beside the Sidonians.] Who were in the northern point of that sea-coast.

Unto Aphek.] See xii. 18. where I observed there were two cities of this name; but it is most reasonable here to understand that in the tribe of Asher; whose king though Joshua had slain, he had not taken his country.

To the borders of the Amorites.] Who were in these parts: for they being a mighty people had dispersed themselves, not only in the east, and in the south, but in these northern regions.

Ver. 5. *And the land of the Giblites.*] A people inhabiting a city called Gebal, and the country about it, near to Tyre and Sidon; as appears from Ezek. xxvii. 9. and in 1 Kings v. 18. they are mentioned as stone-cutters, sent by Hiram king of Tyre to king Solomon. (See also Psal. lxxxiii. 7.)

And all Lebanon towards the sun-rising.] They extended their conquests thus far, (xi. 17.) but could not subdue the eastern part of this country.

From Baal-Gad under Mount Hermon, unto the entering into Hamath.] Concerning *Baal-Gad*, see xi. 17. and concerning *the entering into Hamath*, Numb. xxxiv. 8.

Ver. 6. *All the inhabitants of the hill-country.*] In the northern parts of the land.

From Lebanon.] This shews what hilly country he speaks of.

Unto Misrephoth-maim.] A place beforementioned, xi. 8. where, as I observed, some render it *hot waters*, or *baths*: for *sharaph* signifies to burn, and *maim* is waters. And I may add, there are those that think they were *lime-kilns*, others *glass-furnaces*; but most likely *salt-pits.*

And all the Sidonians.] Who were near to the inhabitants of Libanus, westward upon the sea.

Them will I drive out before the children of Israel.] If they persisted constant in his worship and service. Which they did not; and therefore we never read that the Sidonians were conquered by the Israelites: and the people of Lebanon were only made tributaries in the days of David and Solomon.

Only.] Or rather *therefore*, as the word *rak* sometimes signifies. (See chap. i. *ult.*)

Divide thou it by lot unto the children of Israel for an inheritance.] Though they be not yet driven out, yet, since I have promised to expel them, assign all the forementioned countries to the children of Israel by lot, as the inheritance I have bestowed upon them. Which gave them a strong assurance they should have all this land; both because God had given it to them for an *inheritance*, and ordered it to be divided by *lot.*

As I have commanded thee.] Or, as I now command thee, and give thee authority to do.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh.*] Both that which was conquered, and that which remained unconquered, was to be divided, that every tribe might know what belonged to them, by God's gift; and be encouraged to attempt the conquest of it when they were able; and be preserved from entering into any covenant or society with those who kept their inheritance from them; and likewise hinder the unconquered people from joining their forces together to recover their country; the Israelites inhabiting the cities and fields that lay between them.

Ver. 8. *With whom.*] That is, with the other half of the tribe beforementioned.

The Reubenites and Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward.] See Numb. xxxii. 33, &c.

Even as Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave them.] Which he did by order from God; and therefore they were not to be disturbed in their possession, (Deut. iii. 18.)

Here the words of God to Joshua (ver. 1.) end; and in the next verse the writer of this book begins to describe the country which God ordered to be given to the forenamed two tribes and a half, that there might be no future dispute about this division; but it might be held as good as that which was made by lot among the rest of the tribes.

Ver. 9. *From Aroer, that is upon the brink of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river.*] See xii. 2. and Deut. iii. 16.

And all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon.] These are two cities which the Amorites took from the Moabites, (as we read Numb. xxi. 30.) and the Israelites took from them when they conquered Sihon their king. The former of them was in the portion of the Reubenites; the other of the Gadites: and when the ten tribes were carried captive, they returned into the possession of the Moabites again. For Isaiah speaks of them as belonging to Moab, xv. 2.

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and so doth Jeremiah, xlviii. 22. The plain of Medeba seems to be the same with the plain of Moab.

Ver. 10. *And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon.*] See Numb. xxi. 24, 25, &c.

Ver. 11. *And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites, and Maachathites.*] Geshur and Maacha were two cites near Mount Hermon, in the extreme bounds of this country northward, whose inhabitants the Israelites could not drive out, (ver. 13.) and yet their land was divided among them.

And all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah.] See all this verse explained, xii. 5. I shall only add, that Maacha was in the tribe of Manasseh, and is the city which Ptolemy calls Epicæros. Which name the Chaldee paraphrast uses both here and xii. 4, 5. and Deut. iii. 14. instead of Maacha, as Bochart observes, lib. ii. Phaleg. cap. 6.

Ver. 12. *All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants.*] See xii. 4. and Deut. iii. 11.

For these did Moses smite, and cast them out.] These *Rephaim* (which we translate *giants*) were perfectly conquered, and rooted out by Moses. They were smitten in Abraham's time, by Chedorlaomer, (Gen. xiv. 5.) but recovered strength so much, that their country, when Moses conquered it, was called *the land of giants*, Deut. iii. 13.

Ver. 13. *Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites and Maachathites.*] See ver. 2.

But the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites unto this day.] For Joshua growing old (ver. 1.) made no further conquest, but left this people unsubdued, as Moses also had done.

Ver. 14. *Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance.*] For the tithes of the whole country were instead of their portion in land, (Deut. xviii. 2.) And this is set down here by Joshua, as formerly by Moses, to shew that they had as indisputable a right to the tithes as their brethren had to the land.

The sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance.] That is, the inheritance of the priests; for the whole tribe of Levi had nothing to do with them. See Numb. xviii. where the portion of the priests and of the Levites is exactly set down; and see ver. 33. of this chapter, and xiv. 3. xviii. 7.

As he said unto them.] See Numb. xviii. 20, 21. where this is distinctly said, both with respect to the priests and to the Levites.

Ver. 15. *And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben inheritance according to their families.*] Having said in general what Moses gave to the two tribes and a half, he proceeds to set down in particular what share each of them had in this country: that so they might no more quarrel among themselves about their portion, than the nine tribes and a half quarrel with them all. And, first, he mentions what part of the land was given to Reuben; which was divided into as many portions as they had families.

Ver. 16. *Their coast was from Aroer, that is on the bank of Arnon,* &c.] See ver. 9. Aroer itself was in the tribe of Gad, (Numb. xxxii. 34.) unto which the portion of the Reubenites reached.

Ver. 17. *Heshbon, and all the cities that are in the plain.*] He means the plain beforementioned, ver. 9.

Dibon.] It is said plainly, in Numb. xxxii. 34. that it belonged to the Gadites; for it was, as Masius well judges, in the confines of both tribes; and so was inhabited by both. Which is to be said also of Heshbon, here ascribed to the Reubenites; but in xxi. 39. is said to be a city of the Levites in the tribe of Gad. And so we read also in 1 Chron. vi. *ult.* And this is still more evident; for Heshbon, which in this verse is reckoned to the Reubenites, in the twenty-sixth verse of this very chapter, is said to be given to the tribe of Gad; which is a demonstration they had it between them.

Bamoth-Baal, and Beth-Baal-meon.] We read of Bamoth not far from this country, Numb. xxi. 19. but no where else of Bamoth-Baal; which, it is probable, was some high place where Baal was worshipped; for we read of *high places* in this country, Numb. xxi. 28. We find mention of Baal-meon in many places, particularly Numb. xxxii. 38. where it is said to be given to this tribe. And the addition of Beth to it, signifies there was some house, that is, temple of Baal in this place.

Ver. 18. *And Jahaza.*] Here they fought with Sihon. (See Numb. xxi. 23.)

And Kedemoth.] From whence Moses sent friendly messengers to Sihon, to desire a peaceable passage through his country, (Deut. iii. 26.)

And Mephaath.] This, with the two foregoing, were Levitical cities in the tribe of Reuben, (xxi. 36, 37. 1 Chron. vi. 78, 79.)

Ver. 19. *And Kirjathaim, and Sibmah.*] These two are mentioned in Numb. xxxii. 37, 38. as given to the Reubenites.

And Zareth-shahar.] We do not read of this city any where else.

In the mount of the valley.] In the mount which overlooked the great plain beforementioned; which may be supposed to be one of the mountains of Abarim, where this city, and perhaps the two former, were seated.

Ver. 20. *And Baal-Peor.*] It seems to have had its name from the filthy idol which was there worshipped by the Moabites, (Numb. xxv. 3. 5. see Deut. xxxiv. 6.)

And Ashdod-Pisgah and Beth-Jeshimoth.] See xii. 3.

Ver. 21. *And all the cities of the plain.*] As well as those mentioned in the mountain which overlooked it, (ver. 19.)

And all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites.] That is, all the forementioned places belonged to the kingdom of Sihon. But they had not all his kingdom given them; for it was shared between them and the Gadites, as appears from ver. 27.

Whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian.] Not in the war with Sihon, mentioned Numb. xxi. but in another war after that, undertaken by a particular command of God, (Numb. xxxi.)

Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba.] Who are mentioned as killed in that war, (Numb. xxxi. 8.)

Which were dukes of Sihon.] This is the reason why they are here mentioned, because, though they lived in Midian, yet they were tributaries to Sihon; and, it is likely, assisted him in his war with Israel, in which though they then escaped, yet afterward they were slain by them.

Dwelling in the country.] It is uncertain whether he meant that Sihon had given them some place in his country to dwell in (that they might be ready on all occasions to assist him with their forces), or that they were settled

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in the country of Midian; whereas some of that people were unsettled, and moved from place to place, like to the ancient Nomades. However it was, they were such great men in Midian, that they are called *kings*, Numb. xxxi. 8. as here they are called *princes;* but much inferior to Sihon, whom they served only as great commanders under him. So our translators, I suppose, understood it, which made them render the Hebrew word *nesiche* by the English word *dukes;* which we elsewhere translate *nobles*, in Psal. lxxxiii. 13.

Ver. 22. *Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer.*] He had been a prophet, but degenerated into a soothsayer, or diviner, (see Numb. xxii. 5—8.) and became a prophet again for the sake of Israel.

Did the children of Israel slay with a sword among them that were slain by them.] It is hard to give an account why he is here mentioned; unless we suppose him to have been an adviser of Sihon, and those dukes that joined with him to undertake the war; as it is certain he was of the Midianites to draw in the Israelites to commit idolatry, (Numb. xxv. 17.)

Ver. 23. *And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border thereof,* &c.] This river was the bounds of their country westward.

Ver. 24. *And Moses gave inheritance unto the tribe of Gad,* &c.] As he had done to the Reubenites, ver. 15. (See there.)

Ver. 25. *And their coast was Jazer.*] See Numb. xxi. 32. and xxxii. 35.

And all the cities of Gilead.] That lay next to Jazer: for half of Gilead was given to the children of Manasseh, (ver. 31.)

And half of the land of the children of Ammon.] The children of Israel took nothing from them, but were expressly forbidden to meddle with their country, (Deut. ii. 19.) He speaks therefore of that part of their country which Sihon had taken from them, (as he did part of the Moabites' country, Numb. xxi. 26.) and the Israelites, having vanquished Sihon, justly possessed, from Arnon to Jabbok; as Jephthah represents to the Ammonites, when they demanded this land as belonging to them; when the Israelites had enjoyed it near three hundred years, (Judg. xi. 13. 22, &c.)

Unto Aroer.] This was the bounds of that country taken from the Ammonites by Sihon, from Aroer unto Jabbok; for Aroer was seated upon Arnon beforementioned, (Judg. xi. 13.)

That is before Rabbah.] Over against Rabbah, the chief city of the Ammonites' country; which was in the north part of it, as Aroer in the south.

Ver. 26. *And from Heshbon.*] See ver. 17.

Unto Ramath-Mizpeh.] The same with Ramath-Gilead, of which we read xx. 8. and many other places. It seems to be the same place which is called Mizpeh of Gilead, where Jephthah the Gileadite lived, (Judg. xi. 29. 34.)

And Betonim.] We know no more of this place, than that it was, in all likelihood, a city in the north part of this tribe, as Ramath-Gilead was; and Heshbon in the south.

And from Mahanaim.] This was a city built in that place where Jacob saw the camps of angels, (Gen. xxxii. 1, 2.) It was not far from the river Jabbok, as appears from that chapter, ver. 22. This city was very considerable in aftertimes; Ish-bosheth, who reigned over Israel after Saul, having his residence here; and David making some stay here when he fled from Absalom, (2 Sam. ii. 8. 12. xvii. 27.) It was one of the Levitical cities, (xxi. 37.)

Unto Debir.] There was another city of this name in the tribe of Judah, (xv. 15. 49.) But this was (as St. Jerome and Eusebius tell us) a city of the Ammonites upon Jordan.

Ver. 27. *And in the valley, Beth-Aram, and Beth-Nimrah.*] Having mentioned the frontier places, he comes to speak of those cities which were in the midst of the country. And these two are mentioned, Numb. xxxii. 36. The latter of which, here called Beth-Nimrah (*Domus Pardorum*, as Bochart interprets it), is simply called Nimrah in the third verse of that chapter. And the waters of Nimrim (Isa. xv. 6.) seem to have been in the same place; which Moses and Joshua say belonged to the Gadites; but Isaiah and Jeremiah call it a city of the Moabites: who, in the days of those prophets, after the ten tribes were carried captive, recovered those places. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 7.)

And Succoth.] Which was the place where Jacob fixed, after he had passed over Jabbok, in his return from Padan-Aram, (Gen. xxxiii. 17.)

And Zaphon.] A place which St. Jerome saith lay upon the river Jordan.

The rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon.] That is, all but that which was given to the Reubenites.

Jordan and his border.] For instance, the country bordering upon Jordan.

Even unto the edge of the sea of Cinnereth, on the other side Jordan eastward.] To the extreme part of the lake, in aftertimes called Gennesaret; where the river Jordan came out of it on the south-east.

Ver. 28. *This is the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages.*] Which are not all named, but they were in the region here described.

Ver. 29. *And Moses gave inheritance unto the half tribe of Manasseh,* &c.] The country which they conquered on the other side Jordan, being too large for the Reubenites and Gadites alone, Moses bestowed what follows upon the half tribe of Manasseh; who did not desire it, as far as I can find, (see Numb. xxxii. 1, 2.) but were thought fit to be joined with the other two tribes, because they were very numerous, (Numb. xxvi. 34.) and, it is likely, had great store of cattle, as the other had.

Ver. 30. *And their coast was from Mahanaim.*] Mentioned before, ver. 26.

All Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan.] This kingdom consisted of three parts, (Deut. iii. 13.) half of Gilead, Bashan, and the region of Argob: all which sometimes are comprehended under the name of Bashan, because it was the principal part of his kingdom.

And all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan.] This is an explication of what went before; for these towns were in the forenamed kingdom of Bashan, and not distinct from it. Why they are called *the towns of Jair*, Moses gives an account, Numb. xxxii. 41.

Threescore cities.] Which were in the region of Argob, as we read Deut. iii. 4. 14.

Ver. 31. *And half Gilead.*] The other half that was not given to the Gadites, (ver. 25.) This is also but an explication of what he said at the first; for Gilead was not dis-

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tinct from the kingdom of Og king of Bashan; but a part of it.

And Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.] Royal cities, as is commonly thought, from xii. 4.

Were pertaining unto the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh.] All the posterity of Manasseh came from Machir; for he had no other son beside him, (Numb. xxxii. 29.) unto whose children, that is, to one half of them (as it is explained in the following words), he gave this part of that kingdom, (Deut. iii. 15.)

Even to the one half of the children of Machir by their families.] Among whom Jair and his posterity had the honour to be reckoned, though he was of the tribe of Judah; because he was his grandchild by his daughter, and so instrumental in conquering this country, that he had his inheritance given him here, (1 Chron. ii. 21, &c. Numb. xxxiv. 41, 42.)

Ver. 32. *These are the countries which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward.*] Which countries, with their bounds and limits, are thus particularly described, that every tribe might rest satisfied with God's appointment, and not invade their brethren's territories.

Ver. 33. *But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them.*] This had been noted before in this very chapter, ver. 14. and is again noted, xiv. 3, 4. and again, xviii. 7. Which frequent repetition was for the honour of this tribe; and that the people might have the greater regard to them, and care of them.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *AND these are the countries.*] *viz.* Those mentioned in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and following chapters; for this chapter is but a kind of preface to the division of the land.

Which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan.] Which was now conquered by Joshua; as that of Sihon and Og had been by Moses.

Which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance unto them.] According to the command given by God to Moses, Numb. xxxiv. 17, 18. where the names of the twelve heads of the tribes, or the princes (as they are there called), are set down, ver. 19, 20, &c.

Ver. 2. *By lot was their inheritance.*] To take away all occasion of controversy, the matter being determined by God.

As the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.] Numb. xxvi. 55, 56. xxxiii. 54.

For the nine tribes, and for the half tribe.] Who were to be provided for in the land of Canaan; as the other, it here follows, had been on the other side Jordan.

Ver. 3. *For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan.*] This seems to argue a strong faith, which the nine tribes and a half had in the promise of God; that they were contented to see their brethren put in actual possession of their inheritance, when they were only in hope of their portion.

But unto the Levites gave he no inheritance among them.] Neither on this side Jordan, nor on the other; as was said before, xiii. 33. and mentioned here again for the reason following.

Ver. 4. *For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim.*] The privilege of the first-born was transferred from Reuben's to Joseph, (1 Chron. v. 1, 2.) from whose two sons sprung two tribes: so that there were still twelve tribes, without reckoning Levi for one, (Gen. xlviii. 5, 6.)

Therefore they gave no part to the Levites in the land.] Because the children of Joseph succeeded in their room, as the Vulgar Latin translates the foregoing words; that is, to make up the number of twelve tribes.

Save cities to dwell in.] Not for a possession, as Conrad. Pellicanus observes, but only for a habitation: for they could not sell them, as their brethren might their possessions.

With their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance.] See Numb. xxxv. 2, 3, &c.

Ver. 5. *As the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.*] That is, assigned them cities and suburbs, (xxi. 1, 2, &c.)

And they divided the land.] That is, when Eleazar, Joshua, and the princes had divided it.

Ver. 6. *Then the children of Judah.*] Before they went to cast lots for the division of the land, some of the children of Judah interposed in the behalf of Caleb; coming along with him, I suppose, as witnesses to the truth of what he alleged.

Came unto Joshua in Gilgal.] Where the tabernacle as yet was; for Joshua had not removed his camp from thence; and, accordingly, here the division of the land began to be made; though it was finished at Shiloh, as we read ch. xviii.

And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him.] This shews that he was the principal person concerned in this address to Joshua; though the rest, perhaps, who came along with him, were not only witnesses to the truth of his pretensions, but came to desire Joshua to begin the division of the land; the tribe of Judah, now that the Reubenites were provided for, being the eldest of those that wanted their portion. Among whom, Caleb was not only a considerable person, but one of those princes who were appointed by God to assist in the division of the land, (Numb. xxxiv. 19.) and therefore would not be a judge in his own case, but have it settled before by Joshua, the supreme governor of God's people. Why he is called the Kenezite, is not easy to resolve; nor is it certain, whether Caleb or Jephunneh be called the Kenezite. But it comes to the same, whether the one or the other be so called, and the Hebrew words will bear either construction; yet St. Jerome and the LXX. take it to belong to Caleb, some of whose ancestors were called Kenez; which was certainly a name very common in their family. (See xv. 17. and Judg. i. 13.) And there is no improbability in it, that Kenez was the father of Jephunneh, from whence both he and his son were called Kenezites.

Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses, the man of God.] He gives him this title, that what he ordered might be thought of greater authority, *i. e.* a Divine command.

Concerning me and thee, in Kadesh-barnea.] Which he

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was confident Joshua could not but remember, being concerned in it as well as himself. (See Numb. xiv. 24. 30. 38.)

Ver. 7. *Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land.*] He mentions this, partly to shew that Moses took care to send persons of some experience, able to make observations, and judge aright; as well as in their full strength of body, able to travel and take pains. Such, it is probable, were all the rest, as well as he; men grown up every way to maturity, both of judgment and bodily vigour.

And I brought him word again, as it was in my heart.] Delivered my true opinion freely and sincerely, without either fear or flattery, (Numb. xiii. 30.)

Ver. 8. *Nevertheless, my brethren that went with me made the heart of the people melt.*] Numb. xiii. 31, 32. xiv. 1, &c. which did not discourage him at all from speaking the truth.

But I wholly followed the Lord my God.] This testimony God himself gave him, (Numb. xiv. 24.) which he might therefore mention without any breach of modesty, it being the ground of his present petition.

Ver. 9. *And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God.*] See Deut. i. 34—36. This was first pronounced by God himself, and that with an oath, Numb. xiv. 21. 24. (See my notes there.) Some think *his treading on it with his feet* was his taking possession, and being admitted the owner of that land; according to the present notion of civil lawyers, who will have *possessio* to be as much as *pedis positio*. But this is only a modern conceit.

Ver. 10. *And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years.*] Thus far he had fulfilled his words, in preserving him alive till the country was conquered, wherein he promised him a certain portion; so that he wanted only actual possession of it.

Even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness.] Which was thirty and eight years.

And now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.] It seems then that seven years were passed since they came into Canaan, before they began to divide the land; which was not till a year after the war was ended. (See xi. 18.) As for the time that followed between the complete division of the land, and the death of Joshua, it is not set down in this book; nor have we words in it, from whence to make a probable conjecture about it, but only those xxiii. 1. where it is said, *A long time after God had given them rest, Joshua waxed old*, &c. Which shews it is not to be restrained to so short a time as seven, or ten years, but may rather be thought twenty, as Du Pin computes it.

Ver. 11. *As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me.*] As able, both in body and mind, to undertake, and to dispatch any business, as he was forty and five years ago: which was a wonderful blessing of God, and an argument his petition should be granted; because he wanted neither courage nor strength to assault and take the place he desired, if it were still in the Canaanites' hands; or to defend and preserve it, if it were already conquered.

As my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war; both to go out, and to come in.] This is a repetition of what he affirmed; as is usual when a thing is certain and undoubted. Concerning this phrase, *go out and come in*, see Numb. xxvii. 17. And this shews the force and efficacy of God's promise, confirmed by an oath; which (as Dr. Jackson well observes) was as remarkable in preserving his life and strength, as in bringing mortality on others, who he sware should not enter into Canaan.

Ver. 12. *Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day.*] The mountainous country where Hebron lay, (xi. 21.) which was the place promised to him, as I observed upon Numb. xiv. 24.

For thou heardest in that day.] The LXX. and the Vulgar Latin refer this to what goes before, and make the sense to be, as if he had said, *in thy hearing*, God promised this country to me.

How the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and strong.] The Vulgar makes the sense to be, *Where the Anakims are*, &c. (See Numb. xiii. 28. 32, 33.) He mentions cities in the plural number; for we read of two other, beside Hebron, which they possessed, (xi. 21.)

If so be the Lord will be with me.] These are not words of doubting; but a pious acknowledgment that nothing could be successfully enterprised, without God's gracious assistance; of which, no question, he was very confident. The Targum hath it, *If so be the Word of the Lord will be my helper:* which is the constant language of that paraphrast in all this book upon such occasions. (See i. 9. 17. vi. 27. x. 42. and xxiii. 3. 10.)

Then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said.] Which, whether it was done now or before, when Joshua conquered the country, is a dispute. (See x. 37.)

Ver. 13. *And Joshua blessed him.*] Acknowledged his deserts, and beseeched God to prosper him in his undertaking, and gave his consent that he should have this country: for then God is said *to bless* a man, when he bestows his benefits upon him; and we do not *bless* others to purpose, unless we do what they desire. Accordingly it here follows.

And gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.] That is, the country about it: for Hebron itself was a city of the priests, xxi. 11. 13. where it is expressly said, ver. 12. the fields and the villages of it were given to Caleb.

Ver. 14. *Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb unto this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.*] God rewarded his fidelity by this singular gift, which he bestowed upon him before the land was divided by lot.

Ver. 15. *And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba.*] See upon Gen. xxiii. 2.

Which Arba was a great man among the Anakims.] Of great authority, as well as strength. So the word *gadol* is used, Gen. xxiv. 35. and so we call men at this day, who are of great power, by the name of *magnates*. He was the father of Anak, (xv. 13. and xxi. 11.) who either built this city, or fortified it, or made it his royal seat (being a kind of prince among them), and perhaps was here buried; which made it be called his city. (See upon Numb. xiii. 33.)

And the land had rest from war.] Which gave them liberty to divide the land. This was said before, (xi. *ult.*) and now repeated, perhaps to shew that what is here re-

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ported concerning Caleb was done some time ago, at the end of the war; and now mentioned to shew, that he held this portion of land by a Divine donation, before the country was divided by lot.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *THIS then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah.*] The first lot that came up was for the tribe of Judah; in honour of it, and that the prophecy of Jacob might be fulfilled concerning his pre-eminence among his brethren. The manner of drawing these lots, see upon Numb. xxvi. 55, 56. which it is apparent could not be done without a precedent survey of the whole country. A description of which being laid before Joshua, he, and Eleazar, and the princes, divided it into nine shares and a half, as equal as they could; considering not merely the quantity of ground, but the quality also, and goodness of the soil. This survey is not mentioned here; but it is afterward, xviii. 4. and therefore is to be supposed when they began to divide the land.

By their families.] The lot was only of so much land (bound as follows) for the whole tribe. Unto every family of which a portion was assigned by Joshua, and the rest, who were appointed to see that none were neglected, and that they had every one a just proportion. Therefore the lot for each tribe was not so unalterably fixed and determined, but that it might be enlarged or diminished; by taking from that tribe which had too much, and giving it to that which had too little. (See xix. 9.)

Even to the border of Edom; the wilderness of Zin, southward, was the uttermost part of the south coast.] See Numb. xxxiv. 2. Edom lay upon the wilderness of Zin; and the lot of Judah extended as far as that, which was the south part of the land. And, indeed, the tribe of Judah (as Conr. Pellicanus observes) had half of the south part of the whole land of Canaan for their portion; as the tribes of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) had the north part; with whom the rest of the tribes were intermixed, *viz.* Simeon, Benjamin, and Dan, with the tribe of Judah; and Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, with the portion of Joseph.

Ver. 2. *And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea.*] The foregoing verse was a short description of the length of Judah's country: now he describes the bounds of it on all quarters; and here saith, that the *salt*, or *dead, sea* was the bounds of it on the south-east. For so it was, as here follows.

From the bay that looketh southward.] In the Hebrew, from *the tongue;* which signifies either a *creek*, or a *promontory*, as some understand it, pointing to the south-east. (See Numb. xxxiv. 3.)

Ver. 3. *And it went out to the south side of Maleh-acrabbim.*] There was a mountain so called, from the multitude of scorpions that were there. It lay at the end of this lake, (Numb. xxxiv. 4.) From whence the country of Acrabatene had its name, as Bochart thinks, (see Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. v. cap. 29.) which lay near the country of Edom, (1 Maccab. v. 3.)

And passed along to Zin, and ascended upon the south side unto Kadesh-barnea.] This is the very description of the southern bounds of the promised land, Numb. xxxiv. 4.

And passed along to Hezron.] There is nothing said of this place in the book of Numbers; but it appears to have been a city from the twenty-fifth verse of this chapter.

And went up to Adar.] This place is mentioned in the forenamed Numb. xxxiv. 4. and called Hazar-addar. So that Hezron lay between Kadesh-barnea and this town.

And fetched a compass to Karkaa.] This place is not mentioned in Numbers, or any where else; but lay beyond Adar, not in a right line, but bending towards the west.

Ver. 4. *And from thence it passed towards Azmon.*] This is mentioned in the forenamed place, Numb. xxxiv. 4.

And went out unto the river of Egypt; and the going out of that coast was at the sea.] That is, the Mediterranean Sea. (See Numb. xxxiv. 5.)

This shall be your south coast.] From the tongue of the salt sea to the Mediterranean.

Ver. 5. *And the east border was the salt sea, even unto the end of Jordan.*] Having described the southern limits, he sets down the eastern; which, beginning where the southern did, at the tongue of the salt sea, reached to the other end of it, where Jordan falls into this sea. So that the whole length of this sea, from one end of it to the other, was the eastern bounds of Judah's country.

And their border at the north quarter was from the bay of the sea, at the uppermost part of Jordan.] It had its beginning where the eastern border ended, *viz.* at the mouth of Jordan, where it runs into the salt sea.

Ver. 6. *And the border went up to Beth-hoglah.*] A city in the tribe of Benjamin, (xviii. 21.)

And passed along by the north of Beth-arabah.] Another city in the same tribe, (xviii. 21.) though there was one in this tribe of the same name (ver. 61. of this chapter), which some take to be the same city, which lay in the frontier of both tribes.

And the border.] That is, this northern border.

Went up to the stone of Bohan, the son of Reuben.] We find mention made of this stone again in xviii. 17. where he speaks of the bounds of the tribe of Benjamin. It was but lately laid here, since the Israelites came into this country; but by whom, or of what it was a monument, is not known. It is certain Bohan did not dwell here; for the Reubenites had their portion on the other side of Jordan: but perhaps he performed some famous exploit in this place, or died and was buried here; being one of those that came over Jordan to assist their brethren in the conquest of Canaan.

Ver. 7. *And the border went up towards Debir.*] Which is mentioned in no other place: for it is not the same with that Debir in ver. 15. which was in the south near Hebron, but this in the northern parts.

From the valley of Achor.] Mentioned vii. 24. 26.

And so northward looking towards Gilgal.] Having Gilgal on the north of it. Which is to be understood, not of that Gilgal near Jericho, but of that place called Geliloth, xviii. 17. which was distant from thence, as appears by what follows.

That is before the going up to Adummim.] A place which stood upon a rising ground, which some think was in the tribe of Judah, others of Benjamin.

Which was on the south side of the river.] Or of the brook, which some take to be the brook Cedron.

And the border passed towards the waters of En-shemesh, and the goings out thereof were at En-rogel.] This place, it

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is evident, (1 Kings i. 9.) was near Jerusalem; which shews that Gilgal beforementioned was not the place where they were now encamped.

Ver. 8. *And the border went up.*] For it was an ascent from the salt sea to this country; especially when they came nigh to this place.

By the valley of the son of Hinnom.] A famous place on the east side of Jerusalem; and so delightfully shady, that it invited them to idolatrous worship in this valley, whereby it became infamous, (2 Kings xxiii. 10. Jer. vii. 32.) Hinnom, in all probability, was some eminent person, in ancient times, who was the owner of this valley: for it is sometimes called the valley *of the children of Hinnom*, which shews his posterity were planted here. After it was polluted by idolatry, it became a place where they threw all their filth, and excrements, and dead carcasses, and where there was a continual fire, the Jews say, to burn bones, and such sordid things as were thrown here; from whence, they think, it became the name for hell-fire.

Unto the south side of the Jebusite.] *i. e.* The city of the Jebusites.

The same is Jerusalem.] Which is called Jebusi, in the last verse of the eighteenth chapter, and Jebus, Judg. xix. 10. Especially that part of it fortified by the Jebusites, which was called Mount Sion, and lay on the south of Jerusalem.

And the border went up to the top of the mountain.] Which is thought to be Mount Moriah.

That lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward.] It was westward to the valley of Hinnom; and so had that valley on the east of it.

Which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward.] Which mountain had on the north part the valley of *Rephaim* (as the word is in the Hebrew), which was in the tribe of Judah, extending itself from Mount Moriah as far as Bethlehem, as Josephus tells us.

Ver. 9. *And the border was drawn from the top of the hill to the fountain of the water Nephtoah.*] Where this fountain, or well of water was, cannot be known; for it is no where mentioned but here, and in xviii. 15.

And went out to the cities of Mount Ephron.] This place also is unknown; for it cannot be that in the tribe of Ephraim, mentioned 1 Chron. xiii. 19.

And the border was drawn to Baalah, which is Kirjath-Jearim.] Called ver. 60. and xviii. 14. *Kirjath-Baal;* there being, it is likely, a temple of Baal in this place, whose name the Israelites changed into *Kirjath-Jearim;* which signifies *urbs sylvarum*, because of the goodly trees hereabouts, which made it the fitter for idolatrous uses.

Ver. 10. *And the border compassed from Baalah westward.*] Not in a direct line, but bending towards the west.

Unto Mount Seir.] Not that mount belonging to the Edomites, but another of that name.

And passed along unto the side of Mount Jearim (which is Chesalon) on the north side.] This was a woody country, as appears from the name of this mountain, and from Mount Seir also; which signifies as much as *hairy.*

And went down to Beth-shemesh.] A known place in the tribe of Judah, and a city of the priests, (xxi. 16.)

And passed on to Timnah.] Another city in the same tribe, (ver. 17.) but afterward given to the tribe of Dan, (xix. 43.)

Ver. 11. *And the border went out to the side of Ekron northward.*] This city belonged to the Philistines; but fell to the lot of Judah, as did also Ashdod and Gaza, ver. 45—47. But afterward Ekron was given to the Danites, as the forenamed place tells us, xix. 43.

And the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to Mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel.] It cannot now be known where these three places were; only it appears by what follows, that they were not far from the coast of the Philistines.

And the goings out of the border were at the sea.] That is, the northern border ended at the Mediterranean Sea; where there was a city called Jamnia; which some think the same with Jabneel.

Ver. 12. *And the west border was to the great sea, and the coast thereof.*] All along that coast of the Mediterranean, unto the river of Egypt, where the west border met with the southern, (ver. 4.)

This is the coast of the children of Judah round about, according to their families.] That is, thus their lot was bounded on all sides, in the first draught of it. Which being afterward found too large, it was contracted into a narrower compass, that more room might be made for the tribe of Simeon, who had part of this lot given them; as some other places were added out of it, to the tribes of Benjamin and Dan; as will appear afterward.

Ver. 13. *And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah.*] Or rather, he (that is, Joshua) *had given* him a part in this country, which by lot fell to the tribe of Judah. See the foregoing chapter, xiv. 6, 7, &c. where we read how Caleb petitioned for it, and founded his petition on a grant made to him of it, long ago, by God himself.

According to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua.] God promised it by Moses; and it appears from these words, that Joshua had an order from God to make it good.

Even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which is Hebron.] See xiv. 15. This is here again particularly remembered, and an addition made to it, for this reason; that Joshua having described the bounds of the country of Judah, and intending to set down the particular cities which were included in it, and distributed among them (as he had just before said, ver. 12.) *according to their families;* it might be remembered, that there were two cities, or rather the territories about them, given to two families, antecedent to this distribution made by him, Eleazar, and the princes. Which being a matter fit to remain for ever upon record, and to be known to all posterity, he inserts it here at large, in this description of the portion of Judah; of which, it is likely, every family of that tribe had a map in their houses; that they knowing their limits might both preserve them, and keep within them.

Ver. 14. *And Caleb drove thence.*] Not by his own power alone, but by the confederate army of the tribe of Judah and Simeon, (Judg. i. 3. 9, &c.) in which, it is probable, he had a principal command; and led on that party which assaulted this city. (See x. 36, 37. xi. 21.)

The three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.] Whom he had seen five-and-forty years ago, and was not at all affrighted at them. (See Numb. xiii. 22. and Judg. i. 10, &c.)

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Ver. 15. *And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir.*] See x. 38, 39.

And the name of Debir before was Kirjath-Sepher.] See Judg. i. 11, 12. It is called also Kirjath-Sanna, ver. 49. of this chapter; which hath the same signification: for *sanna* (as Bochart observes, lib. ii. Canaan, cap. 17.) in the Arabic language, is *learning*, or *the law*. The Chaldee there calls it Kirjath-arche; which he translates *urbs archivorum, the city where the ancient records of these nations were kept*. All which shews the conjecture of some very learned men is not improbable, who think this city in those times was the seat of learning, as Athens was among the Greeks in future ages: insomuch, that Grotius takes this city to be the same with that which Xenophon calls Φοινίκων γυμνάσιον, *the school of the Phœnicians*. But, as the word γυμνάσιον in Xenophon's days did not signify a school of learning, but a place designed for exercises of the body; so we do not read of any famous place in that country, to which men resorted in his time for study.

Ver. 16. *And Caleb said.*] Made proclamation, I suppose, throughout the army, which he led against Debir.

He that smiteth Kirjath-Sepher, and taketh it.] Assaults this fortress, and possesseth himself of it.

To him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.] With this place, I suppose, for her dowry.

Ver. 17. *And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it.*] He was stirred up by the Spirit of God, it is probable, (as he was when he was made judge of Israel, Judg. iii. 9, 10.) to attack this place with an extraordinary courage; in which the providence of God appeared (as Caleb hoped it would) in bestowing his daughter upon a worthy person, and keeping the inheritance in his own tribe.

And he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.] Some think this was not lawful, because he was her uncle: but this is a mistake, for Othniel was not Caleb's brother, but Kenaz, who was Othniel's father. For Caleb is constantly called the son of Jephunneh, and Othniel the son of Kenaz. Therefore they had not the same father, but were very near of kin; which is all the word *brother* signifies in many places.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, as she came unto him.*] As she was brought from her father's house to her husband's; according to the accustomed manner. (See Selden, in his Uxor. Hebr. lib. ii. cap. 11.)

That she moved him to ask of her father a field.] Desired her husband, unto whom she thought her father at this time would deny nothing, to bestow a field upon her. Or, perhaps, she moved him to give her leave to ask it of her father; as she did, either by his permission, or by his desire; who might tell her, it was more proper for her to ask it than himself.

And she lighted off her ass.] Upon which they rode then in those countries; having no horses, nor mules, till after-times. And her lighting down was in reverence to her father; unto whom she addressed herself in an humble posture.

And Caleb said to her, What wouldest thou?] He seems to have prevented her request; knowing, by her posture, she had something to desire of him. But Ludov. de Dieu takes it quite otherwise; that when she came to her husband's house, she did not alight from her ass, but continued still sitting upon it. Which her father observing, and asking her the reason, why she did not come down and go to her husband; she told him, she had first a thing to beg of him. And thus both the LXX. and the Vulgar translate it, as if she did not alight, but sighed and cried, ἐκ τοῦ ὄνου, from the ass on which he sat.

Ver. 19. *Who answered, Give me a blessing.*] Bestow a gift upon me, as the word *blessing* is used, Gen. xxxiii. 11. or, make my happiness complete.

For thou hast given me a south land.] A dry country; being both mountainous and towards the south; that is, towards the deserts of Arabia, from whence very hot and scorching winds were wont to blow.

Give me also springs of water.] A field hard by, wherein were springs of water: for it was not merely the springs she begged, but the ground in which they were; as appears from the foregoing verse, where she moved her husband to ask *a field*.

And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.] Whereby that dry ground might be watered and made fruitful. He seems to have given her more than she desired; not only those springs that were in the mountain, but those which were below also. That so neither the rising ground, nor the plain, might want water; as Arius Montanus expounds it.

Ver. 20. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah, according to their families.*] Now follows an account of the cities within the lot of this tribe; which were assigned to their several families, after Hebron, which was the principal of them (for here David reigned over the tribe of Judah alone seven years), was given to Caleb. Which the Jews generally think he did not get into his possession till after the death of Joshua; as is related in the book of Judges. (See there, i. 11—13, &c.)

Ver. 21. *And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah.*] Those that were in the confines; for he doth not seem to number all that were in the heart of the country. So the Jews think, though the truth is, as will appear in the following part of the chapter, he only begins with the outmost cities, but afterward proceeds to those that were in the midst of the country.

Towards the coast of Edom southward.] He begins with those that lay on the south side of the country; which was the border he first described, ver. 1, 2.

Kabzeel.] Where that valiant person Benajah was born, who smote two lion-like men of Moab, (1 Chron. xi. 22.)

And Eder.] Which Eusebius calls Ἐδραί. But he hath no more to say of it; nor of Jagur, and the rest that follow, but that they were in the tribe of Judah: nor shall I go about to inquire further after every particular city mentioned; the number of which is summed up ver. 32.

Ver. 32. *All the cities are twenty and nine, with their villages.*] If the foregoing places be told, there are no less than thirty and eight of them. But there were only twenty and nine of them (as some solve the difficulty), that could be called cities; the other being only villages. Or, the meaning is (as the Jews generally think) that twenty and nine only belonged to the tribe of Judah; the rest being afterward given to the tribe of Simeon, as we find in the nineteenth chapter; where nine of these very cities here mentioned are said to be in that tribe, *viz.* Beer-sheba, Moladah, Hazar-shual, Baalah, Azem, Hormah, Zigleg, Ain, and

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Rimmon: which nine, with the twenty and nine here set down as the sum total, make just thirty and eight. And this seems to be the truer account, because the villages of other cities are mentioned ver. 36. and 41. and yet none of them set down by name, as is supposed in the first interpretation of these words.

Ver. 33. *And in the valley.*] Or in the plain below the mountains: but which way I shall not examine; because the geography of this country will be done, I hope, by a better hand.

Ver. 36. *Fourteen cities with their villages.*] There are fifteen in all, if we take the two last for distinct cities. But in all probability there might be one, called indifferently Gederah, or (as we translate it in the margin) Gederothaim. Perhaps there might be a double city, the old and the new: or, Gederothaim was an appendix to Gederah, as the borough of Southwark is to the city of London.

Ver. 37. *Zenan, and Hadashah,* &c.] I suppose these cities, and all that follow to the forty-first verse, lay also in the valley, or plain.

Ver. 41. *Sixteen cities with their villages.*] There are exactly that number; among which Mizpeh, Lachish, Bethdagon, Eglon, and Makkedah, were the chief. They seem to have been in the western part of this country, near the tribe of Dan; for the two first in the former division (Eshtaol and Zoreah, ver. 33.) were afterward given to the Danites, (xix. 41.)

Ver. 42. *Libnah and Ether,* &c.] These two cities, and those that follow unto ver. 45. were in another division of the plain country: among which, Libnah, Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah, were the most noble.

Ver. 44. *Nine cities with their villages.*] But Ether and Ashan were afterward given to the tribe of Simeon, (xix. 7.) which may seem a prejudice to the interpretation which the Jews give of ver. 32. Unless we suppose these two places to be different from them, though called by the same name: as here is mention made of Ashnah, (ver. 43.) and there is one of the same name in the former division, ver. 33.

Ver. 45. *Ekron, with her towns and her villages.*] The Hebrew word for *towns* signifies *daughters;* by which seem to be meant lesser cities, depending on Ekron, with their villages belonging to them. Gath and Askalon, perhaps, were such at this time; though, in future times, they grew up to be of more consideration, which may be the reason they are not here mentioned. For this, and the two following verses, describe the lot of Judah in the west, upon the Mediterranean Sea, which comprehended all from Ekron to the river of Egypt.

Ver. 48. *And in the mountains.*] From the plain he goes to the mountains, and distributes the cities there into five divisions.

Shamir and Jattir, &c.] In this division there were eleven cities, among which was Kirjath-Sanna, (ver. 49.) which had three names. (See ver. 15.)

Ver. 52. *Arab and Dumah,* &c.] In this division there were nine cities, (ver. 54.) which were in the mountainous country, in the middle of Judea; as those mentioned before and those that follow were. And therefore it is not true which the Jews say, that he reckons up only the cities in the skirts of the country, with which indeed he began. (See ver. 21.)

Ver. 55. *Maon, Carmel,* &c.] This, and the two following verses, contain an account of ten cities and their villages in another division, two of which were near together; for Nabal dwelt in Maon, and had great possessions in Carmel, (1 Sam. xxv. 2.) There was another Maon in the deserts of Jeshimon, (1 Sam. xxiii. 1.) as there was another among the Moabites called Beth-Maon, the house or dwelling of Maon. The people of which, called Maonites, and, as some think, Mehunims, (Judg. x. 10. 12. 2 Chron. xxvi. 7.) were very powerful, and some time oppressed the Israelites. And there was likewise another Carmel; for this is not the place where Elijah built an altar, and offered sacrifices when he slew the prophets of Baal, (1 Kings xviii.) but a place far distant from it, where Saul made himself a place when he returned from the conquest of the Amalekites; (1 Sam. xv. 12.) that is, encamped, as some will have it, and divided the spoil, or built a triumphant arch, as St. Jerome interprets: and where Nabal kept so many sheep, as are mentioned in the place forenamed; and is the place the prophets mean (as Bochart conjectures) when they speak of the pastures of Carmel, Jer. l. 19. Amos i. 2. Mic. vii. 14. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 48.)

Ver. 57. *Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah,* &c.] The first of these cities, Conradus Pellicanus thinks, hath the same name with that called Kinah, (ver. 22.) though it be in a different place. And, indeed, in this division, consisting of ten cities, there are two whose names we had before, when he speaks of those in the skirts of the country, *viz.* Ziph and Zanoah. (See ver. 24. 34.) Which shews there were many cities in the same country of the same name.

Gibeah and Timnah] Are known places. (See Gen. xxxviii. 12.)

Ver. 58. *Halhul, Beth-zur,* &c.] In this and in the following verse is contained a small division of six cities; the most eminent of which was Beth-zur, which lay in the road from Jerusalem to Hebron, about twenty miles from it, as St. Jerome tells us.

Ver. 60. *Kirjath-Baal,* &c.] Here are only two cities in this division, the first of which was called Kirjath-Jearim, as we read xviii. 14. and Baala, and Baal-Judah, 2 Sam. vii. 2. 1 Chron. xiii. 6.

Ver. 61. *In the wilderness.*] So the Hebrews call those parts of the country which were but thinly inhabited; as this was, wherein there were but six cities. Of this wilderness of Judah, we read frequently in the following books of Scripture; several parts of which are mentioned in the history of David, when he fled for fear of Saul, and lurked in this country: particularly in the wilderness of Ziph, 1 Sam. xxiii. 14. and of Maon, ver. 24, 25. and of En-gedi, one of the places here mentioned, 1 Sam. xxiv. 1. and there was a part of the wilderness not far from Carmel, beforementioned, 1 Sam. xxv. 14.

Ver. 62. *The city of salt.*] Some take this to be Zoar, the little city unto which Lot was permitted to flee, at the destruction of Sodom: which is called the *city of salt,* either because it stood near the salt sea, or because Lot's wife was hereabouts turned into a pillar of salt.

Ver. 63. *As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out.*] This supposes that Jerusalem belonged to the children of Judah; and so it did in part, though not the whole; for some of it was in the tribe of Benjamin, as shall be observed in its

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proper place. The king of this city Joshua had vanquished, together with other four kings of the Amorites who joined in battle with him, (Josh. x. 5. 23.) and in the conclusion of that chapter, he is said (ver. 42.) to have taken *all these kings and their land at one time.* But if Jerusalem was then taken, as well as the land about it, the strong-hold of Zion remained still in the hands of the Jebusites. And the Israelites not being able presently to people all the cities they had taken, the Jebusites recovered the city of Jerusalem, and got possession of it again; from whence the children of Judah expelled them after the death of Joshua, (Judg. i. 8.) But still Mount Zion continued in their hands until the reign of David.

But the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.] That is, in the fort of Zion, which was a part of it; where they were so considerable, that the city was called the city of the Jebusites, and its name Jebus, (Judg. xix. 10, 11.) There can be no doubt, I think, that these Jebusites were of the seed of Canaan, they being constantly numbered among the seven nations devoted to destruction. Yet some of the Jews have a conceit, that the people here mentioned were derived from Abimelech, king of the Philistines; with whom their forefather Isaac made a solemn league; and therefore the children of Judah did not expel them. So Kimchi. But this, it is evident, is a foolish imagination: for why did they expel them at the last, as they did, if they were to be kind to them upon this account?

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *THE lot of the children of Joseph.*] That is, of Ephraim, and that half of the tribe of Manasseh, which was not yet provided for. (See ver. 4.) One cannot but observe the providence of God, in bringing up their lot next to Judah's. For, as he had the prerogative of being made the chief of all Jacob's children, (Gen. xlix. 10.) so Joseph had the privilege of the first-born transferred to his family. And therefore they are considered before any of the other tribes, except Judah.

Fell from Jordan by Jericho.] In the Hebrew, *went forth* from Jordan by the city of Jericho. Which was in the tribe of Benjamin; which tribe lay between the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Ephraim.

Unto the water of Jericho on the east.] This is justly thought to be the water mentioned 2 Kings ii. 19—21. whose spring Elisha healed, by which the plain of Jericho was watered. (See Josephus, lib. v. de Bello Jud. cap. 4.)

To the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout Mount Beth-el.] It appears from xviii. 12, 13. that this was the wilderness of Beth-aven.

Ver. 2. *And goeth up from Beth-el to Luz.*] Beth-el was a place so called, because Jacob there had the famous Divine vision, mentioned Gen. xviii. It was nigh to the city Luz, as appears from the nineteenth verse of that chapter; but was distinct from the city itself, being in the neighbouring fields, where Jacob lay all night; though being so near, it is likely afterward they became one city. But they who would hence infer, that this book could not be written by Joshua, because Luz was built after his death in the land of the Hittites, (Judg. i. 26.) do merely trifle: for it is plain he doth not speak here of that Luz, but of the old one: for the country of the Hittites belonged to Hebron and Beer-sheba, and the neighbouring places in the land of Judah; unto which the author of this book could have no respect here in the description of the land of Ephraim. Therefore, when Luz and Beth-el are said to be the same, (xviii. 13. and Judg. i. 23.) the meaning can be no more, but that in length of time they were united; the inhabitants of Luz going into Beth-el. And of such coalitions of two cities into one, there are six hundred examples, as Huetius speaks in his Demonstr. Evang. propos. iv. and therefore, I think Du Pin well translates this whole verse, in this manner, *From Beth-el-Luz the border passeth along to Archi-Ataroth.*

And passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth.] Or rather, *the borders of Archi-Ataroth,* as both the LXX. and the Vulgar translate it; and as the words are in the Hebrew; this being the same city which is afterward called Ataroth, ver. 7. it being usual to cut off the former part of the names of cities, as Bochartus observes in abundance of instances; and gives this for one, in Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 24.

Ver. 3. *And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhtali.*] It is not known where this place was, being no where else mentioned; but it was in the western part of the land towards the Mediterranean.

Unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether.] See x. 10.

And to Gezer.] This was one of the Levitical cities in this tribe of Ephraim, (Josh. xxi. 21.) And, as Is. Casaubon hath proved at large, it was, in all probability, the city which Josephus and the author of the book of the Maccabees call Gazara; and is mentioned as a neighbouring city to Joppa, Azotus, and Jamnia. (See his annot. upon lib. xvi. Strabonis, p. 261, 262.)

And the goings out thereof are at the sea.] The Vulgar hath it, *at the great sea:* which is certainly here meant; this being a short description of the lot of this tribe from Jordan on the east to the Mediterranean on the west.

Ver. 4. *So the children of Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim, took their inheritance.*] According to the following measures. Which give a more particular account of what is before said in general.

Ver. 5. *And the border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families.*] And, first, he shews what was given to Ephraim, reserving the description of Manasseh's portion to the next chapter.

Even the border of their inheritance on the east side.] The north-east. For he describes, though grossly, only the breadth of this lot from south to north.

Was Ataroth-adar, unto Beth-horon the upper.] The first of those was in the south, and the latter in the north.

Ver. 6. *And the border went out towards the sea.*] From Beth-horon the upper this northern border went on one side westward, towards the Mediterranean.

To Michmethah on the north side.] And on the other side eastward towards Jordan. This is very obscurely expressed; but it appears, from what follows, it must be thus interpreted.

And the border went about eastward unto Taanath-Shiloh.] Still proceeded further eastward unto this place; the name of which only is now known.

And passed by it on the east to Janohah.] Another place easterly, of which we are now ignorant. For there are no

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records left to make us understand whereabouts in the east it was situated; which was perfectly understood when this country was inhabited by the Ephraimites.

Ver. 7. *And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and Naarath, and came to Jericho.*] Not to the very city, for that belonged to Benjamin; but to the country adjoining.

And went out at Jordan.] Which was the eastern bounds of this country.

Ver. 8. *And the border went out from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah.*] He returns to describe the length of it from east to west; if the river or brook Kanah be the same with the brook Cherith, mentioned 1 Kings xvii. 3. And so not only Adricoinius understands it, but that great man Bochartus; who observes, it was called the brook Cherith, from the Hebrew word *cara*, which signifies to *eat* or *feed*, because here God commanded the ravens to feed Elijah; and it was called Kanah, from the multitude of reeds which grew there (and so the Vulgar here translates it, *the valley of reeds*), in which it may be supposed Elijah lay hid. (Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 14.) But there is so much to be objected against this situation of the brook Kanah, that I must leave it in suspense whether it were in the east, or in the west; and confess, with Conradus Pellicanus, that as none of the Hebrews or Latins have given a satisfactory account of these four last verses, so I do not pretend to it.

And the goings out thereof were at the sea.] Where *sea* alone is mentioned, it is commonly understood to signify the *Mediterranean;* which quite overthrows the opinion, which makes Kanah the same with Cherith. But the Vulgar here took it for the *salt sea* (adding the word *salsissimum*), which favours the forenamed opinion.

This is the inheritance of the tribe of Ephraim by their families.] A gross description of it.

Ver. 9. *And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh,* &c.] What these separate cities were cannot now be known, because we have not a particular account given of all the cities of this tribe (as we had of Judah), but only of those which were the limits of their country. But they seem to have been some cities in the tribe of Manasseh, which were inhabited by the children of Ephraim, though the territories about them belonged to the Manassites, and were occupied by them. (See xvii. 8, 9.)

Ver. 10. *And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day.*] The inhabitants of Gezer were properly Canaanites; who dwelt upon the sea-coast, where Gezer was situated. (See ver. 3.) This is mentioned also Judg. i. 29.

And serve under tribute.] They so far subdued them, as to make them tributaries; and, some fancy, imposed on them the precepts of the sons of Noah. But they ought to have destroyed them, and were forbidden to make peace with them upon any conditions. (See Judg. ii. 1—3.) Unless Grotius's conjecture be true, that the inhabitants of Gezer submitted and accepted the terms of peace, which Joshua was bound to offer them, before he began the war; as the Girgashites, he thinks, also did; who remained even in our Saviour's time: for they delivered up themselves at the first summons to surrender; which is the reason, he imagines, that they are omitted in the enumeration of their enemies, both in xi. 1. and in Deut. xx. 17. (See his annot. on his thirteenth chapter of the second book de Jure Belli et Pacis, sect. 4.)

This city, and the people of it, were destroyed in Solomon's time by Pharaoh, king of Egypt; who made a present of it to his daughter, Solomon's wife; who thereupon rebuilt it, (1 Kings ix. 16, 17.) Till then the Canaanites lived in it; from whence Spinoza would have it concluded, that this book was not written by Joshua, because we find the same thing recorded in the book of Judges, (i. 29.) which is of a later date. But this is a very frivolous cavil; for, as Huetius well observes, if an historian should have said in the life of Tiberius the Germans were not destroyed, the same might, in like manner, have been said in the life of Vespasian; and just so, when Joshua saith the Gezerites were not cut off by the Ephraimites, it did not hinder him that wrote in the following age from saying the same; because they still remained in the possession of their ancient habitation.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *THERE was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh.*] That half of it which had no portion on the other side Jordan.

For he was the first-born of Joseph.] I cannot make any sense of this; and therefore think the particle *ki* should be translated *though*, not *for*. And then the meaning is plain enough, that the lot of Manasseh came up after that of Ephraim (not before it), though he was the first-born of Joseph; for Jacob had preferred Ephraim before him, (Gen. xlviii. 19, 20.)

For Machir, the first-born of Manasseh.] And his only son, from whom sprung such a multitude, that there was no room for them all on the other side Jordan; but part of them were to be disposed of here.

The father of Gilead.] Numb. xxvi. 29.

Because he was a man of war.] This is generally thought to relate to Machir; who had done some famous exploits in the skirmishes they had with some neighbouring people while they were in Egypt, (see 1 Chron. vii. 21, 22.) for he was not alive to fight when they came to Canaan.

Therefore he had Gilead and Bashan.] A share in this country; for some of it was given to the Reubenites and Gadites, xiii. 25. but the Gileadites were also planted here; (ver. 31.) for, inheriting the valour of their progenitor, they were fit to defend this frontier-country.

Ver. 2. *And there was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families.*] A great part of the Manassites being disposed of before they passed over Jordan, now follows the lot which fell to the rest, whose several families he names.

For the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida.] These six families descended from Gilead, as we read Numb. xxvi. 30, &c. Where the first of them, who is here called Abiezer, is there called Jeezer.

These are the male-children of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, by their families.] He uses the expression of *male-children* to introduce what follows concerning the females. And they are called *the children of Manasseh*, because they

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inherited in his right; being families descended from him. (See Selden, de Successionibus, cap. 22.)

Ver. 3. *But Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.*] Here he recites their pedigree from the son of Joseph.

Had no sons, but daughters.] And so could not make a family in Manasseh; and consequently have no share in the land.

And these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, &c.] See Numb. xxvi. 33.

Ver. 4. *And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes.*] To whom God had committed the care of dividing the several lots, (xiv. 1. Numb. xxxiv. 17, 18.)

Saying, The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren.] See Numb. xxvii. 6, 7.

Therefore, according to the commandment of the Lord, he gave the man inheritance among the brethren of their father.] Or, an inheritance was given them, according to this commandment of God to Moses, by Eleazar and Joshua, and the rest who were appointed to divide the land. For after the lot had determined what land every tribe should have, Eleazar, Joshua, and the princes, considered how many families there were in the tribe, and how large they were; and accordingly divided it among them. So Numb. xxvi. 55, 56. imports.

Ver. 5. *And there fell ten portions to Manasseh.*] For there were six portions given to six sons: but the portion of Hepher, the last of them, being divided into five parts among his five daughters, there were ten portions in all. (See Selden, de Succession. cap. 23.) Which ten portions being assigned to so many families, Eleazar, Joshua, and the princes, were not concerned any further in dividing these ten portions into lesser, among several households; but that, I suppose, they agreed among themselves.

Besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side Jordan.] Mentioned before, ver. 1.

Ver. 6. *Because the daughters of Manasseh.*] That is, of Zelophehad, descended from Manasseh.

Had an inheritance among his sons.] Being considered as heirs to their father.

And the rest of Manasseh's sons.] Which were not of the six families beforementioned.

Had the land of Gilead.] On the other side Jordan, as hath been often said; and is again repeated, to prevent all contentions that might arise about their portions.

Ver. 7. *And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, that lieth before Shechem.*] This was the south border, which went from a city called Asher, to another called Michmethah; which was over against a city in the tribe of Ephraim, called Shechem.

And the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah.] And so to those that lived in the land of Tappuah, leaving Tappuah itself on the right hand.

Ver. 8. *Now Manasseh had the land of Tappuah.*] All the territory adjoining to this city belonged to the tribe of Manasseh.

But Tappuah, on the border of Manasseh, belonged to the children of Ephraim.] But the city itself, which lay on the confines of their country, was one of those separated cities spoken of in the foregoing chapter, (ver. 9.) in which the children of Ephraim dwelt.

Ver. 9. *And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river.*] Concerning this place, see ver. 8. of the foregoing chapter.

These cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh.] That is, the cities on the coast beforementioned were inhabited by the Ephraimites, as well as Tappuah; though they were in the tribe of Manasseh. For these two tribes were nearer of kin than any other; and so greater friendship was intended to be established between them.

The coast also of Manasseh was on the north side of the river.] By the coast of Manasseh, is meant the cities inhabited by the Manassites; which were all on the north side of this river. As all those on the south side of it, though belonging to the Manassites, were inhabited by the children of Ephraim.

And the goings out of it were at the sea.] The coast mentioned in the beginning of the verse, ended at the Mediterranean Sea.

Ver. 10. *Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea is his border.*] These words express how these two tribes lay, with respect to each other: Ephraim on the south, and Manasseh on the north; and both bounded on the west by the Mediterranean.

And they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east.] Though on the south the tribe of Manasseh was wholly joined to the tribe of Ephraim, yet on the north-west, towards the great sea, it had the tribe of Asher on the confines of it; and on the east (towards Jordan and the sea of Tiberias) the tribe of Issachar. So Conradus Pellicanus rightly explains these words. For both the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh could not touch these other tribes.

Ver. 11. *And Manasseh had in Issachar, and in Asher.*] As Ephraim had some towns in the tribe of Manasseh, so Manasseh had some in the tribes of Issachar and Asher, unto whom, in the north-west, and the east, they were near neighbours.

Beth-shean and her towns.] This was a place not far from the sea of Tiberias beforementioned, and near Jordan.

And Ibleam and her towns.] It appears by 2 Kings ix. 27. that it was not far from Megiddo, mentioned in the latter end of this verse.

The inhabitants of Dor and her towns.] Concerning Dor, see xi. 2. whose inhabitants (as also those of the other cities following) are here mentioned; because, it seems, they possessed the people (whom they ought to have destroyed), as well as their cities and towns, making them their slaves.

And the inhabitants of Endor and her towns.] The city whither Saul went to consult with the witch. It was not far from Mount Tabor; which was in the confines of the tribe of Issachar.

And the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns.] This city lay not far from the other; and was one of those given to the Levites, (xxi. 25.)

And the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns.] This was near the former; not far from the brook Kishon, (Judg. v. 19.)

Even three countries.] Or rather, three parts of those countries beforementioned.

Ver. 12. *Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities.*] Through want of faith in

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God, and of zeal to perform his commands; which made them slack in their attempts to expel the inhabitants of this country.

But the Canaanites would dwell in that land.] Finding themselves strong enough to maintain it, against [illegible] ble endeavours as they used to conquer it.

Ver. 13. *Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute.*] When they were more numerous and expert in war, not only the Manassites, but they of other tribes also, brought the Canaanites to be tributaries to them.

But did not utterly drive them out.] In which they grievously offended against God's command, (Deut. xx. 16—18.)

Ver. 14. *And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua.*] Both they of Ephraim, and they of Manasseh, (ver. 17.)

Saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people.] They were discontented with their lot, which they thought too strait for them; because they were so very numerous, that the country which was assigned them was little enough for one of them.

Forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto.] Multiplied them exceedingly, as appears from Numb. xxvi. 34. 37.

Ver. 15. *And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people.*] Though he was their flesh and blood, yet Joshua would not humour them; but returns their argument upon them, that since they were so great a people, they should do as here follows.

Then get thee up to the whole country.] Which was in the highlands, (ver. 18.) which is full of trees; for *Aba*, as Bochart observes, signifies very thick woods, (lib. ii. Canaan, cap. 9.)

And cut down for thyself there.] Make it habitable.

In the land of the Perizzites.] Who were a rough uncivilized people, living in these mountainous forests, as Bochart gathers from this place; and thinks they had their name from thence. Because they did not live in cities and towns, but in those *Pagi* that were in the woods; which the Hebrews call Pherazoth; from whence the Pagani, the people who lived in those places, were called Pherazim: lib. iv. Phaleg. cap. 36.

And of the giants.] There were some of the *Rephaim* (as the Hebrew word is) still remaining here; or it was a place where they had been wont to dwell.

If Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.] If that noble mount which was given them for their portion, with the rest of the land beforementioned (which is included in the name of Mount Ephraim, the principal part being put for the whole) did not afford them room enough, he exhorts them to enlarge their bounds, by taking in those woodlands beforementioned.

Ver. 16. *And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us.*] They still insisted, that if they could get possession of the woody mountain, and destroy all the inhabitants, and cut down all the trees, it would not be sufficient to contain them.

And all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley.] But if it would, they further allege, they had no hope to conquer it; because, before they could come at it, they must encounter those that lived in the valley below it, who were too strong for them.

Have chariots of iron.] Before which they were not able to stand: for he doth not mean chariots made of iron, but armed with iron; which the ancients called *currus falcati*, in Greek δρεπανοφόρου having a kind of scythes of two cubits fastened to long axle-trees on both wheels; which [illegible] swiftly through a body of men, made great slaughter, mowing them down like grass or corn. Xenophon gives a description of them in his Cyropædia, lib. vi. and Quintus Curtius, lib. iv. cap. 9. Vegetius also, de Re Militari, lib. iii. cap. 24. Bonfrerius hath heaped up abundance on this subject; and so hath Joh. Conradus Dietericus in his Antiq. Biblicæ, p. 329, &c. where he observes Xenophon imagined Cyrus to have been the inventor of these chariots; which had been in use among the Canaanites eight hundred years before.

Both they who are of Beth-shean and her towns, and they who are in the valley of Jezreel.] Which cities, it seems, lay near to this mountain, unto which Joshua directed them, and both of them possessed by the Canaanites.

Ver. 17. *And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even unto Ephraim and Manasseh.*] He was not moved, by their objections, from his resolution; but told them,

Thou art a great people, and hast great power.] That, by their own confession, they were very numerous; and consequently of great power.

Thou shalt not have one lot only.] And therefore need not be straitened in their habitation; which they said was not sufficient for one tribe.

Ver. 18. *But the mountain shall be thine.*] For they should have the mountain added to their portion; which he could not enlarge any other way, it being settled by a Divine decree.

For it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down.] Or, *though* it be a wood, yet they could cut it down, and grub it up; and then it would afford a commodious habitation.

And the goings out of it shall be thine.] They should have the product of it: or, all the country below in the valley (ver. 16.) should be theirs also.

And thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.] He answers all their objections (ver. 16.) with an assurance that they should be able, with God's help, to dispossess the present inhabitants, notwithstanding their great force and power: for so God had commanded them to believe, and not to be afraid of their chariots, which now seemed so terrible to them. (See Deut. xx. 1.)

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *AND the whole congregation of the children of Israel.*] All their elders and heads of their tribes, who represented the people of Israel; and are sometimes meant by the *whole congregation*, as Corn. Bertram hath shewed in many instances, particularly in 1 Chron. xiii. 1, 2, &c. (See L. de Repub. Judaica, in the latter end of cap. 6. and cap. 11.) But here it may well signify the whole body of the people, who accompanied the ark to settle it in a new place.

Assembled together at Shiloh.] A place in the tribe of Ephraim, not far from Jerusalem; and, as the great primate of Ireland thinks, the same with Salem. But I do not find any ground for that opinion.

And set up the tabernacle of the congregation there.] Which had hitherto remained in Gilgal; but now, by God's

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order, no doubt, (for he was to choose the place of his own residence, Deut. xii. 5. 11. 14, &c.) was removed thither; together with the camp of Israel, which tarried so long in Gilgal, merely because the tabernacle was there. If it be inquired, what token God gave of his choice of this place [illegible] perhaps it was by giving some extraordinary token of his approbation, by accepting their sacrifices; or, it may be, they consulted him in this case by the oracle of *urim* and *thummim*. For when he made choice of Mount Sion, an angel bade the prophet Gad tell David he should set up an altar in the thrashing-floor of Ornan; and there God answered him by fire, &c. (See 1 Chron. xxi. 18. 26.) Now the reason of its being translated to Shiloh, it is likely, was because it would have been too far, after the division of the land, for all the tribes of Israel to go to Gilgal, to perform all that the law required to be done at the tabernacle. Which was now indispensably to be performed, though while they lived in the wilderness they did not live by these rules, (Deut. xii. 8—10.) and, perhaps, while they continued unsettled in Canaan could not exactly observe them. This place also was very convenient for all the tribes to resort unto; and likewise very safe, being guarded by the two powerful tribes of Judah and Ephraim. And it was, as I said, in the lot of the latter; for it was fit it should be where Joshua was; who, being of this tribe, lived among them. Here it is thought the tabernacle continued for the space of three hundred and fifty years, till the days of Samuel; but our primate beforementioned reckons no more than three hundred and twenty-eight years.

And the land was subdued before them.] Or rather, *for* the land was subdued, &c. that is, continued quiet, without any opposition from the old inhabitants, since the conquest mentioned xi. 23.

Ver. 2. *And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance.*] For whom no lot had been drawn at Gilgal. The reason of which was, perhaps, because the last mentioned tribes, of the house of Joseph, were not satisfied with the division which was begun to be made there. And therefore Joshua stopped his proceedings till he had made a new survey of the whole country. In order to which, God commanded him to remove hither; from whence, being in the middle of the country, they might do it more easily; and also give the children of Joseph greater content, by settling God's house among them.

Ver. 3. *And Joshua said unto the children of Israel.*] Unto the *congregation* beforementioned, ver. 1.

How long are you slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?] He doth not blame them for not taking possession of the land which was conquered, without God's direction, by a lot (for that was expressly commanded), but for their being so slow to consider of, and propound some means of making such an equal division, as they desired; that they might take possession of the land, where their lot should fall.

Ver. 4. *Give out from among you three men for each tribe.*] He therefore himself propounds a method for their satisfaction; and such a one as they could not dislike, *viz.* that they should choose three men (for he would not appoint them, but only give them orders what to do) out of each of the seven remaining tribes that were not provided for; or rather, out of the nine tribes and a half; that they who had already received their portion, might be willing to resign up some part of it, if they found, upon the survey, there was not sufficient left for their brethren.

And I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land.] Give them orders to go immediately through the whole country; both that which was divided, and that which was not.

And describe it.] Set down not only the dimensions of it, but its condition and quality; whether barren or fruitful, mountainous or plain, &c.

According to the inheritance of them.] Making so many parts in the description, as there remain tribes that want their inheritance. Thus the next verse teaches us to explain it.

And they shall come again to me.] Make their report to him, when they had done, that he might judge of it.

Ver. 5. *And they shall divide it into seven parts.*] Of equal extent, with a just respect, as Josephus observes, not merely to the quantity of ground, but the goodness of the soil. But there was no respect to the greater or lesser number of persons in each tribe; for then these men had given each tribe their portion, and there had been no need of a lot. Their business was to divide the country into seven equal portions, and leave God to appoint which portion should fall to each tribe: who would have no reason to complain, when the division was made by themselves.

Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north.] But the lot of Judah, which was southerly, and the lot of Ephraim and Manasseh, which, with respect to the former, was northerly, were not to be altered. But these tribes were to remain undisturbed in their possessions, unless it should be found that they had more than they needed, and others had less. For this was the very reason of making a new and more exact survey of the country, than had been made before the first division; that there might be an allotment made more to every one's satisfaction, when they had a more perfect account of all the land. Accordingly, it is evident, that the tribe of Judah (by common consent, no doubt) parted with some of their portion to the Simeonites, and the Danites, whose lot appeared to be too scanty, (xix. 29. 41.)

Ver. 6. *Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me.*] When the men, who were appointed to measure the country, had divided it into seven parts, he orders that the description thus divided should be laid before him.

That I may cast lots for you here before the Lord.] Whereby their possessions were settled and established by a Divine authority. For the lots being drawn before the sanctuary, God was desired to declare what portion every tribe should have. Accordingly, it was their duty to look upon it as a sacred appointment, and to be contented with it; for it was done at the very door of the tabernacle, as we read, xix. *ult.*

Ver. 7. *But the Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance.*] He declared, what had been often said before, that in this division of the land, the priests and Levites were to have no share; God having otherwise provided for them. (See xiii. 14. 32. xiv. 3.)

And Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh,

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have received their inheritance beyond Jordan, &c.] And, as for the rest, no care was to be taken of them in this division; because Moses had provided for them before they came over Jordan.

Ver. 8. *And the men arose, and went away.*] Being chosen by their brethren (as Joshua directed, ver. 4.) to act in their name.

And Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go, and walk through the land, and describe it, &c.] Before they went, Joshua gave them a charge to do the business they went about with care and fidelity; using their best diligence to be truly and fully informed: and at their return, give him an account, that he might put an end to all disputes, by desiring God to assign every tribe their portion.

That I may here cast lots for you before the Lord in Shiloh.] These words sound as if he gave this charge to them in the presence of God, before the sanctuary, that they might be excited to execute his orders with greater diligence.

Ver. 9. *And the men went and passed through the land.*] Through the whole country which they had conquered.

And described it by cities.] Set down the name of every city, and its villages, and the territory about it, with its situation. For so, I suppose, Joshua charged them.

Into seven parts in a book.] In which were seven maps, as we now call them; which made a chorographical description of all the cities, towns, mountains, plains, woods, and all other conditions of the soil.

And came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh.] For the tabernacle being removed hither, the camp followed it, as I observed, ver. 1. And here it remained till the land was divided among the seven tribes. Which could not be done in a short time; for Josephus saith they were seven months in taking this survey, and making the forenamed description.

Ver. 10. *And Joshua.*] With the assistance of Eleazar and the princes, (xiv. 1.)

Cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord.] As he told them he would, ver. 6. The manner of it, see upon Numb. xxvi. 55, 56.

And there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel, according to their divisions.] That is, according to the divisions made by the surveyors; which were so just and equal, that all consented the lot should determine what part should belong to them.

Ver. 11. *And the lot of the tribe of Benjamin came up.*] The providence of God so ordered it, that his children should have the first lot of these seven, next to the children of Joseph, they two being the only sons of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife.

According to their families.] To be divided according to their families.

And the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah.] Who lay on the south of them.

And the children of Joseph.] For the Ephraimites lay on the north of them. And it is observable, that in the blessing of Moses, Benjamin is placed between Judah and Joseph (Levi having no inheritance among them), which prophecy of Moses by this lot was exactly fulfilled concerning him, (Deut. xxxiii. 12.)

Ver. 12. *And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side.*] Just thus the south border of Ephraim proceeded from Jordan by Jericho, which was in the tribe of Benjamin. (See xvi. 1. 7.)

And went up through the mountain westward.] Through the mountainous country, which lay on the north of Jericho, it went up to the western part of the country.

And the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Beth-aven.] A place near Beth-el, which in aftertimes (when they committed foul idolatry there) was called Beth-aven, a house or place of iniquity, (Hosea iv. 15. x. 8.)

Ver. 13. *And the border went out from thence towards Luz, to the side of Luz (which is Beth-el) southward.*] On the south side of that city. (See xvi. 2.) The Jews think there were two Beth-els; one here named in the confines of Benjamin and Joseph, where Jacob had the vision of the ladder reaching up to heaven, and the other Beth-el near to Ai, (viii. 6. 17.)

And the border descended to Ataroth-adar.] Called in the place forenamed, (xvi. 2.) Archi-Ataroth.

Near the hill that lieth on the south side of the nether Beth-horon.] A city in the tribe of Ephraim, (xvi. 3.) called *the nether,* because there was a higher hard by it in the mountain adjoining. Though others will have the two Beth-horons to have been at a great distance; one in the mountains of Ephraim, the other in the valley near Jordan.

Ver. 14. *And the border was drawn thence.*] In a line bending westward, as appears by what follows in the end of the verse; which tells us the western border began from Beth-horon the nether.

And compasseth the corner of the sea southward, from the hill that lieth before Beth-horon.] I cannot give any account of this border, according to our translation: for, it is certain, it did not compass any corner of the Mediterranean (and no other sea can be here meant), nor came near unto it. Therefore, by *peath,* which we translate *corner,* must be understood *the side* of the sea. As if he had said, It ran along in a parallel line to the sea. So the Vulgar hath it, *over against the sea;* and the LXX. to the same purpose. And the word *southward* is joined by the Vulgar, not to the *sea,* but to the next words, *southward from the hill that lieth before Beth-horon.*

Southward.] That is, the hill was to the south of Beth-horon, as we read in the verse before.

And the goings out thereof were at Kirjath-Baal (which is Kirjath-Jearim), a city of Judah.] See xv. 60.

This was the west quarter.] Here the *peath* beforementioned (for it is the same word we before translate *corner*), the west side, or quarter, ended: for that is meant by *its goings out.*

Ver. 15. *And the south quarter.*] The same word again in the Hebrew, *viz. peath.*

Was from the end of Kirjath-Jearim, and the border went out on the west.] Did not go directly south, but bordered something towards the sea, till it came to *the well of waters of Nephtoah,* as this verse concludes. (See xv. 9.) By considering of which, and the foregoing and following verses, it will be unnecessary to say much of this south border of Benjamin, it being the same with the north border of Judah. For the very same places are named here that are there, and in the same order; with this difference only, that in describing this border, he proceeds from the west towards the east; but in describing that of Judah

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from the east towards the west. So that Kirjath-Jearim is there the north limits of Judah, as it is here the south limits of Benjamin.

Ver. 16. *And the border came down to the end of the mountain that lieth before the valley of the son of Hinnom,* &c.] See xv. 8.

And descended to En-rogel.] See xv. 7.

Ver. 17. *And was drawn from the north, and went forth to En-shemesh, and went forth towards Geliloth.*] See there; where this place is called Gilgal.

Which is over against the going up to Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan, the son of Reuben.] See there, and ver. 6.

Ver. 18. *And passed along towards the side of Arabah northward; and went down unto Arabah.*] Called Beth-Arabah, xv. 6. and so the LXX. have it here in this verse.

Ver. 19. *And the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah northward.*] Leaving Beth-hoglah on the north of it, (see xv. 6.)

And the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea.] Its utmost progress was to the tongue or bay of the salt sea, which is on the north part of it.

At the south end of Jordan.] Where Jordan ends towards the south; being swallowed up by the salt sea.

This was the south coast.] That is, hither it reached, and here it ended.

Ver. 20. *And Jordan was the border of it on the east side.*] Till, near Jericho, it met with the bounds of the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh.

This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about.] That is, a description of its bounds on all sides.

According to their families.] Which was divided among as many families as were in that tribe.

Ver. 21. *Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho.*] Having given a description of the bounds of the country, he sets down the principal cities in it. The first of which was well known, *viz.* Jericho; the territory of which remained, though the city itself was destroyed. And perhaps there were some houses there, though without walls or gates; which seem to be the only things which Joshua commanded should not be built, (vi. 26.)

And Beth-hoglah.] A city nigh to Jericho; not far from the river Jordan.

And the valley of Keziz.] Rather, *Emer-Keziz;* for he speaks of a city, not of a valley. Or, it may be interpreted, Keziz in the valley; that is, in the plain of Jericho.

Ver. 22. *And Beth-Arabah.*] This city is reckoned to Judah, (xv. 61.) being, it seems, in the confines of both tribes. It stood also in the plain of Jericho, signifying as much as *domus campestris,* a habitation in the fields: for there were large fields about it, as Bochartus supposes; from whence a place in Assyria, for this reason, was called Oraba, as he shews, lib. iv. Phaleg. cap. 21.

And Zemaraim.] A city, it is probable, built by Zemari, the tenth son of Canaan, (Gen. x. 18.) There was a mountain also called by this name, from this city, it is likely. For though it is said to be in Mount Ephraim, 2 Chron. xiii. 14. it might also, in part, belong to Benjamin, as Betharaba and the next cities did belong to two tribes.

And Beth-el.] A city in the confines of the tribe of Ephraim and of Benjamin, which seems to have belonged to both.

Ver. 23. *And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah.*] We know no more of these cities but their names.

Ver. 24. *And Chephar-haammonai, and Ophni.*] These also are unknown cities.

And Gaba.] This is often named in Scripture, and called Gibeah, being that place where the foul fact was committed which almost ruined this tribe, (Judg. xix.) And is called Gibeah of Saul, because it was his native country, where he made his residence after he was king, (1 Sam. x. 26.) And it was one of the cities of the priests, (Josh. xxi. 17.)

Twelve cities with their villages.] Which seem to have been in the eastern part of their country.

Ver. 25. *Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth.*] The first of these is well-known from the story of its ancient inhabitants, related in the ninth chapter of this book. It was also a city of the priests, (xxi. 17.) and seated on a hill, as its very name imports. Ramah also was an eminent city on the north side of Jerusalem, as Bethlehem was on the south. So that Jerusalem was in the road from the one to the other; as appears from the man that went from Bethlehem-Judah to Ramah, (Judg. xix. 2. 11. 13.)

Beeroth also is notorious upon this account, that it was one of the cities which cunningly joined with Gibeon to deceive Joshua and procure a peace with them, (ix. 17.)

Ver. 26. *And Mizpeh.*] There were several cities of this name, as I have noted before, (xv. 38.) And this was in the confines of the tribe of Judah; so that it seems to have belonged both to them and to Benjamin, as several others did.

And Chephirah.] Another of the cities depending upon Gibeon, (ix. 17.)

And Mozah.] An unknown city.

Ver. 27. *And Rekem.*] This is a city mentioned both by Eusebius and St. Jerome; but they do not say where it was, nor so much as name the two next, Irpeel and Taralah.

Ver. 28. *And Zelah, Eleph.*] Two cities, of which no more than the names are remaining. Eusebius and St. Jerome mention the former as in the tribe of Benjamin, but say no more.

And Jebusi, which is Jerusalem.] See xv. 63. where it is reckoned to the tribe of Judah; for both that tribe and Benjamin had an interest in it. The old city belonged to the tribe of Benjamin; unto which an addition being made, it belonged to Judah (as some make account); that is, the north part, with Mount Moriah, was in the portion of Benjamin; but the south part, wherein Mount Sion was, belonged to Judah.

Gibeath.] This was a distinct city from Gaba, (ver. 24.) and I suppose near to Jerusalem.

And Kirjath.] The very name imports a city: which, Eusebius and St. Jerome say, was under the metropolis of Gibeath forementioned. Πόλις ὑπὸ Μητρόπολιν Γαβαθά.

Fourteen cities with their villages.] Which were in the western part of this tribe.

This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin.] Which was one of the smallest, with respect to the quantity of ground which they possessed; but the soil was the richest of all other tribes, as Josephus informs us.

According to their families.] All the families of the Ben-

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jamites were disposed of into these great cities, and the territories belonging to them; in which, it is probable, there were lesser cities, not here named. For we find two cities of the priests in this tribe which are not among those here set down, *viz.* Anathoth and Almon, (xxi. 18.)

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1. *AND the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon.*] Both the LXX. and the Vulgar leave out the latter part of these words, as if they were superfluous; and only say, *the second lot came forth to Simeon.* But I suppose the words following in the Hebrew are intended to shew, that though their inheritance was within that of the tribe of Judah (as the next word tells us), yet those cities were not all that were given to this tribe, but they had another share by lot that fell to them: and God disposed it so, that the very next lot to Benjamin came up for them; Simeon being the eldest son of Jacob that was unprovided.

According to their families.] Which was divided by Eleazar, Joshua, and the princes, among their several families.

And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah.] So we well translate it; for though the word in the Hebrew be *betoch (in the midst)* of the inheritance of Judah; yet it signifies no more than *within.* For the lot of Simeon did not lie in the very heart (as we speak), but in the skirts, of the country of Judah: from whose northern and western border some part was cut off, and given to the Simeonites; for the reason mentioned ver. 9.

Ver. 2. *And they had in their inheritance Beer-sheba, and Sheba.*] Or rather, *Beer-sheba,* which is *Sheba:* for they were one and the same place; sometimes called at length Beer-sheba, and sometimes contracted into Sheba: nothing being more common than to cut off the beginning of the names of towns and places, as Bochartus hath shewn in many instances, in his Phaleg. lib ii. cap. 24. which he repeats in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 15. And certainly it is so here; for otherwise it would not have been said, (ver. 6.) there were thirteen cities in all, but fourteen; for there are so many if Sheba be distinct from Beer-sheba. Which was the last city in the south belonging to the land of Israel. From whence the common saying, *from Dan to Beer-sheba,* to express the whole length of the country; from Dan in the north to Beer-sheba in the south.

And Moladah.] This is mentioned before, in the account we had of the lot of Judah, (xv. 26.)

Ver. 3. *And Hazar-shual.*] A place where there was abundance of foxes.

And Balah.] The same that is mentioned in the south of Judah, (xv. 29.)

And Azem.] It signifies, in Hebrew, *great strength.* We read of it no where else but in this place, and 1 Chron. iv. 29. where it is called Ezem.

Ver. 4. *And El-tolad.*] Called there *Tolad;* the first syllable being cut off, as I said ver. 2. it often is.

And Bethul.] Called there *Bethuel.* Which some will have to be the same with Bethulia, where Judith dwelt; because she was of the tribe of Simeon. But that is a mistake; for this was in the south of Judah, and that a city in Galilee.

And Hormah.] Which is mentioned in the same place, 1 Chron. iv. 30. and was one of the cities to whom David sent part of the spoil he took from the Amalekites, (1 Sam. xxx. 30.)

Ver. 5. *And Ziklag.*] A neighbouring city, as appears from both the forementioned places.

And Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah.] It is a very probable conjecture of Bochartus, that these were two of the cities where Solomon kept his chariots and horses, (1 Kings x. 26.) For the former of these signifies *the house of chariots;* and the other, *the village of horses.* For it is called Hazar-susim, in the plural number, 1 Chron. iv. 31. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. 2. cap. 9.)

Ver. 6. *And Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhen.*] They seem to be the same cities, called in aftertimes Beth-birei, and Shaaraim, (1 Chron. iv. 31.)

Thirteen cities and their villages.] See ver. 1.

Ver. 7. *Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan.*] One of these towns is otherwise called in 1 Chron. iv. 32. *viz.* Etam, not Ether; and a fifth is added. Which shews all the cities and towns belonging to Simeon are not here mentioned, no more than all those belonging to Benjamin; as I observed on ver. 28. of the foregoing chapter. Ashan also is thought by Bochart (in the place beforenamed) to be the same with Chor-Ashan in 1 Sam. xxx. 30. by cutting off the first syllable.

Four cities and their villages.] Which are mentioned separate from the rest; either because they were in another part of the country, or because they were not properly cities, but only *chatserim (large villages),* as they are expressly called 1 Chron. iv. 32. that is, towns which were without walls. Here, indeed, they are called cities; but that must be understood largely, to make it agree with the Chronicles, for towns of more than ordinary bigness.

Ver. 8. *And all the villages that were round about these cities.*] Here the word *chatserim (villages)* is opposed to cities; and signifies all the towns, great and small, that lay about all the cities beforementioned.

To Baalath-beer Ramath.] This is the name but of one city, called simply Baal in 1 Chron. iv. 33. and is that city in the tribe of Judah, mentioned xv. ver. 24. or ver. 29. As far as which city the bounds of the tribe of Simeon reached. Some think this is the city which Solomon built, *i. e.* repaired, and made larger and stronger, (1 Kings ix. 18.)

On the south.] This doth not relate to the situation of the city beforementioned; but of the inheritance of this tribe, which was on the south of Judah.

Ver. 9. *Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of Simeon.*] For which reason the bounds of this tribe on all sides are not described as of the foregoing; because that was sufficiently done in the description of the possession of Judah; out of which the inheritance of this tribe was taken.

For the part of the children of Judah was too much for them.] They who were sent to make a new survey of the whole land, found that the former surveyors had not measured it exactly; but left one division too big in proportion to the rest, which fell to the tribe of Judah: who had now, therefore, a large slice cut from them, because they had too much, and others too little.

Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.] Within that lot, which was at first given to the tribe of Judah: yet not absolutely

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given, but so that if it appeared there was not sufficient for the rest of their brethren, and they had more than enough; that error should be corrected by taking something from them and giving it to another tribe, as it was now in this new allotment.

Ver. 10. *And the third lot came up for Zebulun, according to their families.*] He was not the next brother; for Issachar was born before him. But he is mentioned before Issachar, both in the blessing of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 13. and of Moses, Deut. xxxiii. 18.

And the border of their inheritance was to Sarid.] No more is said of this place by Eusebius, but that it was ὅριον Ζαβουλών, *the bound or limit of Zebulun;* and St. Jerome saith the same. And, by what follows, it seems to have been the south-west border.

Ver. 11. *And their border went up towards the sea.*] That is, the Mediterranean, which was in the west.

And Maralah, and reacheth to Dabbasheth.] These were cities in the western borders, as appears by the following words.

And reacheth to the river that is before Jokneam.] See xii. 22.

Ver. 12. *And turned from Sarid eastward, towards the sun-rising.*] This is a description of the south border; which went from Sarid in the west unto Jordan in the east.

Unto the border of Chisloth-Tabor.] A city near Mount Tabor in the tribe of Issachar, ver. 18. For as, on the west, the Zebulunites were contiguous to the tribe of Manasseh; so, towards the east, they were to the tribe of Issachar.

And then goeth out to Daberath.] A city also in the tribe of Issachar, (xxi. 28.)

And goeth up to Japhia.] It is uncertain where this city was, though some think it to be the strong city which Josephus calls Japha, (lib. ii. de Bello Jud. cap. 25.) and places it in Galilee near Jotapata.

Ver. 13. *And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittath-Hepher.*] This seems to be a description of the eastern border. We read of *the land of Hepher*, 1 Kings iv. 10. which was near the sea of Galilee. There this city was, in which Jonah the prophet was born, (2 Kings xiv. 25.)

And Ittah-kazin.] This city, it is likely, was upon the same sea of Galilee, called Gennesaret; which the Vulgar calls *Thacasin.*

And goeth out to Remmon-methoar, to Neah.] Here the eastern border ended (for that is meant by the phrase *goeth out*), at the sea of Gennesaret. So Josephus expressly affirms. (See Gen. xlix. 13.)

Ver. 14. *And the border compasseth it on the north side to Hannathon.*] Here begins the description of the northern border; which, from the last-named place, went in a bending line towards Hannathon; a city, it is supposed, in this tribe.

And the out-goings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthah-el.] Here the northern border ended. But we know no more of this valley of Jiphthah-el, than that it was in the tribe of Asher, in the confines of this tribe, (ver. 27.)

Ver. 15. *And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Beth-lehem.*] It is not certain whether these cities belonged to Zebulun, or are set down as places upon which this tribe bordered. Of the two first I can give no account; but we read of Shimron as a principal city, which had a king in it conquered by Joshua. (See xii. 20.) And Idalah is mentioned by St. Jerome (de locis Hebraicis,) and called *Jadela;* as if it were compounded of *jad* (which signifies a *place*, Deut. xxv. 12.) and *ela* (a *goddess*), being the place where Venus was worshipped, as Bochartus conjectures, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 3. As for Beth-lehem, we are not to take it for the place where our Saviour was born; which is called Bethlehem-Judah, to distinguish it from this, which was far from it.

Twelve cities with their villages.] Here are more cities than *twelve;* therefore some of them are mentioned only as the boundaries of this country. There is no doubt but those mentioned ver. 13. were in this tribe; and many think those five here mentioned in this were so also. Jokneam likewise belonged to it; but which were the rest to make up the number twelve cannot be determined.

Ver. 16. *This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun, according to their families, these cities with their villages.*] That is, these were the bounds of it; but all the cities belonging to it are not here set down: for we read of two, Kartah and Dimnah, (xxi. 34, 35.) which are not here named. And, indeed, twelve cities do not seem sufficient for sixty thousand men; (Numb. xxvi. 27.) therefore they were only the principal; and all, perhaps, that the measurers of the land had noted in their book.

Ver. 17. *And the fourth lot came out for Issachar, for the children of Issachar, according to their families.*] Thus far there is some kind of order observed in these lots: Issachar being brother to Zebulun by the same mother.

Ver. 18. *And their border was towards Jezreel.*] This was one of the royal seats of the kings of Israel in aftertimes, (1 Kings xxi. 1.) which Eusebius and St Jerome place in the tribe of Manasseh; but ought to be accounted belonging to this tribe, as the next place is agreed to be. There was another in the tribe of Judah, (xv. 56.)

And Chesulloth.] Mentioned ver. 12. which both the forementioned authors place in the tribe of Issachar, under the name of Acheseloth.

And Shunem.] Where that noble lady lived who entertained Elisha at her house, (2 Kings iv. 8. 12.) And where Abishag, the wife of David, in his old age, was born, (1 Kings i. 3.)

Ver. 19. *Haphraim, and Shihon, and Anaharath.*] He doth not describe the borders on all sides of this tribe; but only sets down some principal cities; for it lying between Manasseh and Zebulun, the situation of it was sufficiently known. And they do but guess, who say these six cities named in the foregoing verse and in this were in the southern border.

Ver. 20. *And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez.*] These three cities, and the two next that follow, ver. 21. they will have to constitute the western border.

Ver. 21. *And Remeth and En-gannim.*] Here, as I said, they imagine the western border ended.

En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez.] These two, and the three next, ver. 22. they will have to be the northern border.

Ver. 22. *And the coast reacheth to Tabor.*] That is, this northern border; for Mount Tabor was in the north; and this city was hard by it, and received its name from the mount, or gave its name to it.

And Shahazimah, and Beth-shemesh.] Here ended the

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northern border. There was another Beth-shemesh in the tribe of Naphtali, (ver. 38.) and another in the tribe of Judah, (xxi. 16.)

And the out-goings of their border were at Jordan.] This makes it probable the former account of its other borders is not true; because it leaves no city for the eastern border near Jordan, nor any for the middle of the country.

Sixteen cities with their villages.] This shews that Tabor was a city; otherwise there would be but fifteen.

Ver. 23. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar, according to their families, the cities and villages.*] These were their principal cities; but it is likely there were others: for we read of two not here mentioned, xxi. 28, 29. Dabareh and Jarmuth; yet there are those who think Jarmuth is but another name for Remeth, here mentioned ver. 21. which to me doth not seem probable.

Ver. 24. *And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher, according to their families.*] No reason can be given for this order; unless it be, that God was pleased to place this tribe, being descended from the handmaid of Leah, not far from Zebulun, one of Leah's sons. As for Gad, the elder brother of Asher, he was provided for before, on the other side of Jordan.

Ver. 25. *And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph.*] We know no more of the three first of these cities than their names. But the last of them was very considerable; mention being made of the king of Achshaph, xi. 1. xii. 20. The first of them also we find was a Levitical city, (xxi. 31.) called Hukok, in 1 Chron. vi. 75. It appears, likewise, by the mention of Carmel in the next verse, unto which this border reached, that these cities lay in the west near the Mediterranean Sea.

Ver. 26. *And Alammalech, and Amad, and Mishael, and reacheth to Carmel westward.*] Or, *by the sea*, not far from Ptolemais; to distinguish it from the other Carmel, in the tribe of Judah, near Hebron. (See xv. 55.) Here the great prophet Elijah sometimes dwelt, and confuted the Baalites by a stupendous miracle. But we are as ignorant of the three cities mentioned in this verse, as we are of the other in the foregoing.

And to Shihor-libnath.] Whether this was a city (some fancy Ptolemais), or a promontory, or a muddy river (for there are those different opinions about it), I cannot determine.

Ver. 27. *And turneth towards the sun-rising.*] It turned from the sea towards the east; and so northward, bending towards the west again. For there are no borders or sides of this tribe described: but from the south part of the sea it turned eastward, and then northward, in the form of a bow, towards the north part of the same sea, where Zidon was, (ver. 28.)

To Beth-Dagon.] There was a place of this name mentioned before in the tribe of Judah, xv. 41. where it is thought there was a famous temple of Dagon, the god of the Philistines.

And reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley Jiphthah-el.] And so touched upon the north border of the tribe of Zebulun; in which the valley of Jiphthah-el lay. (See ver. 14.)

Towards the north side of Beth-emek, and Neiel.] Where these were, is not known. Only Eusebius and St. Jerome say, Beth-emek lay in a valley, or low place in this tribe; as the word seems to import.

And goeth out to Cabul on the left hand.] On the north side (called the *left hand*) of this city, which lay in the tribe of Asher, this border ended. Some have been so frivolous as from hence to argue, that this book was written long after Joshua's time; because the land of Cabul (1 Kings ix. 13.) was not known till the days of Solomon, when Hiram gave this name to the land, which Solomon presented him withal. As if there were no difference between the land and the city of Cabul: when one of them was a little region, containing twenty towns, and the other a small place in the confines of Ptolemais; both of them in the tribe of Asher. They are plainly distinguished by Josephus, who calls one of them γῆν Χαβαλὼν, *the land of Cabul;* and the other κώμην, *the village of Cabul;* as Huetius hath observed, propos. iv. Demonstr. Evang. p. 186.

Ver. 28. *And Hebron.*] Called *Elbon* by the LXX. and by the Vulgar *Abran;* to distinguish it, I suppose, from that Hebron in the land of Judah.

And Rehob.] There were two cities of this name in this tribe. (See ver. 30.) One of them was a Levitical city, (xxi. 31.) and the Canaanites kept possession either of that or the other, (Judg. i. 31.)

And Hammon.] There was a Levitical city of this name in the tribe of Naphtali, (1 Chron. vi. 76.) called Hammothdor in xxi. 32. of this book.

And Kanah.] There were two cities of this name; one in the upper Galilee, which was Kanah the greater; and the other in the lower Galilee, called Kanah the less. He speaks here of the greater, which was near to Sidon. The lesser was that wherein our Saviour turned water into wine, and of which Nathanael and the Syrophœnician woman were.

Even unto great Sidon.] See before concerning this city, xi. 8.

Ver. 29. *And then the coast turneth to Ramah.*] Another city on the northern part of the Mediterranean Sea.

And to the strong city Tyre.] This translation is questionable: for we never read one word of the city Tyre (unless it be here) until the days of David; though we often read of Sidon in the books of Moses; even in the prophecy of Jacob. And, as Bochartus observes, Homer himself, who speaks frequently of Sidon and the Sidonians, never names Tyre, (lib. iv. Phaleg. cap. 35.) Therefore, it is highly probable, some other place is meant by Tzor (as our margin notes the word is in the Hebrew), which was a fenced city, as we render the word here translated *strong*, (ver. 35.) And there were several cities, perhaps, called by this name of Tzor or Tyre, besides that famous one in future times; particularly Palætyrus; as much as to say Old Tyre. And it is no improbable conjecture of Campegius Vitringa, that into these two places, Sidon and Tzor, many of the people of Canaan fled, to secure themselves when Joshua invaded them: for Tzor signifies not only a *rock*, but any strong fortified place; from whence it is possible the Latin word *turris*, and then our English *tower*, is derived. Certain it is, that these two were famous cities, ἔνδοξοι λαμπροὶ, as Strabo calls them, lib. xvi. where he saith they were so anciently, and not only in his time; insomuch, that it was uncertain which was the metropolis of the Phœnicians. But it is certain he speaks of the New Tyre, which was built in an island; but the old one was on the continent. (See his Observationes Sacræ, lib. i. cap. 1.)

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And the coast turneth to Hosah.] Declined a little towards a city of this name.

And the out-goings of it are at the sea, from the coast of Achzib.] It ended at the country which belonged to Achzib; for so *hebel* (which we here translate *coast*) signifies. In proper speaking it signifies a *cord*, whereby ground was measured; and thence was used to signify the portion of ground itself, which was measured by that cord or line. Thus we read of Hebel Argob, the region of Argob, Deut. iii. 13. and Hebel Hajam, the region of the sea, Zeph. ii. 5. Achzib, according to St. Jerome, is that place, which, by Pliny and others, was called in aftertimes Ecdippa.

Ver. 30. *Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob.*] It is probable these were three cities in the heart of the country of Asher.

Twenty-two cities with their villages.] There are more than this number here mentioned, though we do not reckon Carmel nor Jiphthah-el, one of which was a mountain, the other a valley. Therefore some of them were only the boundaries of this tribe, but did not belong to their possession.

Ver. 31. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher, according to their families, these cities with their villages.*] That is, these were the most eminent cities, though it be probable there were some other. For we read of one called Abdon, xxi. 30. not here mentioned.

Ver. 32. *And the sixth lot came out for the children of Naphtali, even for the children of Naphtali, according to their families.*] Here the younger son of Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel, is preferred before the elder, who was Dan, (Gen. xxx. 6. 8.) as Zebulun was before Issachar. Such was the method of Divine Providence in that nation, to shew them that they ought not to value themselves too highly, as they were prone to do, upon their external privileges.

Ver. 33. *And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum.*] He doth not say what coast this was; but by what follows, it appears to be the northern border where these cities were situated, near Lebanon and Sidon, and the rest of the northern part of Asher's country: for Naphtali comprehended the upper Galilee.

And the out-goings thereof were at Jordan.] This border ended at this river; and at the very fountain of it, which was at the foot of Libanus.

Ver. 34. *And then the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-Tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok.*] The southern border began at the former of these cities; and ended at the latter.

And reacheth to Zebulun on the south side.] Touched on the confines of the tribe of Zebulun; so that the north side of Zebulun was the south side of Naphtali.

And reacheth to Asher on the west side.] This is a short account of their western border, which went as far as to the borders of the tribe of Asher.

And to Judah upon Jordan towards the sun-rising.] It was not near Judah, there being several tribes between them. Therefore the meaning is, this tribe had communication with that of Judah by the river Jordan. So the word *upon* in our translation must be interpreted (though there be no preposition at all in the Hebrew before Jordan), which river afforded them convenience of carrying merchandises to Judah, or bringing them from thence. And thus some think the prophecy of Moses was fulfilled, (Deut. xxxiii. 23.) *Possess thou the west and the south.* Which doth not signify that they had any land in the south; but that they trafficked with it, by the means of Jordan.

Ver. 35. *And the fenced cities are Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Cinnereth.*] These were northern cities, it appears by that mentioned in the midst, Hammath, or Hamath, which was the utmost bounds of the land of Israel northward. (See Numb. xiii. 21. xxxiv. 8. 1 Kings viii. 65.) It seems to have had its name from the youngest son of Canaan, who, it is likely, built it, as his eldest son did Sidon, (Gen. x. 18.) It continued a famous city a long time; for in the days of David, we read how the king of it cunningly made his peace with him by a great present, (2 Sam. viii. 9, &c.)

Rakkath,] Which follows that, is, in the opinion of some of the Jews, the same with Tiberias. So the author of the book De Cippis Hebraicis, set forth by Hottinger. Whence the Talmudists, as he observes, say, Rakath is Zipporia; which was called Rakath, because it was seated upon the bank of a river. It was also called Mœsia, and at last Tiberias; though other Jewish authors make Rakkath different from that city.

Cinnereth.] A place upon this sea of Tiberias; in which there were fine gardens, and a kind of paradise. Whence it was called Geneser; as much as to say, *the gardens of princes* (*Gannoth-Sarim*). And it had the name of Cinnereth, from its sweetness and pleasures, as the Jews say; (Cod. Megill.) "Kinnereth is Ginser. And why is it called Cinnereth? because its fruits are as sweet to the taste, as the sound of a harp is to the ear." (See Hottinger in his annot. on the forenamed book, p. 36.)

As for the two first cities, Ziddim and Zer, I can say nothing of them.

Ver. 36. *And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor.*] We may guess where these cities were by the last of them, Hazor, to which they were neighbours. (See concerning it, xi. 1.)

Ver. 37. *And Kedesh, and Edrei, and En-hazor.*] The first of these was a Levitical city, (xxi. 32.) in which that famous captain, Barak, was born, Judg. iv. 6. where it is called Kedesh-Naphtali, to distinguish it from those of that name in other tribes. Of the other two cities we know nothing.

Ver. 38. *And Iron, and Migdal-el, and Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh.*] Every one knows there was another Beth-shemesh in the tribe of Judah; and that this city and Beth-anath the children of Naphtali could not conquer, (Judg. i. 33.) But we know no more of them, nor of the rest; save only that Eusebius says, there was a large village, called Magdal-el, between Dora and Ptolemais.

Nineteen cities with their villages.] Six of which were fenced cities, certainly belonging to this tribe; and there are as many more mentioned as make up twenty-three. Some of which therefore must be accounted as bordering cities; or only large villages, and not properly cities.

Ver. 39. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, according to their families, the cities and their villages.*] This must be understood (as in the account of the forementioned tribes) of the principal cities; for

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there were more besides these, as appears from xxi. 32. where Hammoth-dor and Kartan are numbered among the Levitical cities in this tribe, which are not mentioned here.

Ver. 40. *And the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan, according to their families.*] They were the only remaining tribe that was to be provided for.

Ver. 41. *And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh.*] He doth not describe their lot by its borders; but mentions the cities that were in it. Some of which at first were given to Judah; out of whose share, it being too large, some cities were taken for the Danites, as others were for the Simeonites. And it is certain the two first of these fell to Judah, in the first division of the land, (xv. 33.) Both very eminent places, for the birth, and burial, and mighty motions of Samson: for at Zorah he was born, (Judg. xiii. 2.) between Zorah and Eshtaol he was buried, (Judg. xvi. *ult.*) and here the Spirit of God began to move him, at certain times, (xiii. 25.) It is probable, also, that Ir-shemesh was in the tribe of Judah at the first; it being of the same signification with Beth-shemesh: for one signifies the *city of the sun;* the other, the *house,* or *place of the sun.*

Ver. 42. *And Shaalabbin.*] Which the Amorites kept in their possession, Judg. i. 35. where, by a small change of letters, it is called Shaalbim; and in some copies of the LXX. translated ἐν ᾧ καὶ αἱ ἀλώπεκες, and in others ἐν Θελαβιν. And in our present LXX, both these are retained. For a fox in the Arabian language is called *thalab,* and in the Phœnician (which is half Arabic) *saalab;* as Bochartus observes in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 13. and in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 34. p. 684.

And Ajalon.] Another city which the Amorites kept from them, as we find in the same place, Judg. i. 35. And was one of the Levitical cities, (xxi. 23.) and that famous place mentioned x. 13.

And Jethlah.] We know no more of it than that it was a city in this tribe.

Ver. 43. *And Elon, and Thimnathath, and Ekron.*] It is certain that the last of these three cities was at first given to Judah, (xv. 45.) But Thimnathath was not the same with Timnath in the same tribe, (xv. 10. 57.) but quite different from it; as Gibeath, I observed in the foregoing chapter, was from Geba. For Samson went down to this city Timnath, (Judg. xiv. 5.) which shews it was in a valley; whereas Judah went up to Timnath to shear his sheep, (Gen. xxxviii. 11. 13.) which shews it was upon a hill. Concerning Elon I can say nothing, unless it be the same with Holon in the tribe of Judah, (xv. 51.)

Ver. 44. *And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath.*] Some think that the first of these is the same with that city in the tribe of Judah, called El-tekon, xv. 59. and the last the same with that called there Baalah, ver. 29. As for Gibbethon, the Danites seem not to have got possession of it, or to have lost it again; for it was in the hands of the Philistines after the days of David, (1 Kings xv. 27. xvi. 15.) and yet appointed one of the Levitical cities, (Josh. xvi. 21. 23.)

Ver. 45. *And Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon.*] Where Jehud was I find not; but Βαρακαὶ is mentioned by Eusebius as a village near Azotus (or Ashdod), and St. Jerome saith in his time was called Bernea. Which may incline us to his opinion, that Geth-rimmon was no other than the city of Gath, so often mentioned in Scripture as one of the principal cities of the Philistines. It is reckoned among the Levitical cities xxi. 24. as Gibbethon was ver. 44. though in the hands of the Philistines.

Ver. 46. *And Me-jarkon, and Rakkon.*] It is not certain where these places were, but very likely near to the place next mentioned.

With the border before Japho.] This place was afterward called Joppa, being the principal port-town in all Judea (mentioned by Pompon. Mela, Strabo, and Pliny), and continues so to this day, retaining the name of *Japha,* which in Hebrew signifies *fair* or *beautiful.* It is not certain that it was a part of the tribe of Dan, though Eusebius calls it a sea-town of the lot of Dan; for these words may signify no more, but that their portion comprehended the border which lay before this place.

Ver. 47. *And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them.*] These words, *too little,* are not in the Hebrew, where there is nothing answering to them. But the words run thus, *the coast of the children of Dan went out from them;* that is, they were dispossessed of it in some parts by their powerful neighbours, the Amorites, who forced them into the mountains, and would not let them dwell in the valley, (Judg. i. 34.) This put them to such straits, that they were constrained to enlarge their border some other way, which they did by the means following. I shall only further note, that this is no strange phrase; for in the year of jubilee lands are said to *go out,* when they returned to their first owners, from the present possessors, (Lev. xxv. 28. 30, 31. 33.)

Therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem.] A city not far from Jordan, called Laish, in the book of Judges, before it was taken by the Danites. In aftertimes, when it fell into the hands of the Romans, it was called Paneas; and made the metropolis of Iturea and Trachonitis. And from Philip, also, son of Herod the Great, who very much enlarged and adorned it, it was called Cæsarea Philippi, in honour of Tiberius Cæsar.

And took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein.] Were not disturbed in their possession.

And called Leshem-Dan, after the name of Dan their father.] Thus conquerors were wont to change the names of places which they subdued. This was done after Joshua's death; and is related more largely in the book of Judges, chap. xviii. where there is an account of the whole expedition. From whence some argue this book was not written by Joshua; whereas no more can be inferred from it than this, that, in aftertimes, Ezra, or some other, thought good to put in this verse here, to complete the account of the Danites' possessions. But any one may see, as Huetius observes, that if this verse were taken away, all that is said of this tribe coheres perfectly; and there is no breach at all in the context of the foregoing with the following verse after this. Which is an argument, that this short account of their taking Leshem were not the words of the writer of this book, but inserted afterward by some other person. For if they were taken away, this relation of the Danites' lot would be more like the account of the lot of all the rest.

Ver. 48. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.*] The number of them is not set down, as in

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the foregoing tribes; of which it is to no purpose to inquire the reason.

Ver. 49. *When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts.*] That is, after every tribe had their portion assigned to them.

The children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them.] We cannot but observe the wonderful modesty of this great man, who received his portion last of all; and then, not by lot, but by their gift; who were already possessed of the whole land.

Ver. 50. *According to the word of the Lord, they gave him the city which he asked.*] God, indeed, had ordered that he should have a portion, and that he should choose it; but he was content to stay for it till every body else was served. We do not expressly read of this command; but many things were said and done which are not recorded. And he being as faithful and upright as Caleb, (and, besides, chosen to be the captain of God's people), we cannot but think, that when God ordered what Caleb should have, he gave the same direction about Joshua. And so much is implied in those words of Caleb himself, when he demanded his portion of Joshua, (xiv. 6.) "Thou knowest the thing the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea."

Even in Timnath-serah, in Mount Ephraim.] He did not choose the best place in all the country, but a convenient place in his own tribe; which was seated on the north side of a hill called Gaash; as we read in the latter end of this book.

And he built the city, and dwelt therein.] Repaired it, I suppose (for in all likelihood there was a city there before), and made a convenient habitation for his family and kindred. But we read nothing of them; for as he did not affect to make himself king of Canaan, so he contented himself with a little, and made no large provision for his posterity. We have no mention made of his sons or daughters; but (as Conrad. Pellicanus speaks) all the Israelites were his children.

Ver. 51. *These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*] It is usual, after so long an account, to recapitulate in what they had done, and by what authority; which he doth in this verse.

So they made an end of dividing the country.] Every tribe had the place of their settlement appointed to their satisfaction; so that there was no further division made of the land.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *AND the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying.*] From the tabernacle, at the door of which he, and Eleazar, and the princes had been making a division of the land; as the last verse of the foregoing chapter tells us.

Ver. 2. *Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge.*] This was the proper time for it; when they were all met together to receive their several portions of land, after an exact survey of the country.

Whereof I spake to you by my servant Moses.] In Numb. xxxv. 9—11, &c. where he treats of them at large; and repeats it again, Deut. xix. 1, 2, &c.

Ver. 3. *That the slayer that killeth any person unawares, and unwittingly, may flee thither.*] Such places, every body knows, there were among the heathen; but commonly they were their temples, and their altars, as many have observed; particularly Joh. Gentius lately, in his book De Victimis Humanis, par. iii. cap. 21. p. 483, &c. But there were also some cities that had this privilege, as Dilherrus (who thinks herein the gentiles imitated the Jews) observes out of Tacitus, lib. iii. Annal. where he saith the principal cities of Greece contended before Tiberius about this matter, De Jure Asylorum. (See Dissert. de Cacozelia Gentilium, cap. 3.)

And they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.] Protect such persons from him who studied to avenge the blood of the slain. Concerning whom, see Numb. xxxv. 12.

Ver. 4. *And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city.*] Desiring to be admitted and protected there.

And shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city.] That is, the judges, who sat in the gate beforementioned, (Deut. xvi. 18.)

They shall take him into the city unto them.] Being satisfied he was such a person as he pretended.

And give him a place that he may dwell among them.] Assign a convenient habitation for him; these cities being appointed by God for that purpose, and given unto those who inhabited them, on this condition, that they should entertain such persons when they fled to them.

Ver. 5. *And if the avenger of blood pursue after him.*] Desiring he might be delivered up into his hands.

Then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hands.] But defend him from his assaults.

Because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.] It was a casual slaughter, without any design of doing him hurt, as far as appeared to them. If the avenger pursued the slayer so closely, that they had not time to examine the matter at the gate of the city, they were not to let him stand there; but take him in (and afterward hear his cause, and judge it), lest the avenger should kill him before he was admitted into their city.

Ver. 6. *And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment.*] The avenger might bring him before another tribunal, to be tried whether he killed the man by chance or not. (See Numb. xxxv. 24, 25.)

And until the death of the high-priest, that shall be in those days.] If that court found him not guilty of wilful murder, he was restored to the city of refuge; but confined to live there till the death of the high-priest. (See in the same place.)

Then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and his own house, &c.] See Numb. xxxv. 28.

Ver. 7. *And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in Mount Naphtali; and Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-Arba (which is Hebron) in the mountain of Judah.*] It is commonly observed, that as these three cities were seated on high and eminent places, that they might be seen afar off; so they were at such a distance from each other, that all the country might more easily have the benefit of one or other of them. For Kedesh was in the north; and Hebron in the south; and Shechem between both. Thus they fulfilled the command of God, Deut. xix. 8.

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Ver. 8. *And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward.*] On the east of Jericho, in the land of the two tribes and half; which was almost as long as the land of Canaan, though not so broad.

They assigned Bezer in the wilderness, upon the plain, out of the tribe of Reuben; and Ramoth Gilead out of the tribe of Gad; and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.] These cities were assigned by Moses before he died, (Deut. iv. 43.) but had not the privilege till now. And it is observable, that if Bezer stood in a flat country, the other two, Ramoth and Golan, were in the high.

Ver. 9. *These were the cities that were appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.*] For the safety of all sorts of persons, as is manifest from Numb. xxxv. 15.

That whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.] It is observable, that all these cities belonged to the Levites; who, by their authority, might defend the man from unjust usage; and by their wisdom, direct the elders to judge aright concerning his cause; and also give him good instructions while he lived among them, until the death of the high-priest.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *THEN came near.*] After the cities of refuge were settled.

The heads of the fathers of the Levites.] So the princes of the several tribes (who divided the land, together with Joshua and Eleazar) are called, xiv. 1. and in the conclusion of this verse. And, therefore, the chief persons descended from Kohath, Gershon, and Merari (who were the fathers of the Levites), are here meant by the *heads of the fathers* of that tribe.

Unto Eleazar, and unto Joshua, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel.] Appointed by God to see the land divided, called the *princes* of the tribes, Numb. xxxiv. 18.

Ver. 2. *And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof, for our cattle.*] This command is registered in Numb. xxxv. 2, &c. and is set down before the mention of cities of refuge (which are commanded in the following part of the chapter), though, it seems, that command was executed before this.

Ver. 3. *And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the Lord, these cities and their suburbs.*] Not only Joshua, Eleazar, and the princes, but all the people of Israel acknowledged this obligation, which God had laid upon them; and accordingly these words import, that the people separated so many cities as he commanded by Moses (which were to be forty and eight, Numb. xxxv. 7.) for the habitation of the Levites. Which cities are here named, and distributed among them in this chapter.

Ver. 4. *And the lot came out for the family of the Kohathites.*] After the cities were set out, which should belong to them, then they were divided by lot among the several families of the Levites; as the whole land was among the tribes. And the first lot came out for the noblest family in the tribe of Levi; for Moses and Aaron were descended from Kohath.

And the children of Aaron the priest, which were of the Levites.] The family of Aaron being priests, were the principal among the Levites; and therefore were first and very honourably provided for.

Had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities.] It was by a special providence, that the share which fell to the priests was in those tribes that were nearest to the city; which God intended should be the fixed place of his worship and service in future times; that the priests might be ready to give their attendance there, without much trouble.

Ver. 5. *And the rest of the children of Kohath.*] All his descendants were not *priests*, but Aaron and his family alone; the rest were bare Levites.

Had by lot, out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities.] These three tribes were nearest to the three forementioned; so that the Kohathites were not far separated one from another.

Ver. 6. *And the children of Gershon had by lot, out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.*] Among the sons of Levi, Gershon is mentioned as the eldest, Exod. vi. 16. Numb. iii. 17. but the lot came up first to the children of Kohath, the priests being descended from him.

Ver. 7. *And the children of Merari, by their families, had out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.*] This is only a general account of the tribes in which their several lots fell, and of the number of cities bestowed on their several families.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs.*] The children of Israel, as I said before, gave them; and the lot divided them.

As the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.] Who ordered both how many cities they should have, and how large the suburbs of them should be. (See Numb. xxxiv. 3, 4.)

Ver. 9. *And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are mentioned by name.*] Here now follows a particular account of the names of those cities, which were said before in general to have been given out of these two tribes. Which are put together, because the lot of Simeon was taken out of the lot of Judah.

Ver. 10. *Which the children of Aaron, being of the family of the Kohathites,* &c.] One of the families of the Kohathites, and the eldest of them; for they descended from Amram, the eldest son of Kohath. (Exod. vi. 18. Numb. iii. 19.)

For theirs was the first lot.] They had the honour to be first provided for, as was said before, ver. 4.

Ver. 11. *And they.*] That is, Eleazar, Joshua, and the princes.

Gave them the city of Arba, the father of Anak, which is Hebron, in the hill-country of Judah, &c.] See of this city, xiv. 15. xv. 13.

Ver. 12. *But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof,*

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gave they to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, for his possession.] The priests had only the city and suburbs, which were their possession, as much as the fields and villages were Caleb's, on whom they were bestowed before, (xiv. 13, &c.)

Ver. 13. *Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest, Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer.*] It was given them with this condition, that they who slew a man unawares should be entertained here, and have a place given them to live securely among them, (xx. 4.)

And Libnah with her suburbs.] This is to be understood to belong to them no otherwise than Hebron did, unto which they had no right beyond the city and suburbs: and, therefore, the fields and the villages of Libnah they had nothing to do withal; and the same is to be noted of all the following cities of the priests.

Ver. 14. *And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs.*] These are mentioned as belonging to Judah, xv. 48. 50.

Ver. 15. *And Holon with her suburbs.*] Called Helin, 1 Chron. vi. 56.

And Debir with her suburbs.] See xv. 15.

Ver. 16. *And Ain with her suburbs.*] A city in the tribe of Simeon, (xix. 17.) but taken out of Judah, (xv. 32.)

And Juttah with her suburbs.] See xv. 55.

And Beth-shemesh with her suburbs.] Unto which city the providence of God directed the kine, which drew the cart wherein the Philistines put the ark when they sent it home, there being a great many priests in it, to receive it with due care and reverence, (1 Sam. vi. 12, 13.)

Nine cities out of these two tribes.] For the tribe of Judah was very large; and the command of God was, that *from them which had many cities they should give many,* (Numb. xxxv. 8.)

Ver. 17. *And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs.*] See xviii. 24, 25.

Ver. 18. *Anathoth with her suburbs.*] The city of the prophet Jeremiah, who was a priest, (Jer. i. 1.)

And Almon with her suburbs.] Called Alemeth, in 1 Chron. vi. 60. For there were greater alterations than this made, by length of time, in the names of places.

Four cities.] Which were a great many out of so small a tribe; but the soil of it, as I observed before, was very rich.

Ver. 19. *All the cities of the children of Aaron the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs.*] As was said, ver. 4.

Ver. 20. *And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath.*] Who were mere Levites and not priests.

Even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim.] Part of them were planted there, and part of them in two other tribes, as it follows, ver. 23, &c.

Ver. 21. *For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs, in Mount Ephraim, to be a city of refuge for the slayer.*] See xx. 7.

And Gezer with her suburbs.] See xvi. 3. 10.

Ver. 22. *And Kibzaim with her suburbs.*] Which is called Jokmeam in 1 Chron. vi. 68.

And Beth-horon with her suburbs.] We read of both the Beth-horons in the description of this tribe, the upper and the nether, xvi. 3. 5. the first of which seems to be here meant.

Ver. 23. *And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs; Gibbethon with her suburbs.*

Ver. 24. *Ajalon with her suburbs, Gath-rimmon with her suburbs: four cities.*] The four cities mentioned in these two verses we find before in this tribe, xix. 42. 44, 45.

Ver. 25. *And out of half of the tribe of Manasseh.*] That half of it which was settled in Canaan.

Taanach with her suburbs.] See xvii. 11.

And Gath-rimmon with her suburbs.] In 1 Chron. vi. 70. these two cities are called Aner and Bileam; so much were names changed in a long tract of time. Or, they being dispossessed of the two cities here mentioned, by the invasions of their enemies (who perhaps demolished them), these two others were given in lieu of them.

Two cities.] Which was a just proportion to the other whole tribes, who gave four.

Ver. 26. *All the cities were ten, with their suburbs, for the families of the children of Kohath that remained.*] Who were not of the children of Aaron, the priests, (ver. 5.)

Ver. 27. *And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the other half tribe of Manasseh.*] Which had their inheritance on the other side of Jordan.

Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer.] See xx. 8. From whence the neighbouring country was called Gaulonitis.

And Beeshterah with her suburbs.] Called Ashtaroth in 1 Chron. vi. 71. by a very light change, only leaving out the first letter.

Two cities.] The same number that was given out of the other half of this tribe, (ver. 25.)

Ver. 28. *Out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs.*] See xix. 20. Called Kedesh, 1 Chron. vi. 72.

And Dabareh with her suburbs.] Not mentioned before in this book, but in 1 Chron. vi. 72.

Ver. 29. *And Jarmuth.*] Called Ramoth, 1 Chron. vi. 73.

And En-gannim.] See chap. xix. 21. called Anem, 1 Chron. vi. 73.

Ver. 30. *And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs.*] Called Misheal, xix. 26. and Mashal, 1 Chron. vi. 74.

And Abdon.] Mentioned in that place in the Chronicles; but not in the nineteenth chapter of this book. (See ver. 31. of that chapter.)

Ver. 31. *Helkath with her suburbs.*] See xix. 25. Called Hukok, 1 Chron. vi. 75.

And Rehob.] Mentioned there, and Josh. xix. 28.

Ver. 32. *And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee, to be a city of refuge for the slayer.*] See xx. 7.

And Hammoth-dor with her suburbs.] Called simply Hammath, xix. 35. and Hammon, 1 Chron. vi. 76.

And Kartan with her suburbs.] Called Kirjathaim in 1 Chron. vi. 76.

Three cities.] This being a smaller territory, it seems, than the rest of the tribes forementioned, who gave four.

Ver. 33. *All the cities of the Gershonites, according to their families, were thirteen cities with their suburbs.*] As was said before, ver. 6.

Ver. 34. *And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites.*] The remaining families of the Levites; for there were three heads of them; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

Out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs, and Kartah with her suburbs.] Of the former, see xix. 11. and of the latter, ver. 16.

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Ver. 35. *Dimnah with her suburbs, Nahallal with her suburbs.*] See xix. 15, 16.

Four cities.] There are but two mentioned, 1 Chron. vi. 77. with quite different names; the other two, it seems, being lost before that time.

Ver. 36. *And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs.*] Which was one of the cities of refuge, (xx. 8.) though not here mentioned, as the rest are in the foregoing part of this chapter; and in ver. 38.

And Jahazah with her suburbs.] These, and the two cities in the following verse, Kedemoth and Mephaath, are mentioned as cities in this tribe, xiii. 18. And so they are in 1 Chron. vi. 78, 79, as Levitical cities.

Ver. 37. *Kedemoth with her suburbs,* &c.] Some have urged against the integrity of the Hebrew text, that this and the foregoing verse are not to be found in some ancient copies of the Bible; and, indeed, the Masorites acknowledge as much. But it is evident that they are found in copies of very great antiquity; and the context shews, that they ought to be here; as Bishop Walton observes in his Considerator Considered, chap. 6. sect. 14. And Hottinger also (who answers this cavil more largely) observes, that they are in a most accurate MS. of the Duke of Rohan's, written 1495. (See his Thesaurus Philolog. lib. i. cap. 2. quæst. 4. p. 181, &c.) The Masorites, who take notice of this omission, acknowledge, in the margin of this verse, that it was to be found in several copies.

Ver. 38. *And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer.*] See xx. 8.

And Mahanaim with her suburbs.] This city was made by Abner the royal seat for Ish-bosheth, Βασίλειον ἐποίησε, as Josephus speaks, lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 1.

Ver. 39. *Heshbon with her suburbs, Jazer with her suburbs: four cities in all.*] These, with the foregoing, are mentioned 1 Chron. vi. 80, 81.

Ver. 40. *So all the cities for the children of Merari,* &c. *were by their lot twelve cities.*] As was said in general before, ver. 7.

Ver. 41. *All the cities of the Levites, within the possession of the children of Israel, were forty and eight cities with their suburbs.*] So God ordered by Moses, Numb. xxxv. 7. And it is a demonstration that Moses was divinely inspired to make such an appointment; before they knew whether, without straitening the other tribes, they could afford so many cities to the Levites. For when Joshua and Caleb went up to search the land (with the rest, mentioned Numb. xiii.) they could have no opportunity to take the dimensions of the country; whereby Moses might know there would be room enough to allow the Levites so large a proportion as this; but he was directed to it by a Divine foreknowledge.

Ver. 42. *These cities were every one of them with their suburbs round about them.*] *viz.* Two thousand cubits on every side, round the city, as is ordered Numb. xxxv. 5. Which must be owned to be a great proportion for this tribe; which was the smallest of them all. But God would have an ample provision made for his ministers; and they had none of the land belonging to these cities, as was before observed, but only room for themselves, and for their cattle.

Thus were all these cities.] Disposed and settled according to the Divine commandment. Six of which were cities of refuge; and the other forty-two had the same privileges, if the inhabitants pleased, and at the cost of those that fled thither for safety. (See upon Numb. xxxv. 6.)

Ver. 43. *And God gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers.*] He gave them a right to the whole country (which was distributed among them, as he appointed, by a lot which he ordered and directed), and he gave them the actual possession and enjoyment of the greatest part of it; and he gave them power to subdue the rest (if they continued obedient to him) as soon as it was convenient. Which was exactly according to his promise and oath made to them; for they not being numerous enough to people the whole country, at their first coming into it, he never intended to expel all the old inhabitants at once, but by degrees; as we read expressly, Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.

And they possessed it, and dwelt therein.] Went every man to his lot, and peopled the country, as far as at present they were able.

Ver. 44. *And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers.*] None molested them in their possessions; but they ploughed, and sowed, and reaped, &c. without any disturbance.

And there stood not a man of all their enemies before them.] For whosoever had opposed them, were overthrown and destroyed by them; and, as it follows,

The Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand.] Which is not to be understood, as if all the people of Canaan were absolutely under their power; but that, as long as Joshua lived, not a man appeared to fight with them, but was delivered up unto them.

Ver. 45. *There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.*] Which they themselves (he tells them afterward, xxiii. 14.) knew very well, and could not but confess. But it must be understood according to the explication of ver. 43. For the time of fulfilling some part of his promise was not come; and the completing of what was begun depended upon their obedience to him. "But (as Conradus Pellicanus here admonishes) we are taught by this the truth of the Divine promises; and it ought to establish the belief of the faithful, that it do not fluctuate; though the promises of God seem to us to be fulfilled very slowly."

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *AND Joshua called the Reubenites, and Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.*] Who came as auxiliaries to their brethren when they passed over Jordan; as they had engaged to do, when they received their inheritance on the other side of it, (i. 12—14, &c.)

Ver. 2. *And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded you; and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you.*] Numb. xxxii. 20, &c. Deut. iii. 18, &c. In this and the following verses, he commends them for their obedience unto God and unto him; and for their fidelity to their promises; and their constancy and patience in their piety to God, and love to their brethren.

Ver. 3. *Ye have not left your brethren these many days*

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unto this day.] Seven years (some think as many more) they had continued in their service; as long as the war lasted with the Canaanites; yea, till they had seen their brethren settled in the lots fallen to them.

But have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God.] During which time they never refused what was expected from them for the help of their brethren. (See xi. 18. xiv. 10.) This was a great proof of their patient obedience, in staying so long from their wives and children.

Ver. 4. *And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them.*] Which he had done for them before, i. 13.

Now therefore return to your tents.] So he calls their houses, because this was the common word used for a long time in the wilderness, to signify a habitation.

And unto the land of your possession, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you on the other side Jordan.] It was but reasonable and just that they should go and enjoy what God had given them, now their brethren were in a quiet possession of their portion; and that their fidelity in performing their promise, should be rewarded with the like, in dismissing them, when they had done their business. For they engaged to serve no longer, than till they had driven the Canaanites out of their country, (Numb. xxxii. 21.)

Ver. 5. *But take diligent heed to do the commandment of the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you.*] That is, to observe all his precepts (as they had done this of aiding their brethren), and for that end, preserve in mind all that God had done for them. (See Deut. iv. 9.)

To love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul.] Especially to worship the Lord alone with sincere affection; which Moses inculcated above all things, before he left them, (Deut. vi. 5. 13, 14. x. 12. xi. 13. 22. xx. 9. xxx. 6. 20.)

Ver. 6. *So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away.*] He not only praised and commended them; but dismissed them with a solemn prayer to God for his blessing upon them. And he seems first to have dismissed with his blessing the Reubenites and Gadites; and then to have blessed the Manassites by themselves.

And they went unto their tent.] In order to pack up their goods, and make themselves ready for their departure.

Ver. 7. *Now, to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh, Moses had given possession in Bashan; but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward.*] This is repeated to shew why he mentioned only half the tribe of Manasseh, ver. 1. and to introduce what follows.

And when Joshua had sent them away also unto their tents.] As he had done the Reubenites and Gadites.

Then he blessed them.] This seems to signify that he gave a peculiar blessing to the Manassites; that is, rewarded their services, by some present which he made them: for so the word *blessing* (I observed before) sometimes signifies, (2 Kings v. 15.) And he did this the rather, because the Manassites were near of kin to the children of Ephraim (of which tribe he himself was), and were now to be separated from the rest of their brethren in Canaan.

Ver. 8. *And he spake unto them, saying.*] This speech seems to be directed to the Reubenites and Gadites, as well as to the Manassites; though they had a peculiar concern in it.

Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, and with silver, and with gold, &c.] As much as to say, Part with your brethren contentedly and well-pleased; laden with the spoils which you have got in the wars against the people of Canaan. For they had their share in the prey, as well as the other seven tribes and half; and carried it away to their own country.

Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.] He orders them, when they came home, to let those that stayed on the other side Jordan, to defend their wives, children, and cattle, to have a share in the spoil which they had gotten. For this was thought an equal thing by God himself in the war they had with the Midianites, before they came over Jordan; when twelve thousand went out to fight; who had one half of the spoil; the other half being divided among all the congregation that stayed at home, (Numb. xxxi. 27.) And it is very reasonable to think, that now the same proportion was observed; the forty thousand who went to help their brethren in the war, having one half of the spoil; and their brethren who stayed to guard their possession, the other half: so that the warriors had the far greater share, as there was reason; because they had hazarded their lives in the enterprise. But in David's time it was made a law, that they who went to fight, and they that stayed to guard the stuff, should have an equal share in the prey, (1 Sam. xxx. 24, 25. see Gen xiv. *ult.*)

Ver. 9. *And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go into the country of Gilead,* &c.] This shews that he gave them all his blessing in Shiloh, where the sanctuary was; and sent them from thence, under the Divine protection, to their own country: which is here called *the country of Gilead,* because that was an eminent part of their country, divided between the children of Gad and Manasseh; and here comprehends all the rest of the land where the Reubenites lived.

Ver. 10. *And when they came to the borders of Jordan.*] Or, *they came* (for the word *when* is not in the Hebrew) unto the banks of that river.

Which are in the land of Canaan.] This seems to import that they built the altar, mentioned in the end of the verse, before they went over Jordan, in the land of Canaan. Which is not at all likely; for it would not have answered their intention: which was to shew, that Jordan did not make such a separation between them and their brethren, but that they were one people with those in Canaan; where the altar of God was in Shiloh. Therefore I take this to be a short manner of speech; signifying, that they came to the borders of Jordan in the land of Canaan; and passed over into their own country on the other side of the river. And so the Hebrew word *Gelilath* (which we translate *borders*) seems to signify, a certain place near Jordan, to which they came. The Vulgar Latin translates it *heaps;* the LXX. in the Vatican copy, retains the word Γαλααδ (or Γαλιλωθ, as other copies more truly have it), taking it for some noted place, which was near to their passage over Jordan.

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The children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, built there an altar by Jordan.] The word *there* hath made it thought that they built this altar in the land of Canaan beforementioned; but the particle *sham* rela tes to time as well as place, and may be translated *then* as well as *there*. Examples of which there are in Judg. v. 21. Prov. viii. 27. compared with ver. 30. Eccles. iii. 17. and most plainly, Isa. xlviii. 16. And thus it is to be here interpreted, that, before they went any farther, they stayed by Jordan till they had built this altar on the borders of their own country: for so the next verse teaches us to expound it, and will admit of no other sense; where it is said, they had "built an altar over against the land of Canaan."

A great altar to see to.] Which made a great show, being very high and conspicuous, that it might be seen afar off. For being built, not by a private person, but by the whole body of a great people, they thought they could not make it too stately and magnificent. And herein it differed so much from the altar made by Moses, that they thought, perhaps, it would administer the less occasion to their brethren to suspect it was intended for sacrifice.

Ver. 11. *And the children of Israel.*] That were in the land of Canaan. This is an instance of such a short manner of speech as I take that in the foregoing verse to be; which must be made out by some such supplement as is there mentioned. For the Reubenites, Gadites, &c. were *the children of Israel*, as well as those settled in the land of Canaan.

Heard say.] This is an argument the altar was not built on their side of Jordan; for then they would have seen what they were doing, and hindered the building; whereas they heard nothing of it till it was built.

Behold, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, have built an altar.] By a common consent.

Over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel.] Either there where they now passed over Jordan, or where they all passed over when they entered Canaan, or at the usual place where every body was wont to pass over, that they might take the more notice of it. And here also were the *Geliloth* beforementioned, like those on the other side, which seem to have been great banks cast up to keep Jordan from overflowing too far.

Ver. 12. *And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel.*] Not all the people of the land, but their elders and heads of their tribes, who, in the foregoing books, are often called by the name of *colledath (all the congregation)*. See Numb. xxvii. 2. xxxii. 2. and chap. xviii. of this book, ver. 1.

Gathered themselves together at Shiloh.] It seems they had been separated, being gone to settle in their several cities.

To go to war against them.] To consult about it. For they imagined them to be apostates from their religion, which, as it required them to worship the Lord alone, and no other god, so at no other place but that which he himself had chosen. Where he allowed but one altar, as there was but one God. (See Deut. xii. 5, 6. 11. 13. 18. 26, 27. xiii. 12, &c.) That altar, also, where he commanded sacrifices to be offered, was to be but three cubits high, (Exod. xxvii. 1.) so that they went not up to it by steps; (Exod. xx. 26.) whereas this was a high altar, like those among the heathens, who loved to sacrifice on high places (*i. e.* mountains), and also upon high and lofty altars, which advanced their sacrifices nearer heaven. And this, perhaps, was one thing that incensed the congregation now assembled, and made them think their brethren were lapsed to idolatry; either intending to worship other gods, or the God of Israel in an unlawful place and manner.

Ver. 13. *And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead.*] Their zeal did not so transport them, but that they prudently considered it was fit to be rightly informed of the matter of fact; and, if any thing was amiss, to endeavour to set it right by counsel and arguments, before they betook themselves to arms: in order to which they sent the embassy here mentioned.

Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest.] A person of very eminent authority among them, and more likely to be received with due regard, (Numb. xxxi. 6.)

Ver. 14. *And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince, throughout all the tribes of Israel.*] Which were nine and a half; so that a prince was chosen out of the half tribe of Manasseh, as well as out of the other nine.

And each one was a head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.] That is, they were *chiliarchs*, as the LXX. call them, and the chief among such *rulers of thousands* in the several tribes, (Exod. xviii. 21.)

Ver. 15. *And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh.*] Who, hearing of their coming, held a congregation, it is likely, of the chief persons among them, to receive their message.

Into the land of Gilead.] So he calls here, and ver. 13. the country of the two tribes and half; by the name of an eminent part of it, which is put for the whole, as I observed upon ver. 9.

And they spake unto them, saying.] Made the following speech in the assembly of the two tribes and half, by the mouth of Phinehas.

Ver. 16. *Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord.*] The representatives of the whole people of Israel, in whose name this embassy was sent.

What trespass is this that you have committed against the Lord God of Israel.] They were not able to express the heinousness of it.

To turn away this day from following the Lord.] So soon after they had seen his wonderful works, and received such a charge from Joshua, as he gave them at their departure from Canaan, (ver. 5.)

In that you have built you an altar.] Which they supposed was for a sacrifice.

That you might rebel this day against the Lord?] Which was direct opposition to his express command, immediately after he gave them the law from Mount Sinai, (Exod. xx. 24. And see the places beforenamed upon ver. 12.)

Ver. 17. *Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed to this day.*] He instances in this, being himself an actor in the punishment of it, though it deserved still greater punishment. For that is the meaning of *we are not cleansed;* have not sufficiently suffered for that sin; there being some remaining (he feared) that were

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infected with those idolatrous inclinations, whom God might justly cut off.

Although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord.] Which destroyed twenty and four thousand, (see Numb. xxv. 9.)

Ver. 18. *But that you must turn away this day from following the Lord?*] Commit more sins of that nature. For, whether they intended to worship other gods, or to worship the God of Israel in a manner he did not allow, it was, in his esteem, idolatry.

And it will be, seeing you rebel to-day against the Lord.] It must be acknowledged, that they were a little too hasty in concluding their brethren to be rebels, before they had asked them for what purpose they had erected this altar, which should properly have been the first question; but their pious fear, lest God should be offended, made them immediately fall into this vehement expostulation.

That to-morrow.] That is, quickly, or speedily.

He will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel.] With you for committing this sin, and with us for not punishing it.

Ver. 19. *Notwithstanding.*] Or rather, *and now*, as the LXX. translate the Hebrew particle *veac*.

If the land of your possession be unclean.] They imagined the Reubenites, and Gadites, and Manassites, might take their land to be less holy for want of an altar, and such a token of the Divine presence, as there was in the tabernacle. This appears to be the sense by what follows: which our Mr. Mede carries something further, in his observations concerning the appropriation of some place for the worship of God: which so universally prevailed, from the beginning, that it was believed, in those elder times, that those countries and territories, wherein no place was set apart for God's worship, were unhallowed and unclean. This, he thinks, may be rightly gathered from these words. (See book ii. upon Eccles. v. 1. p. 433.)

Then pass ye over to the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us.] This expresses a wonderful zeal for God and the common good, wherewith they were at present possessed; which made them desire rather to give up some of their own land to them, than have them fall from their religion.

But rebel not against the Lord, nor rebel against us.] They desire them not to break the common bond that tied them to each other, as well as unto God, which was the same religion.

In building an altar, beside the altar of the Lord our God.] Which was, in effect, to forsake the Lord.

Ver. 20. *Did not Achan the son of Zerah.*] Descended from Zerah, (vii. 17, 18.)

Commit a trespass in an accursed thing.] This was a fresher instance than that of Baal-Peor, (ver. 17.)

And wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity.] See vii. 1, 2, &c. In this he explains what he said, ver. 18. that the whole congregation was in danger to fall under the Divine displeasure by their apostacy.

Ver. 21. *Then the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, answered and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel.*] Some of the heads of their tribes made the following reply, in the name of all the rest.

Ver. 22. *The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods.*] In the Hebrew, *the God of gods, the Lord; the God of gods, the Lord.* Where there are three names of God, Elohim, and Jehovah; signifying, that they owned no other God but him whom their forefathers worshipped, by what name soever he was called; that God, who is infinitely above all creatures, the fountain of all other beings: and they double the expression of their devotion to him, that they might signify their earnestness and vehemency to purge themselves from the crime objected to them.

Some of the ancient Jews thought a great mystery is contained in these words: for the Midrasch Tillim upon the fiftieth Psalm (quoted by Mart. à Raymund, in his Pugio Fidei, par. iii. distinct. i. cap. 4.) thus discourses: "What did they see that they mention these words twice, *El, Elohim, Jehovah; El, Elohim, Jehovah?* They said, *God, God, Jehovah*, the first time, because by these the world was created; and they said, *God, God, Jehovah*, the second time, because by these the law was given." Where he plainly insinuates a plurality of persons, saying, *behen (by these)* the world was created, &c. and refers to the first words of Genesis, where it is said *Elohim* created in the beginning the heaven and the earth. No wonder then that Christians have been of the same opinion, and thought these three names denoted the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: as the author of the old Nitzacon (three hundred years before that of R. Lipman's) acknowledges, p. 59. Unto which he gives no answer, but only this, That these three belong to one God; which we also acknowledge.

He knoweth.] They appeal to Him who searcheth the hearts of men, and their most secret designs.

And Israel they shall know.] By seeing their constancy in the religion of their ancestors.

If it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord (save us not this day).] They turn their speech on a sudden (as is usual in great passion) unto God himself; desiring they may not live, but be immediately destroyed by him, if they intended either to throw off his worship and service, or to worship him any other way than according to his appointment.

Ver. 23. *That we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer burnt-offerings thereon, or meat-offerings, or if to offer peace-offerings thereon, let the Lord himself requite it.*] That is, they desire God to punish it, (for so that phrase *requite it* signifies, Deut. xviii. 19.) if they intended to offer any sort of sacrifice whatsoever upon this altar; which they acknowledge had been to turn from their religion.

Ver. 24. *And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing.*] The Hebrew word *deaga* (which we translate *fear*) signifies such anxiety in their mind, as gave them much trouble; till they thought of this way to give themselves ease.

Saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel?] They were afraid a time might come when they should be looked upon as aliens, who had no right to come to the tabernacle, and the altar, to offer sacrifice there. The Targum hath it, *What have you to do with the Word of the Lord God of Israel?*

Ver. 25. *For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben,* &c.] Divided us from you by the river Jordan.

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Ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord.] Make them lose their religion (which is called the *fear of God*), by pretending they are none of the Lord's people. It was not likely, one would think, such a thing should happen; but they did not know what length of time, and their distance from them, might do, to make them forget their relation unto them, and unto God; their country being no part of the land of promise, as Canaan was. Here again the Targum hath it; *Ye have no part in the Word of the Lord.*

Ver. 26. *Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt-offering, or for sacrifice.*] They again disclaim that, before they give the true reason of what they had done.

Ver. 27. *But that it may be a witness between us and you, and our generations after us.*] For it had been an ancient way of preserving the remembrance of things, by raising such structures to testify to them, Gen. xxx. 48. and used afterward by Joshua himself, xxxiv. 27.

That we might do the service of the Lord before him with our burnt-offerings, &c.] Have the privilege to come and worship God at the tabernacle, by offering such sacrifices as the rest of the Israelites did.

That your children may not say unto our children, in time to come, Ye have no part in the Lord.] That they might not be thrust away from the altar when they brought their sacrifices, under a pretence that they were none of God's people, because they did not live in the land which he promised to their fathers. Here the Targum uses the same language again, *No part in the Word of the Lord.*

Ver. 28. *Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they shall so say to us, or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again.*] Have a reply ready, if such a thing as we fear should happen.

Behold, the pattern of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made.] Which they could not have exactly imitated, if they had not been acquainted with it, and worshipped God there with their brethren.

Not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice.] They thought this could not be too often repeated, that they might not be misunderstood.

But it is a witness between us and you.] A public testimony that we ought not to be excluded from the worship of God among you, being of the same communion with you.

Ver. 29. *God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt-offerings,* &c.] They utterly renounce all such intentions as they were suspected to have; protesting again most solemnly they meant not to rebel *against the Word of the Lord,* as the Targum again expresses it.

Ver. 30. *And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation, and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben,* &c. *spake, it pleased them.*] They not only acquiesced in their answer, but were very glad to hear it.

Ver. 31. *And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben,* &c.] He spake to them in the name of all his company.

This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord.] He thankfully acknowledges the gracious presence of God with them, in preserving the Reubenites, &c. from so great a sin, as they feared they had committed; and all the people of Israel from such heavy judgments as it would have deserved.

Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord.] Who would have punished them for this schism, if they had been guilty of it, and not censured for it. This whole verse runs thus in the Targum: "This day we perceive that the Schechinah (or Divine Majesty) is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Word of the Lord; whereby you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Word of the Lord."

Ver. 32. *And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead,* &c.] Under Reuben and Gad the half tribe of Manasseh is included, both here and ver. 25. 32, 33. as under the *land of Gilead* is included the whole country of these tribes. The LXX. thought good to add here (and in all those verses) expressly, *and the half tribe of Manasseh;* though not in the Hebrew.

And brought them word again.] Informed them how they found things among their brethren.

Ver. 33. *And the thing pleased the children of Israel.*] They were satisfied in the account they gave them; and approved of what their brethren had done.

And they blessed God.] As Phinehas had done, that their brethren had not offended the Divine Majesty as they suspected.

And did not intend to go up against them in battle.] Laid aside that intention (which was in their mind, ver. 12.) and pursued it no further.

To destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and the children of Gad dwelt.] For so they thought they were bound to do by the command, Deut. xiii. 12, &c. which extended to a whole country, as well as a city.

Ver. 34. *And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, called the altar Ed.*] That is, *a witness;* for the reason following.

For it shall be a witness between us, that the Lord is God.] That we own no other God but Jehovah, and him only will we worship, as he hath commanded. So the LXX. ὅτι Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς αὐτῶν ἐστι, *that the Lord is their God.*

In all this whole relation from ver. 10. to the end of the chapter, there being no mention of Joshua, who is not once named, either as sending these ambassadors, or receiving the report which they brought back, some have thence entertained a conceit, that Joshua was dead before this happened; and consequently, that he could not be the author of this book. But it is manifest such persons have a great desire to weaken the authority of these holy books, or else they would not draw such consequences from such frivolous observations. For it is evident, that all this came to pass not long after Joshua had dismissed these tribes, with good counsel, and with his blessing: for they returning immediately after this to their own country, went no further than Jordan before they erected this altar; upon which those great persons went to expostulate with them, and heard their apology, and came back and reported it. All this is told in one continued and coherent history (as it were with one breath), without the least signification of any considerable time that passed between one part of it and the other. And the LXX. were so well satisfied of

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this, that they took the answer of the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites to have been brought to Joshua; for they say he imposed the name of *Ed* upon the altar. So their words are in the Vatican edition, which is most common among us, Καὶ ἐπωνόμασεν ὁ Ιησοὺς τὸν βωμὸν, &c.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, a long time after, that the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about.*] Some take it to have been fourteen years after their conquest of the country, (xi. 23.) and seven years after the division of it. (See xiv. 10.)

That Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.] This was said of him before the land was divided, (xiii. 1.) and a portion thereof given unto him: where he built a city; which took up so much time, that probably he was now in the last year of his life.

Ver. 2. *And Joshua called for all Israel.*] Sent out a summons to them to come to him at Timnath-serah, where he lived, as the Jews will have it; but rather to Shiloh, where they might appear before God, as well as before him, and have the greater regard to his words.

And for their elders, &c.] The word *and* is not in the Hebrew text, and therefore these words are an explication of what he means by *all Israel:* not all the people (who could not, without great inconvenience, come thither, and could not all hear him if they did), but their elders; that is, the great Sanhedrin, as they were called in future times; and *for their heads,* that is of their tribes and families; and *for their judges,* who were settled in all the lesser cities; and *for their officers,* who attended upon the judges to execute their sentence.

And said unto them, I am old and stricken in age.] He would make them sensible that this might be the last time he should be able to speak to them, which might move them to give greater attention unto what he said.

Ver. 3. *And ye have seen.*] Or rather, *behold, ye have seen;* for so the particle *ve* (which we translate *and*) sometimes signifies: Gen. xxiv. 31. "Behold, I have prepared the house," &c.

All that the Lord hath done unto all these nations, because of you.] For your sake; that he might make room for you in their country, by expelling them out of it.

For the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you.] See chap. i. 9. xi. 8. 10. 42. xi. 6. The Targum here saith, (as in x. 42.) *The Lord your God, his Word fought for you.* (See xiv. 12.)

Ver. 4. *Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.*] The meaning is, he had divided among them the whole land of Canaan, from Jordan in the east to the Mediterranean in the west; as well that part of the land which remained still unconquered, as that out of which they had expelled the ancient inhabitants.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord your God he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight,* &c.] This relates unto those who *remained* unsubdued (mentioned in the beginning of the foregoing verse), whom they should undoubtedly conquer and possess their country, if they adhered to God in faithful obedience, as he exhorts them in the following part of this chapter.

Ver. 6. *Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do.*] Or (as it may be translated), *by observing and doing.*

All that is written in the book of the law of Moses.] Which was the condition upon which God promised to continue them in the possession of this land. By this it is evident, that the book of the law of Moses was extant in those days, and that the people read it.

That ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left.] See upon Deut. v. 32.

Ver. 7. *That ye come not among these nations, these that remain amongst you.*] Have no familiarity with them, especially by marriage.

Neither make mention of the name of their gods.] With any sort of respect to them. (See Exod. xxiii. 13. and Deut. xii. 3.)

Nor cause to swear by them.] Not make a gentile swear by the name of his god; which was utterly unlawful, as Selden observes out of Maimonides in Avoda Zara. (See lib. ii. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 13.) For this was to suppose they had knowledge of men's thoughts, and power to punish those that forsware themselves. And the forbidding this was also to secure them from making leagues and covenants with the gentiles, which they would not look upon as binding without an oath.

Neither serve them.] By offering sacrifices, or praying, or making vows to them, though never so secretly.

Nor bow yourselves to them.] As all inward reverence, so all outward respect likewise was forbidden to be paid to them, especially open and public acts of worship. Interpreters here observe a gradation, from familiarity with them to the most gross idolatry, in which their friendship with these people concluded.

Ver. 8. *But cleave unto the Lord your God, as you have done unto this day.*] A remarkable instance of which they had all lately given, when the nine tribes and half were so unanimously resolved to punish idolatry, with the extirpation of those that were guilty of it, (xxii. 33.) and the other also most zealously disclaimed all inclinations to it, (ver. 22. 29.)

Ver. 9. *For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations, and strong.*] The seven nations of Canaan, who dwelt in strong cities, and brought mighty armies against them, with horses and chariots, and were some of them gigantic persons, (xi. 4. 22.)

But as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.] None that gave them battle; though from some of their strong cities they had not yet driven them. (See xxi. 44.)

Ver. 10. *One man of you shall chase a thousand.*] He gives them hope of a good success for the future, as they had hitherto. (Lev. xxvi. 8.)

For the Lord your God is he that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.] But he would not have them ascribe it to their own courage, but to the Divine power, (Deut. xxxii. 30.) Here again the Targum hath it, *the Word of the Lord,* &c. as ver. 3.

Ver. 11. *Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God.*] It highly, therefore, concerned them to keep close to the worship and service of God alone,

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with sincere love to him; since all their happiness depended upon his favour to them; for that this is meant by *loving* God, appears from the following verse; and from Deut. vi. 4, 5. x. 12. xi. 22.

Ver. 12. *Else if you do in any wise go back.*] From God, and fall to idolatry.

And cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you.] Embrace their errors, as the Vulgar translates it; which they might easily do by making friendship with them, as the phrase properly signifies.

And shall make marriages with them.] Which was the effect of their familiarity with them.

And go in unto them, and they to you.] The same thing that was said before in other words, which only signify the consummation of marriage; which was strictly forbidden them, Exod. xxiii. 32. xxxiv. 12. 15, 16. Deut. vii. 3.

Ver. 13. *Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you.*] As he had hitherto done, and promised still to do, if they would be obedient, (ver. 8, 9.) The Targum saith, *The Word of the Lord will no more drive*, &c.

But they shall be snares and traps unto you.] Remain in the land to inveigle and seduce them into further impiety. (See Exod. xxxiv. 12. Deut. vii. 4. 16.)

And scourges in your sides.] Bring sore chastisements upon them; for this alludes to the lashes that were given offenders upon their sides, (Ecclus. xxx. 12. xlii. 5.)

And thorns in your eyes.] Most grievously afflict them. (See Numb. xxxiii. 55.)

Until ye perish from off this good land, which the Lord your God hath given you.] For, with the love and favour of God, they forfeited also their inheritance which he had bestowed on them.

Ver. 14. *Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth.*] Shall die shortly, as all men must one time or other; therefore hearken to the words of a dying man.

And ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls.] Are all fully convinced.

That not one thing hath failed, of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, &c.] See upon xxi. 45. And God was as good as his word ever after, as Solomon acknowledges, 1 Kings viii. 56.

Ver. 15. *Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you which the Lord your God promised you, so shall the Lord.*] When he ceased to be *their God.*

Bring upon you all evil things, &c.] According to what Moses had predicted at large, Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii. In my annotations upon which last chapter, I have demonstrated, that not one thing hath failed of all the threatenings there mentioned, but all literally fulfilled to a tittle: for God's faithfulness is no less visible in fulfilling his threatenings than his promises.

Ver. 16. *When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods*, &c.] This was the principal thing in the covenant, that they should have no other gods but him alone; as I have observed from a great number of places in the book of Deuteronomy.

Then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you; and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.] See Deut. xxviii. 20.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *AND Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel.*] It is likely that Joshua, living longer than he expected when he made the foregoing speech to them, called the people together once more, to give them good advice before he died; as Moses made a great many speeches to them (I observed upon the book of Deuteronomy) before his departure from them: or, perhaps, it was the usual custom of Joshua to take occasion often to call them together, and put them in mind of their duty. And these two exhortations, which he made to them in the latter end of his life, he thought fit to record.

To Shechem.] Some will have this place to be the same with Shiloh, called here Shechem, because it was in the country of Shechem, and not far from it. The LXX. also call it Σηλώ, both here and ver. 25. It is plain also, by the latter end of the verse, that they assembled there where God dwelt, which was in Shiloh: yet all this is not sufficient to make us think they were not summoned to the city called Shechem: for there is no good reason for calling Shiloh by this name, it being (as St. Jerome saith) ten miles from Shechem: and all other copies of the LXX. but the Vatican, having Συχὲμ, not Σηλώ. And as for their appearing before God at this place, I shall give an account of it in the end of this verse; and now only say, that it is likely Joshua, who was the supreme governor of God's people, being old and infirm, caused the ark, for this time, to be brought to Shechem, being near to him, that he might renew the covenant with the people in that place where Abraham first settled, when he came into the land of Canaan, and where he built an altar, and God established his covenant with him, (Gen. xii. 6, 7.) and where the patriarchs were buried, (Acts vii. 15, 16.) and where he was about to lay the bones of Joseph (ver. 32. of this chapter), and where the Israelites, at their first entrance into Canaan, renewed their covenant with God, (Josh. viii. 30, &c.) For Ebal and Gerzim were hard by Shechem.

And called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers.] The same persons mentioned xxiii. 2. Which places give us a distinct account of the persons concerned in the government of the Israelites; as Const. L'Empereur observes, in his annotations upon Bertram de Repub. Judaica, p. 362. 395, 396.

And they presented themselves before God.] At his tabernacle; which was, as I said, for the present brought hither. For it is plain, as Cornel. Bertram observes, (L. de Republ. Judaica, cap. 15. p. 249.) the kings or chief rulers of Israel had a power to carry the ark from the place of its constant residence when there was a great occasion for it, (1 Sam. iv. 3, 4. 2 Sam. xv. 24.) And now, at this great assembly of the whole nation by their representatives, there was a just reason for its being brought hither (seeing Joshua could not conveniently, by reason of his great old age, go to Shiloh), that it might be a more solemn meeting, being held in the presence of God. Mr. Mede hath another notion of this matter; for he thinks that there was a *proseucha*, or *praying-place*, erected by the Israelites (at least by the Ephraimites, in whose lot Shechem was) after they had subdued the country, that they might resort hither to call upon God, when they were not able to go as far as

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the tabernacle. Many such places he makes account there were; of which see more on ver. 26.

Ver. 2. *And Joshua said unto all the people.*] That were there present, *viz.* the elders, heads, judges, and officers, mentioned in the foregoing verse, who were to report his words to all the people.

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel.] This is an argument that Joshua spake all that follows by a Divine impulse; for he begins his speech in the solemn form used by the prophets *(thus saith the Lord)* and introduces God himself speaking in his own person. From whence it may be inferred he was a prophet, as well as the ruler of God's people.

Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood.] That is, of the river Euphrates.

In old time.] A long time before they came from Ur of the Chaldees into Haran, (Gen. xi. 28. 31.)

Even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor.] These were Terah's two eldest sons, (Gen. xi. 26.)

And they served other gods.] All agree that Terah was an idolater living in that country, from whence, as many think, idolatry first came, (Gen. xxxi. 19.) The Jews, in Schalsch. Hakkabala, say he was a priest: see Hottinger in his Smegma Orientale, cap. 8. p. 290. Others of them say, he was a statuary, who made images of several materials, λέγων τούτους εἶναι θεούς, *saying, These were gods;* as Suidas speaks, who, together with Epiphanius, is of this opinion. (See Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 5.) Abraham himself also, most agree, was bred up in the same idolatry; though some few deny it; as Hottinger observes in the same place; where he alleges the words of Maimonides, who saith, He was converted to the worship of the Creator of all, in the forty-eighth year of his age; and that his father Terah also repented, and worshipped the true and only God. (See upon Gen. xi. 31.)

Ver. 3. *And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood.*] From that idolatrous country where he was born and educated. Which is mentioned as a singular obligation upon the Israelites to adhere unto God, who singled out the father of their families, so many ages ago, to be his worshipper. This Maimonides, having occasion to mention these words of Joshua, represents in very pathetical expressions: "How great is the benefit (saith he) that we receive by these precepts, which have freed us from such a grand error in which our father was educated, and converted us to the true belief of God? by teaching us that he created all things, and that he is to be worshipped, and loved, and feared, and he only; and that there is no great labour required to do his will, but only the love and fear of him, in which two all his worship is perfected," &c. (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 29.)

And led him.] From Charran, after his father's death.

Throughout all the land of Canaan.] Till he came to Shechem (where the Israelites now were assembled), and so to Beth-el; and so on still towards the south of the land of Canaan, (Gen. xii. 6. 8, 9.)

And multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.] In order to the fulfilling of his promise, (Gen. xv. 5.) he bestowed a son upon him, when he was a hundred years old, (Gen. xxi. 1, 2, &c.)

Ver. 4. *And I gave unto Isaac, Jacob and Esau.*] Who had a very numerous issue, (Gen. xxv. 24, &c.)

And I gave unto Esau, Mount Seir to possess it.] He and his brother being grown so rich, and their cattle so increased, that there was not room for them both in the land of Canaan, where they sojourned, (Gen. xxxvi. 6—8.)

And Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.] Though Esau left the land of Canaan entirely to him, yet the time was not come when God intended to plant his posterity in it; but they were forced to go down into Egypt, where they suffered a cruel bondage, (Gen. xlvi. 6. Exod. i. 11, &c.) So the LXX. explain it.

Ver. 5. *I sent Moses also, and Aaron.*] And when they were multiplied exceedingly, (Exod. i. 7. 14. 20.) these two great persons were sent to deliver them from that bondage, (Exod. iii. 10. iv. 14.)

And I plagued Egypt, according to that I did amongst them.] Smote it with those signs (as the LXX. explain it) which are related in that book of Exodus.

And afterward I brought you out.] By those wonderful plagues they were, at last, constrained to let the Israelites depart, as they desired, (Exod. xii. 31, &c.)

Ver. 6. *And I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came unto the sea.*] When he had brought them out (as is related Exod. xii. 40.) they were led by God through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, (Exod. xiii. 18.) by which they encamped, and were in very great straits, (xiv. 9.)

And the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen into the Red Sea.] Imagining them to be in such difficulties, that they could not escape out of their hand, (Exod. xiv. 3.)

Ver. 7. *And when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians.*] So that when they had overtaken them, they could not see where they were, (Exod. xiv. 10. 19, 20.)

And brought the sea upon them, and covered them.] Insomuch, that they marched after them into the sea, where they were overwhelmed, (Exod. xiv. 27, 28.)

And your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt.] Or, *upon the Egyptians.* He appeals to them for the truth of this, who had seen them lie dead upon the sea-shore, (Exod. xiv. 30, 31.) For their elders, to whom he now speaks, (ver. 1.) were all then there: and now not only men of great dignity, but (many of them at least) of great age.

And ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.] Forty years, Numb. xiv. 33. where he gave them a law, and fed them miraculously, &c.

Ver. 8. *And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan.*] Towards the latter end of that time, (Numb. xxi. 20, 21.)

And they fought with you, and I gave them into your hand, &c.] See there, ver. 23, 24. 33, &c.

Ver. 9. *Then Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose, and warred against Israel.*] He did not actually draw out his forces, and fall upon them, but he prepared them and made them ready, with an intention to drive them from his coast, if Balaam could have disabled them by his curses; which sufficiently appears from Numb. xxii. 11. David Camius therefore notes pertinently, "the design or contrivance is reputed the work itself."

And sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you.] See Numb. xxii. 5, 6, &c.

Ver. 10. *But the Lord would not hearken unto Balaam.*]

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Who had a great inclination to do what Balak desired; and one would think by this, begged of God to give him leave to use his arts to do the Israelites mischief: and when this was denied him, yet obtaining licence to go to the king of Moab, he went with these intentions, and with hope he might prevail with God to suffer him to prosecute his design, (Numb. xxii. 32.)

Therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand.] He all along pronounced nothing but blessings on them, instead of curses, notwithstanding all the attempts that were made to the contrary, Numb. xxiii. and xxiv. Which was to be ascribed to the overruling power of God, who hindered him from hurting them.

Ver. 11. *And ye went over Jordan.*] Having vanquished the two kings of the Amorites on the other side of it, and got quit of all other enemies (the Moabites and Midianites), God in a wonderful manner brought them into Canaan, by drying up the river Jordan to give them a passage over it.

And came unto Jericho.] Which was the first place they besieged, being the nearest city to Jordan.

And the men of Jericho fought against you.] We do not read of any sallies they made upon the Israelites; but they shutting their gates, to defend the city against them, it is likely, flung stones from their wall upon them.

The Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.] After which, it appears by this book, that they fought with all the seven nations of Canaan; who engaged them in several bodies, and at several times: which was done so lately, that there was no need he should repeat all the particulars mentioned in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth chapters. But by the division of their land among the Israelites, it was very well known to them, that (as this verse concludes) *God had delivered them into their hands.* It is observable, that the Girgashites are here particularly mentioned, as fighting against Israel with the rest of the seven nations; which makes Grotius's observation doubtful, of their surrender at Joshua's first summons; (see xvi. 10.) but if that be not true, it is manifest some of them remained unsubdued, and had a settlement in Canaan in our Saviour's days: when we read of the country of the Gergesens, the inhabitants of which were not Jews, as appears by their breeding swine. (See Constant. L'Empereur in his annotations on Bava-kama, p. 180.)

Ver. 12. *And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you.*] This may signify, either that before the Israelites came into those parts, God sent hornets, which so infested them, that many of them were forced to leave their country, and flee into other places; or, that when they came to give them battle, these hornets made such assaults upon them, as facilitated the victory. This God promised in Exod. xxiii. 27, 28. Deut. vii. 20. and here Joshua remembers how true he was to his word. The Book of Wisdom calls them προδρόμους, the *forerunners* of God's host; and Kimchi saith, they flew in the eyes of the Canaanites, and made them so blind, that they could not see to fight.

Even the two kings of the Amorites.] Sihon and Og, whose country was first infested with them; and afterward the kings of Canaan, and their people, felt their fury: for this is a short expression, like that which I observed xxii. 10.

But not with thy sword, or with thy bow.] These swarms of hornets, it seems, did greater execution than the armies of the Israelites. We do not read of their assaulting the Canaanites in any of the battles that Joshua fought with them; for he did not think fit to mention it particularly in the foregoing account of his victory, but now in general, when he was to sum up all the mercies of God to them.

Ver. 13. *And I have given you a land for which you did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them.*] As Joshua had observed before, (xi. 13.)

Of the vineyards and olive-yards which ye planted not do ye eat.] According to his promise, Deut. vi. 10, 11.

Ver. 14. *Now therefore fear the Lord.*] The fear of God commonly signifies his worship and service, unto which he exhorts them in the following words: which seem to relate to all outward acts of worship; as this to the inward reverence they owed to him in their minds, as the only God.

And serve him in sincerity and truth.] Worship no other God together with him, nor mix any idolatrous rites with those prescribed by him; but serve him constantly and purely according to his law, *which is the truth,* (Psal. cxix. 142.)

And put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood.] See ver. 2. This intimates, that there were now some idolaters among them, though secretly in private, and not openly; for they had lately expressed so unanimously such a zeal against any appearance of idolatry, that one cannot think there was any known worshipper of other gods now in the nation.

And in Egypt.] Where they began to be corrupted in their religion, as is often suggested by the prophet Ezekiel, xx. 6—8. 18. xxiii. 3. 8. 19. 21. 27.

And serve ye the Lord.] He repeats it again, as a thing of the greatest moment, that they should worship the Lord alone.

Ver. 15. *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve.*] He could not think they would turn atheists, and have no God at all; and he was unwilling to suppose that they would prefer any other god to him, who had obliged them by such benefits as are beforementioned: which he expresses in this rhetorical form of speech; which is as much as if he had said, If you like not the Lord's service, tell me whom ye will serve? Where do you hope to find a God comparable to him?

Whether the gods that your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood.] That had some colour for it, because of its antiquity; but was condemned by Abraham their father, who forsook that religion, and was blessed for it by God with the inheritance he had now given them in the land of Canaan.

Or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell.] That was so absurd, as to need no confutation; for those gods could not defend their servants that worshipped them.

But as for me, I and my house, we will serve the Lord.] He declares his firm resolution (let them take what course they pleased), together with his whole family (as far as he could oblige them), to worship the Lord alone.

Ver. 16. *And the people answered and said.*] All the elders and others there present, and all those to whom they reported what Joshua had said, made this answer.

God forbid that we should forsake the Lord.] The He-

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brew word *Chalila* (which we translate *God forbid*) imports a great abhorrence and abomination of that which is mentioned with it.

To serve other gods.] Which they now looked upon as the greatest madness.

Ver. 17. *For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight,* &c.] They gave such powerful reasons why they should serve none but the Lord alone; that if they had always preserved them as fresh in their minds as they were now, they could never have gone after other gods.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord drave out from before us all the people.*] That is, of Canaan.

Even the Amorites which dwelt in the land.] In the Hebrew, *and the Amorites;* that is, together with the two kings of the Amorites, whom they had driven before out of the land on the other side of Jordan.

Therefore will we also serve the Lord.] Follow the example of Joshua, their leader, (ver. 15.)

For he is our God.] As they were convinced by their wonderful deliverance out of Egypt; all the great signs he wrought there, and after they came from thence; and the care he took of them in the wilderness, and all other places; and now by their late victories over most potent enemies, whom he had driven out of their country, and put the Israelites in possession of it.

Ver. 19. *And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord.*] This is far from signifying an utter impossibility of it; (for that would have contradicted his exhortation, ver. 14.) but that they were so very prone to idolatry, that they would not be able to persevere steadfast in their resolution, unless they took care constantly to reflect upon, and lay to heart, what they had now acknowledged, (ver. 17, 18.) which he was afraid they would not do.

For he is a holy God, he is a jealous God.] Who, having no equal (that is meant by *holy*), will endure no rival; and therefore they who communicated the worship proper to him, unto any other besides him, or with him, were deemed to deny his incomparable sanctity, and said in Scripture to *profane* his holy name, as Mr. Mede observes, (see book i. disc. 2.) It is a just remark which Mr. Alix here makes, in his excellent book of the Judgment of the Jewish Church against the Unitarians, chap. ix. that here is a plain idea of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, the words in the Hebrew being, *he is the holy Gods;* like that Eccles. xii. 1, *Remember thy Creators.* And, indeed, this is a place anciently noted by the Christian doctors (whom the Jews call heretics), who asked R. Samlai, as the Jews themselves tell us, what he had to answer unto these words, Ye cannot serve the Lord, *Ki Elohim Kedoshim Hu, because he is the holy Gods?* Who had nothing to reply, but that Joshua doth not say, *They are the holy Gods,* but *He is the holy Gods.* Which is the very same that we affirm, that he is Three in One. This is in Bereschith Rabba, mentioned by Raymond in his Pugio Fidei, and by J. Wagenseil, in his confutation of Lipman's Carmen Memoriale, p. 129.

He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.] But make those who assume any other deity into fellowship with him in worship, feel how he resents such dishonour done to his Divine Majesty.

Ver. 20. *If you forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods.*] Either the gods of the Amorites, beforementioned, or those that their fathers anciently served.

Then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.] Alter the course of his providence towards you, and send as many curses upon you as he hath done blessings; according to the prediction of Moses in Deut. xxviii. 63.

Ver. 21. *And the people said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve the Lord.*] They desire him to entertain a better opinion of them; for they persist in their well-grounded resolution, (ver. 16—18.)

Ver. 22. *And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him.*] This solemn profession, which they had thus deliberately and publicly made, he tells them, would testify against them, and condemn them, if they proved false to God.

And they said, We are witnesses.] Here they renew that choice of God for their king, which their forefathers made when they came out of Egypt (in the nineteenth and twenty-fourth chapters of Exodus), and acknowledged they should be self-condemned if they did not make it good.

Ver. 23. *Now therefore put away (said he) the strange gods that are among you.*] See ver. 14. This is an argument that he was a prophet, as I said upon ver. 2. that he saw their inward disposition, and the secret affection they had to idols. For though there was no public idol worshipped, yet he knew, by the spirit of propheey, that they had their *penates* (as the Romans called them), *household gods;* or, rather, gods which they worshipped secretly in their closets, as our Dr. Spencer observes, lib. iii. dissert. 1. cap. 3. These being the very same words which Jacob used to his household, when he suspected them of the same crime, though there was no open idolatry practised among them, (Gen. xxxv. 2.)

And incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel.] Settle your affection upon the Lord alone, who you profess is your sovereign, to whom the whole nation hath infinite obligations, (ver. 16—18.)

Ver. 24. *And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice we will obey.*] They repeat their professed resolution a third time, which made it more binding; and a stronger witness against them, if they forsook the Lord.

Ver. 25. *So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day.*] Engaged them to make good this solemn profession, by renewing the covenant they had formerly entered into, both in the time of Moses, and in his time: wherein they promised to worship him alone, and be obedient to him; and he promised to do for them as he had formerly done; that is, be their constant protector and benefactor. There are those who think this covenant was now established by sacrifice, as it was when they came out of Egypt, (Exod. xxiv. 4, 5.) and when they came into Canaan, (Josh. viii. 31.) But, as there is no mention of an altar, or any offering, so it is not likely that Joshua would offer any sacrifice but in the place which God had chosen, which was Shiloh: for though we suppose the sanctuary to have been brought hither for a little time, yet it was not the settled place of the Divine residence.

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And set them a statute and an ordinance.] It is commonly interpreted, that he propounded to them in brief the precepts of the law; which are the conditions of the covenant: but it may be expounded, that he enacted this covenant to have the force of a statute and ordinance, or judgment, as it is in the Hebrew.

In Shechem.] So that it was called hereafter the covenant or statute in Shechem, where they all made repeated professions of love to God.

Ver. 26. *And Joshua wrote these words.*] From whence, as I observed in the preface, the Talmudists gather Joshua to have been the author of this book. As if these words signified, that he, after the example of Moses, committed to writing all that we read in this book, and added it at the end of the five books written by Moses, as it is now annexed to them. But it must be confessed, that one cannot certainly infer more from these words than that he wrote the words of the foregoing covenant; and this he did, as it here follows, in the very book of the law of God, that it might be preserved in everlasting remembrance.

In the book of the law of God.] Which was laid up by Moses's order, in the side of the ark, (Deut. xxxi. 24—26.) From whence he took it, and wrote in it all that had passed between him and the people, that they might look upon this as a sacred transaction, as indeed it was, and most carefully observe it: and perhaps he wrote it also in that copy of the law of God, which the princes had for the use of every tribe. (See upon Deut. xxxi. 9.)

And took a great stone, and set it up there.] As a monument of the covenant now made. Which was an ancient way of preserving the memory of things past, as appears by what Jacob did, Gen. xxviii. 18. and they themselves had lately done, iv. 3. 20, 21, &c. Upon this stone, it is probable, there was an inscription, signifying what it meant.

Under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord.] This is one argument Mr. Mede uses (in the place I mentioned upon ver. 1.) to prove that the sanctuary, properly so called, cannot be here meant, because it was unlawful to plant any trees near it, (Deut. xvi. 21, 22.) and therefore he understands hereby a *proseucha*, or *praying-place*, which, in memory of Jacob, was here at Shechem. And he doth plainly shew, there were both such places, and also synagogues, in several parts of the country; the former being in the fields, open on the top; the latter in cities, covered as our houses are. And I may add, that we do read of sanctuaries, in the plural number, that were among them in aftertimes, (Amos vii. 9.) Yet it must be acknowledged, that the argument he uses from the place I mentioned in Deuteronomy is not cogent: for though they be prohibited there to plant a grove of any trees near God's altar, after the manner of the gentiles, this did not make it unlawful to set up the sanctuary under a tree that had been planted before; especially when it was done only for a short time, and not to make it the settled place for its constant abode.

But there are those who avoid this seeming difficulty, by referring these words, *in the sanctuary of the Lord* (as they may be translated), not to the *oak*, but to the words going before, *the book of the law of God;* which was in the sanctuary. And thus, it is certain, words are sometimes to be connected, not with those immediately preceding, but with those which are more remote. A notable instance of which we have in Gen. xiii. 10. where those words in the end of the verse, *As thou comest unto Zoar*, cannot be joined to *the land of Egypt*, just beforementioned, but to *the plain of Jordan*, in the very beginning of the verse.

Ver. 27. *And Joshua said unto all the people, This stone shall be a witness unto us.*] As Laban said concerning the heap of stones which he and Jacob raised, (Gen. xxxi. 48. 51, 52.)

For it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us.] All those speeches which had been delivered by Joshua in the name of God, (ver. 2, 3, &c.) and all that the Israelites had answered to him: that is, the covenant between God and them; which being renewed before this stone, it is said, by an elegant figure, to have *heard* what was spoken; because it would remain to testify and declare to all posterity the engagements that lay upon them. Thus the prophet calls to all creatures, *Hear, O heaven*, &c.

It shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.] To accuse them; as much as if it had *heard* what they said, and could *speak* against them.

Ver. 28. *And so Joshua let the people depart, every one unto his inheritance.*] And the sanctuary of the Lord returned to its settled place, which was in Shiloh.

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass, that after these things.*] Not long after, in all probability.

Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died.] Leaving this honourable character behind him, which Moses also had, that he had served the Lord faithfully.

Being a hundred and ten years old.] Of the same age with Joseph. How many of these years he spent in Canaan, as the chief ruler of God's people, men's opinions are very widely different: for some say he lived twenty and eight years after they came over Jordan (which is the opinion of the Jews in Seder Olam); though others will not allow so much as the odd eight years, but say it was only seven. There is a middle opinion maintained by others, that he was their governor seventeen years. (See Bonfrerius.)

Ver. 30. *And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah.*] Called in Judg. ii. 9. *Timneth-heres;* because of the image of the sun engraven on his sepulchre, in memory of that famous day, when the sun stood still till he had completed his victory. (Chap. x.) So several of the Jewish authors say, particularly he who wrote the book put out by Hottinger, under the title of Cippi Hebraici, p. 32. where he saith, his father Nun was buried here, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh. (See also his Smegma Orientale, cap. 8. p. 523.) And thus Tully saith, a sphere and a cylinder were put upon the tomb of Archimedes.

On the north side of the hill Gaash.] So called, as the Jews fable, because it trembled and quaked, at the burial of Joshua, whose death the people did not enough bewail. Which fancy, it is likely, came into their head, because there is no mention here of any days of mourning for him, as there were for Aaron and Moses. In which St. Jerome and other of the fathers think there is a mystery; *viz.* that under the law, when the kingdom of heaven was not yet opened, they had reason to mourn and weep for the death of their friends; but under the gospel, wherein is revealed by the Lord Jesus (of whom Joshua was a figure) the

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wonderful love of God to men, &c. there is no reason for mourning and lamentation, but rather for rejoicing.

Of this hill, see Const. L'Empereur upon Benjamin's Itinerarium, who calls Montpelier by this name of Har-Gaash, the trembling hill, p. 142, 143.

Ver. 31. *And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua.*] No idolatry appeared among them publicly while he lived, (whatsoever private superstition might be practised, ver. 14. 23.) for all that wicked generation which came out of Egypt (except the younger sort) were consumed in the wilderness, before Joshua took the conduct of them. And God kept them there so many years, as wasted them also, for this reason, among others, that they might forget the idolatrous custom of Egypt, unto which it early appeared, by their making the golden calf, they were strongly inclined. Thus St. Chrysostom discourses: (lib. i. advers. Vitæ Monast. vituper.) God, saith he, that the children of Israel might unlearn the evil customs of Egypt, brought them καταμόνας ἐπὶ τῆς ἐρημίας, *to lead a solitary life in the wilderness*, forming their minds, as in a monastery, far from those who had corrupted them. And he destroyed there all the elder sort, that none might enter into Palestine, but they who had not seen the superstitious impieties of the Egyptians, καὶ μηδένα διδάσκαλον ἔχειν τῆς τοσαύτης πονηρίας, *and that they might have no master left among them to teach them such kind of wickedness.*

And all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had seen all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.] These elders had been chosen by Moses, who knew them to be men of great piety; that had not only seen, but observed and kept in mind all God's wonderful works; and would put others in mind of them, and teach them to serve and obey the Lord.

From this place the Jews labour to establish all their oral traditions; which Moses, say they, delivered to Joshua, and he to these elders, and they to the prophets, and they to others, (see Maimonides in Seder Zeraim, set forth by our most learned Dr. Pocock, p. 34.) for which there is no foundation.

Ver. 32. *And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought out of Egypt.*] It is a needless pains which the Jews bestow in reconciling this place with Exod. xiii. 19. where it is said, *Moses took the bones of Joseph with him.* For there is no contradiction between these two places, the children of Israel doing what Moses required them to do; who could not carry them away himself, but saw them brought out of Egypt. Yet thus they gravely discourse about this matter in the Talmud: (tit. Sota, cap. 1. sect. 47.) "When any one begins a thing, but doth not bring it to perfection, and another comes and finishes it, the Scripture speaks of him who completes it, as if he alone had done it."

Buried they in Shechem.] Which was one reason, perhaps, for gathering the great assembly abovementioned, that they might the more solemnly deposit the bones of this great man, in that portion of land which his father Jacob had given him; see Gen. xlviii. 22. where it seems they thought it most agreeable to lay him, rather than in the cave of Machpelah. It may be reasonably thought, also, that the bodies of the rest of the sons of Jacob, from whom the twelve tribes descended, were brought into Canaan, to be there interred, as Josephus relates from ancient tradition, lib. ii. Antiq. cap. 4. And St. Stephen confirms it, Acts vii. 16. For though Joseph excelled them all in dignity, and gave this special charge about his body, yet, no doubt, every tribe had as great a regard to the head of it, and would be inclined to do the same for their fathers that Joseph desired for himself. But whether they buried them in the sepulchre at Machpelah, or in some eminent place in their own tribe, as Joseph was, there is none that gives us any account.

In a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of silver.] See Gen. xxxiii. 18, 19. This shews they did not bury him in the city of Shechem, but in a field near it, which was his own ground: for so the ancient manner was, not to bury in cities and towns, but in the adjacent fields or gardens.

And it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.] Of the Ephraimites, who gave Shechem to the Levites for a city of refuge, (xxi. 20, 21.)

Ver. 33. *And Eleazar the son of Aaron died.*] Who imitated Joshua (if we may believe the Samaritan Chronicle), in calling all the elders and princes of the tribes to him before he died, charging them strictly to obey all the commands of God. After which he put off his sacred garments, and clothed his son Phinehas with them. This is so far from being improbable, that it is likely all the elders did the same, as far as their authority could reach; being very desirous their posterity might continue firm and steadfast in the worship of God alone.

And they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son.] In the Hebrew the words are, *in the hill of Phinehas;* that is, a hill called by his name. It being the manner, as I have noted elsewhere, to call places by the name of their eldest son.

Which was given him in Mount Ephraim.] It is a question to whom this hill was given: most probable to Eleazar, who, being the high-priest at the time of the division of the land, they thought fit to give him a peculiar portion, distinct from all the cities of the priests; none of which were in the tribe of Ephraim, but all in the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, as we read xxi. 9. 17. 19. And they gave it Eleazar in this country, that he might be near to the tabernacle (which was in Shiloh), and near to Joshua, to be ready on all occasions to advise him, and consult the oracle for him. But against this there lies a great objection, that no Levite or priest was to have any portion in the division of the land: and therefore it is the most received opinion among the Jews, that either Eleazar or Phinehas had this inheritance in the right of his wife. So the Gemara Babylonica on Bava Bathra, and a great many others, mentioned by Mr. Selden, in his book de Successionibus ad Leges Hebr. cap. 18. where he observes another example of this *marital succession*, as he calls it; that is, the husband succeeding his wife in her estate after her death, in 1 Chron. ii. 21. where the twenty-three cities which Jair possessed, Kimchi saith he had by his wife.

These five last verses, it is evident, were not written by Joshua: but this is no argument he did not write this book; no more than that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, because there is the like account given of his death

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and burial in the conclusion of it, by some other author. (See Deut. xxxiv. 1.) The Talmudists, I observed, say, in Bava Bathra, that Joshua wrote his own book, and the eight last verses of the Pentateuch. And they say in the same place, (cap. 1.) as to what is written here, ver. 29. it was done by Eleazar; and what is said, ver. 33. it was wrote by Phinehas: or rather, these five verses, from 29. to the end, were written by Samuel; who, being a prophet, was moved and directed by God to continue the history of this people from the death of Joshua to his own time.

THE

BOOK OF JUDGES.

THIS book is called by the name of SHOPHETIM, or JUDGES, because it treats principally of the great things done by those illustrious persons, who were raised up by God, upon special occasions, after the death of Joshua, till the time of making a king, to judge, that is, to rule the people of Israel, and to deliver them from their oppressions. It consists of two parts; the one containing the history of the Judges, from Othniel to Samson, which ends with the sixteenth chapter (the history of the two last judges, Eli and Samuel, being not recorded here, but in the following book); the other containing several memorable actions, which were performed in or about the time of the Judges; with which the holy writer would not interrupt their history, but reserved them to be related by themselves in the conclusion, *viz.* in the seventeenth, and the following chapters, unto the end of the book.

It is but conjectured who was the writer of it. Some think Ezra; but it is more probable the prophet Samuel, who was the last of the judges; and, by the direction of God, brought down their history unto his own days, when they desired a king to be set over them. The Talmudists, in Bava Bathra, (cap. 1.) are of this opinion; which Kimchi, Abarbinel, and other great authors follow. And, indeed, there is reason to think, that he who wrote the conclusion of the book of Joshua was the writer of this book also; in the second chapter of which he inserts part of that which is written there. And it is manifest it was written before the second book of Samuel, where mention is made of a passage in this book; which would not have been so commonly known, if it had not been published here, 2 Sam. xi. 21. out of Judg. ix. 53. David, also, in Psal. lxviii. 7, 8, seems to allude unto what we read in the song of Deborah, v. 4. (See Du Pin.) Certain it is, it was written before David's reign; for the Jebusites were possessed of Jerusalem when this author lived (ver. 21. of the first chapter), who were driven out of it by David, (2 Sam. v. 6.) and therefore this book was written before that; and is of wonderful use, as Procopius Gazæus observes, to represent unto us the mighty power of true religion to make a nation happy, and the dismal calamities which impiety brings upon it. And therefore, saith he, St. Paul thought fit to propound a great many examples to us out of this very book; such as Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthah, who did marvellous things by the power of faith.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *NOW after the death of Joshua.*] And of Eleazar, it is probable (for this book gives an account of what followed after those things that are mentioned in the foregoing), but how long after cannot be certainly determined: but we have reason to think it was not till they were multiplied so much, as to be able to people more of the country than they had yet in possession.

It came to pass, that the children of Israel.] There was no person appointed by Joshua to succeed him in the government, as he was appointed by Moses to be his successor; but the government was left in the hand of the elders. For it is a mere fiction which we meet withal in the Samaritan Chronicle, that at the last assembly (mentioned Joshua xxiv.) he chose twelve of the chief of the tribes, and cast lots which of them should hold his place when he died; and that the lot fell upon one whose name was Abel, and his nephew; to whom he assigned his authority, and set a crown upon his head. (See Hottinger, in his Smegma Orientale, cap. 8. p. 522.)

Asked the Lord, saying.] Inquired of him by *urim* and *thummim*, as the manner was in all cases that concerned the whole congregation of Israel. For which end, it is to be supposed, that some who represented the body of the people (their elders, perhaps, or heads of their tribes) were sent to Shiloh, where the sanctuary was, and desired Phinehas the high-priest to represent their case to God, and beseech his directions. Here the Jews raise a question, why we never read that Joshua, in all his wars, consulted God by the oracle, but the elders immediately after his death did. To this they give several answers. (See Numb. xxvii. 21.)

Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?] They being increased, as I said, to such a number, that they were able to people more of the country; and beginning to be straitened for want of room, thought of enlarging their possessions; but would not adventure without God's approbation and direction to do any thing: and therefore desired he would tell them who should make the first attempt; that the rest, being encouraged by their success (of which they did not doubt, if they had his warrant for what they did), might make the like. For it is evident by these words, *go up for us*, that all the tribes on this side Jordan were concerned in this matter.

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Ver. 2. *And the Lord said, Judah.*] *i. e.* The tribe of Judah, who were very populous, and no less valiant.

Shall go up.] And assault the mountainous country, which was the lot of this tribe. According to the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 9. where, comparing Judah to a lion's whelp, he saith, "From the prey, my son, thou art *gone up.*"

Behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.] That is, all the land belonging to their lot. By this it seems plain, that the answer by *urim* and *thummim* was given by a voice which uttered these words. Here Abarbinel endeavours to give satisfaction to the question beforementioned, why Joshua did not inquire in this manner, though it be expressly said, (Numb. xxvii. 21.) that "he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, and ask counsel of the Lord, after the judgment of *urim.*" He thinks he did so all the time after that, till Moses's death, to shew he was made the leader of God's people, for none but such could inquire by *urim:* but, after his death, he was endued with the spirit of prophecy, as Moses was, and so had no need to inquire in that manner, being immediately directed by God in his proceedings. But, after his death, there being none endued with the prophetical spirit, the children of Israel were constrained to have resort to this oracle. Which is an account very much below the judgment of so great a man; for Moses, being a prophet, did frequently ask counsel of God at the sanctuary, which was the same as if he had inquired by *urim.* Therefore the true answer is, that Joshua did thus inquire of the Lord in the case of Achan: and it is highly probable he did the same in the management of his war, and other great occasions, though it be not expressly mentioned in so many words.

Ver. 3. *And Judah said to Simeon his brother.*] They were brethren by the same father and mother; and also nearly joined in their situation, the lot of the tribe of Simeon being taken out of that of Judah, (Josh. xix. 9.)

Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites.] Which people, with the Perizzites (as is further declared in the next verse), still possessed a considerable part of the lot which fell to Judah.

And I likewise will go with thee into thy lot.] To drive them out of that part of the country which was the portion of Simeon.

So Simeon went with him.] They joined their forces together in this expedition, under the conduct, no doubt, of some eminent leader. And who so fit as Caleb? who, though an old man, was full of vigour, and fit for war, (as he himself declared not long ago, Josh. xiv. 10, 11.) and had not yet got possession (as appears by the sequel) of the portion which, by God's commandment, was assigned him.

Ver. 4. *And Judah went up.*] They were the principal persons concerned in this expedition, and therefore only mentioned, though the children of Simeon also went up with them.

And the Lord delivered.] We meet with no such religious expression (which occurs often here in these holy books) in any heathen writer.

The Canaanites and Perizzites into their hand.] Though most of the people properly called Canaanites dwelt by the Mediterranean Sea, yet many of them were scattered up and down in other parts of the country, (as I observed upon Numb. xiv. *ult.*) and particularly in these mountains and woody places, where the Perizzites dwelt. (See Josh. xvii. 15, 16.)

And they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.] In the country near to Bezek, which was a city in the tribe of Judah, not far, some think, from Bethlehem. Here they chose to make their rendezvous (as we now speak) of their forces, and wait to receive the children of Judah, that, if they were worsted, they might easily find a strong place of retreat.

Ver. 5. *And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek.*] He was the king, or lord of this place, as his name imports, whom they surprised, as the word *found* signifies, (see Bochart. Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 21.) by a sudden assault upon this city, whither he seems to have fled when he had lost the field. Theodoret makes this king the same with Adonizedek, (mentioned in Josh. x.) but as their names are different, so he was king of Jerusalem, and this of Bezek, where he was overcome; but the former in Gibeon, who was killed also with the sword, and then hanged on a tree; but this had only his thumbs and toes cut off, and so brought to Jerusalem, where he died.

And they fought against him.] Took the city wherein he thought to have defended himself, and the remainder of his army, which escaped hither.

And they slew the Canaanites and Perizzites.] Put all the people of those two nations, whom they found there, to the sword.

Ver. 6. *But Adoni-bezek fled.*] He made his escape.

And they pursued him, and caught him.] They found which way he went, and pursued him so close, that they overtook him before he could get to the strong fortress of the Jebusites; where, it is likely, he hoped to secure himself.

And cut off his thumbs and his great toes.] That he might be made incapable of war hereafter, being unable to handle arms, by reason of the loss of his thumbs; or to run swiftly (which was a noble quality in a warrior), by the loss of his great toes. This had been his own practice, it appears by his confession in the next verse, which made them think it reasonable to serve him in his kind.

Ver. 7. *And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings.*] In those days the chief person in every city had a kingly power; as we learn from the history of Joshua, who found many kings in Canaan when he conquered it. And seventy such petty princes Adoni-bezek had subdued; who were not kings of so many several cities, but some of them, it is likely, kings of the same place, who successively opposed him, and were dethroned by him.

Having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table.] He was proud and insolent, as well as cruel, treating those kings whom he conquered as if they had been dogs.

As I have done, so hath God requited me.] Justice was defined by the Pythagoreans to be τὸ ἀντιπεπονθὸς, *to make others feel the hurt they had done, by their suffering the like punishment.* Which Harmenopulus calls ταυτοπάθεια, *suffering the very same;* as Grotius notes, lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 20. n. 32. Now, Adoni-bezek's acknowledgment of God's justice in this punishment, hath made some think he was a penitent, and became a convert to the true religion: for he speaks of God in the singular number, and not of the gods, as the heathen manner was;

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which might possibly be the reason why they spared his life, and did not kill him. Certain it is, his pride and arrogance was very much humbled by his punishment, which extorted this confession from him. For it carried in it (as Mr. Mede observes on these words) the very stamp and print of the sin for which it was inflicted.

And they brought him to Jerusalem.] Which, as it follows in the next verse, was now in the possession of the children of Judah: though the Jews think they had not yet taken the city; but having begirt it, they brought him prisoner thither, and he died in the time of the siege.

And there he died.] After he had lived some time, perhaps, to perfect his repentance.

Ver. 8. *Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and taken it.*] We do not read of its being taken by Joshua, though it seems to me highly probable, that when he took the king of Jerusalem he also took his city, and did to it as he did to the rest of the cities of those kings, mentioned Josh. x. 3. 23. But when he was gone to conquer other parts of the country, it is likely the old inhabitants returned again and took possession of it; for the land was not then divided among the Israelites: after which, this city falling in part to the share of Judah, they dispossessed the Jebusites that dwelt there of all but the strong fortress on the top of Mount Sion, which held out till the days of David. (See upon Josh. x. 1. and xv. 63.)

And burnt it with fire.] As Joshua had done to Jericho, Ai, and Hazor: this being a city, it is probable, deeply infected with idolatry; from which they thought fit entirely to purge it before they rebuilt it.

Ver. 9. *Afterward the children of Judah went down.*] From Jerusalem (I suppose) which stood high.

To fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain.] There were several mountains round about Jerusalem, (Psal. cxxv. 2.) and we often read of the mountains of Judah, which were possessed, it seems, by the old inhabitants till after the death of Joshua.

And the south.] Towards the wilderness of Paran.

And the valley.] Or the flat country about those mountains, some of which are mentioned in the following verses.

Ver. 10. *And Judah went up against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron.*] This shews the old inhabitants of the country had returned to this place after it had been destroyed by Joshua, as we read it was, Josh. x. 36, 37. Who were now again expelled by the children of Judah after his death, this city being in their lot.

Now the name of Hebron before-time was Kirjath-Arba.] As much as to say, the city of Arba, who was the father of Anak. (See Josh. xiv. *ult.* xv. 13.)

And they slew Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.] These were the three sons of Anak, as we read there, Josh. xv. 14. where it is said that Caleb drove them out from thence: for he was the conductor of the children of Israel in this expedition, (as I observed upon ver. 3.) and had great reason to go up against this city, because this part of the country was given to him by a particular direction of God, (Josh. xiv. 13, 14. xv. 13.) But he did not conquer it till after the death of Joshua, as this place shews us.

Ver. 11. *And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir,* &c.] Another city which had been taken by Joshua in the beginning of the war; (Josh. x. 38, 39.) but, while he was gone to bring under other parts of the country, was reinhabited by the Canaanites, who were not expelled till after Joshua's death: when Caleb (to whom it was given, together with Hebron, for his portion, Josh. xv. 15.) drove them out again and possessed himself of it.

Ver. 12. *And Caleb said.*] Hence it still appears that the children of Judah fought under the conduct of Caleb as their general.

He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.] This, and the three following verses, 13—15. have been explained upon Josh. xv. 16, &c. where the portion of Judah being described, there is a particular mention of what was given to Caleb, and how he disposed of it. Which relation seems to have been taken out of this book, and inserted there by the authority of Ezra, for the fuller illustration of all that belonged to that tribe, whether by lot or peculiar donation before the division of the land. For any one may see that the description of Judah's lot is entirely coherent (as Huetius truly observes), if all between the twelfth and the twentieth verses were left out. And that all things here mentioned were not done till after the death of Joshua, is so evident, by the narration which is here made of all that fell out after that time, as to leave no doubt of it.

Ver. 16. *And the children of the Kenite, Moses's father-in-law.*] See Numb. x. 29. where Hobab, the son of Jethro, was invited by Moses to accompany him into the land of Canaan, and in all probability accepted the invitation, as I there observed.

Went up out of the city of palm-trees.] That is, Jericho, which was in a flat country. (See Deut. xxxiv. 3.) Here it seems they were pleased to settle themselves at their first coming into Canaan, where Moses promised, that whatsoever goodness God should shew to the Israelites, they should have their share in it: and there was no sweeter place in that country than this about Jericho, in the territory of which they dwelt, for the city itself was destroyed.

With the children of Judah.] Admiring the courage and success of this tribe, they seem to have contracted a particular friendship with them, and to have accompanied them in this expedition into the high country.

Into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad.] In the southern part of the land of Canaan, where Arad was, (Numb. xxi. 1.) which, as Procopius Gazæus here observes, was a city of the Amorites, near to the wilderness of Kadesh, which is Paran: in his time it was a village four miles from Malaathon; but twenty from Hebron.

And dwelt among the people.] They removed from the city of palm-trees, which was in the tribe of Benjamin, and settled themselves among the people of Judah. Yet not all of them; for some went into the northern parts among the tribe of Naphtali, as appears from iv. 10, 11. What should be the reason of their forsaking so pleasant a place, as that where they were first settled, is but conjectured. Some think it was the love of solitariness and retirement; which they gather from Jer. xxxv. 6, &c. Or, as I said, out of their great affection to the children of Judah; under whose protection they hoped for greater safety than in other places.

Ver. 17. *And Judah went with Simeon his brother.*] Having finished, as far as they were able, the conquest of what belonged to the tribe of Judah, they went to assist the Simeonites, according to their mutual engagement, (ver. 3.)

And they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath,

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and utterly destroyed it.] Some think this was the name both of a city and of a small region; but whereabouts it was situated is not known.

And the name of the city was called Hormah.] From the utter destruction beforementioned. Some think this was the same place with that mentioned Numb. xxi. 2, 3. But there he speaks of more cities that were laid waste; here but of one.

Ver. 18. *And Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof.*] These three cities were in the land of the Philistines, upon the sea-coast; which the Israelites did not hold long, before the Philistines recovered them again. For the Israelites contenting themselves with taking these cities, without destroying the people (as they did in other places, and ought to have done here), and only making them tributaries, it was not hard for them to regain their liberty.

Ver. 19. *And the Lord was with Judah.*] The Targum here uses the same language, which we find all along in the book of Joshua, when he speaks of God's presence with him: (see Josh. xiv. 12.) *And the Word of the Lord helped the house of Judah.*

And they drave out the inhabitants of the mountain.] God gave them such success wheresoever they went, that it ought to have encouraged them to go on with their enterprise; which they did not, as the following words tell us. This mountain, it is very likely, was Mons Casius, which was near to Gaza.

But could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.] Here now the fountain of all the ensuing evils which befel the Israelites begins to be opened. In that, either through sloth, or covetousness, or distrust of God's power, or more lenity than the law of Moses allowed, they did not attempt those people that were stronger than ordinary; or, being unfaithful to God, failed in their attempt; or, having some success, only brought them under tribute. And it is most likely, they were so affrighted at the iron chariots (which were in use in the plain country, though not in the mountains), that they were quite disheartened; and did not remember what God had promised them (ver. 2. of this chapter), and how undauntedly Joshua set upon those that came thus dreadfully appointed, (Josh. xi. 4. 6.) Concerning these chariots, see Josh. xvii. 16. 18. where I have observed they are frequently mentioned in profane authors. And see Dilherrus, tom. i. Disput. Academ. p. 129.

Ver. 20. *And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said, and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.*] Thus ends the account of the wars of the tribe of Judah: which concludes with a repetition of what part in their country was given to Caleb; because he was their leader (as I have often said), and this was his reward, *viz.* the country about Hebron; the city itself belonging to the Levites.

Ver. 21. *And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem.*] This tribe, and that of Judah, had an interest in Jerusalem: but though both of them joined together, they could not drive the Jebusites out of the south part of it, where they had a strong fortress upon Mount Sion. (See Josh. xv. 63.) Nay, of that part of the city which belonged to Judah, they were not dispossessed till the forenamed expedition.

But the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin to this day.] That is, they kept possession of that fortress, from which they were not able to drive them; but they dwelt there in the days when Samuel wrote this book, being not expelled till the reign of David. And they seem also to have dwelt with the Benjamites in that part of the city belonging to them; which though conquered, yet the inhabitants were not destroyed, but only brought under tribute. For this was very agreeable to the lazy and covetous humour which now began to prevail in Israel.

Ver. 22. *And the house of Joseph.*] *viz.* The tribe of Ephraim, (Josh. xvi. 1.)

They also went up against Beth-el.] They, following the example of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, endeavoured to enlarge their border by taking Beth-el.

And the Lord was with them.] As the success demonstrated. The Targum hath it, (as before, ver. 19.) *The Word of the Lord was their helper.*

Ver. 23. *And the house of Joseph sent to descry Beth-el.*] They proceeded very cautiously; sending spies (as we read in the next verse) to view the strength of the place, and to discover how it might be best approached.

Now the name of the city before was Luz.] See Gen. xxviii. 19. Josh. xvi. 2.

Ver. 24. *And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city.*] Whom they apprehended, as he passed by the place where they lay to make their observations, and get intelligence.

And they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city.] Where it may be most easily entered. For they did not inquire the way to the gate, which was common and plain enough; but for the weakest part, where the walls were lowest, or most out of repair, or had the least guard. Or, they desired him, perhaps, to shew them some private way to get into it, which none knew but the inhabitants.

And we will shew thee mercy.] As they spake civilly and gently to him when they apprehended him, so they make him a promise of kind usage, when they got into the city, by sparing his life, and all belonging to him, as they did Rahab and her family: which, it is highly probable, he begged of them, being fallen into their hands; and it was not unlawful for them to grant, if he changed his religion, or left the country, as we find he afterward did.

Ver. 25. *And when he shewed them the entrance into the city.*] Notice, I suppose, was immediately sent to the army, which lay not far off.

They smote the city with the edge of the sword.] Came upon them on a sudden, and assaulted them where they least expected it; so that they found little resistance.

But they let go the man, and all his family.] Did them no harm; but gave them their liberty, as well as lives, to go whither they pleased.

Ver. 26. *And the man went into the land of the Hittites.*] A colony of this nation, I suppose, had planted themselves heretofore in some of the neighbouring countries, Syria, or Arabia, or some of those that fled upon Joshua's invading the land, settled themselves there. To whom this man thought good to go with his family, being, perhaps, of the same nation.

And built a city.] Which is an argument, that the chil-

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dren of Ephraim were so kind as to dismiss him and his family, with all their goods and estate.

And called the name of it Luz.] To preserve the memory of the place from whence he came. The founders of cities are mentioned with honour by all authors; and this seems to be so intended.

Which is the name thereof unto this day.] It kept this name to the time of the writing of this book, and long after. For it seems to be the same city mentioned by Josephus in Arabia (not far from Judea), which he calls Λούσσα, (lib. xiv. Antiq. cap. 2.) And Bochartus observes, that this place had its name originally from the great plenty of almonds growing there; from whence also it may be Lusitania had its name, (lib. i. Canaan, cap. 35.)

Ver. 27. *Neither did Manasseh.*] He speaks of that part of this tribe which was seated on this side Jordan.

Drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her towns, &c.] Hitherto several of the Israelites had shewed some valour, and expelled some of the Canaanites. But now he begins to shew how cowardly others of them were; for these do not seem to have attempted any thing against the places here mentioned, or any where else. Beth-shean was a city not far from Jordan. See Josh. xvii. 11. where the rest of the cities here named in this verse are mentioned.

But the Canaanites would dwell in that land.] Not only in the cities, where they might have been straitened and kept under, but in the towns and villages, where they had the same liberties with the Israelites, and perhaps held some of the ground belonging to them. For so some think the word *dwell* signifies; that they enjoyed all the benefits that any others had. And this they demanded as their right; which the Hebrew word *jaal* imports; a settled resolution not to quit that land. (See Josh. xvii. 12.)

Ver. 28. *And it came to pass, when the Israelites were strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.*] Herein they acted contrary to the law, whereby they were enjoined to destroy them, when they were able. And being strong enough to make them tributaries, they might, no doubt, have utterly expelled them out of the land. But they found more profit in making them pay tribute; and it cost them less pains to bring them into some subjection, than to destroy them. And this seems to be here noted, as the common fault of all the children of Israel, that, when they grew strong, they did not use their power to destroy or expel the Canaanites: but let them live quietly under them, upon payment of tribute.

Ver. 29. *Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer.*] See Josh. xvi. 10. It is very probable, they did not so much as exact a tribute from them (which is not here mentioned), but made a covenant of friendship with them; which was still a higher crime. And this the next words seem to import.

But the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.] Which is a form of speech not used in the foregoing exceptions. And *to dwell* among a people, signifies a quiet settlement, with the enjoyment of all their rights. As in 2 Kings iv. 13. when Elisha offered the Shunamite to do her any kindness at court, she expresses herself satisfied with her condition, in these words, *I dwell among my own people.*

Ver. 30. *Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol.*] Which was the greater crime, because this last city was ἀφωρισμένη Λευίταις, *one of those that were separated for the Levites,* as Eusebius speaks. (See Josh. xxi. 35.) Yet they did more than the Ephraimites; for though they let them *dwell among them,* they made them pay tribute.

But the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.] They troubled themselves no further than to make them pay a tribute to them; when they might, with a little more pains, have expelled them. This laziness, or covetousness, or whatsoever it was that made them act in this manner, brought them into a dangerous snare.

Ver. 31. *Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho.*] A city near the Mediterranean Sea, called by Strabo and others Ace; and afterward Ptolemais, as Eusebius saith, who observes, that the Asherites did not drive out the Ἀλλοφύλους from hence. Procopius saith the same.

Nor the inhabitants of Sidon.] Which every one knows was another great city upon the same sea.

Nor of Ahlah, nor of Achzib.] We find no mention of the former of these elsewhere; but the latter is in Josh. xix. 29. and was called in aftertimes *Ecdippa,* as Eusebius relates.

Nor Helbath, nor Aphik, nor of Rehob.] The two latter of these we read of in Josh. xix. 28. 30. but nothing of the former, unless it be the same with Helkath, mentioned there, ver 25.

Ver. 32. *But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.*] They seem to have entered into a league of friendship with the Canaanites; so that they were mixed with them as if they had been the same nation, which was most strictly forbidden by the law of Moses: for they did not so much as make them tributaries; but the Asherites seem to have submitted to the basest condition of all the other tribes: for it is not said, as of the other tribes, that the people dwelt among the Asherites; but that the Asherites dwelt among them. As if the Canaanites remained still the lords of that country, and the Asherites were only permitted to live among them.

Ver. 33. *Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath.*] Both these cities are mentioned as in the lot of Naphtali, Josh. xix. 38.

But they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land.] Imitating the Asherites, in letting the old inhabitants live promiscuously with them; or rather contenting themselves with the liberty to live quietly among the Canaanites.

Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath became tributaries to them.] In this they were more valiant than the Asherites, that they brought these two cities under contribution, and made them acknowledge them for their lords.

Ver. 34. *And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain.*] The condition of the Danites was the worst of all the tribes: for they could neither expel the old inhabitants of their country, nor make them tributaries, nor so much as possess it together with them; but the Amorites distressed them sorely, by penning them up in the cities that were in the mountainous parts of their country, not suffering them to dwell below in the plain.

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For they would not suffer them to come down into the valley.] Being very strong, it is likely, in chariots of iron (which were of use, I observed, in the flat country, though they could do no service in the mountains), which the Danites so dreaded, that they durst not venture to encounter them.

Ver. 35. *But the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and Shaalbim.*] And, to add to their affliction, would not let them enjoy all the mountainous country, but possessed these three cities there: which constrained the Danites to seek for larger quarters in other parts; and seems to have been the occasion of that expedition mentioned Josh. xix. 47. where, ver. 41. we read of the two last-mentioned cities. (See my notes there.)

Yet the hand of the house of Joseph.] That is, the Ephraimites, who were next neighbours to the Danites, in one part of their country.

Prevailed.] Against the Amorites, as the LXX. expound it, Ἐβαρύνθη ἡ χεὶρ οἴκου Ἰωσὴφ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀμορῥαῖον, *The hand of the house of Joseph was heavy upon the Amorites;* for they came to the assistance of their brethren, when they were grievously distressed.

So that they became tributaries.] They brought the Amorites so much under, that they made those three cities beforementioned pay tribute to the Danites, if not all the low countries which they inhabited; for he saith, in general, *They became tributaries,* speaking of all the Amorites thereabouts.

Ver. 36. *And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.*] We find mention of the going up to Akrabbim in Josh. xv. 3. (See my notes there.) And the Vulgar by the *rock* (in Hebrew, *selah*) understands the city called Petra, which was upon the borders of Edom, and by Amaziah called Joktheel, in 2 Kings xiv. 7. Some take these words to signify the large extent of the country which the Amorites inhabited; but I take them rather to denote, that the children of Ephraim gave such a check to their insolence, that they were confined to this country, which reached from Akrabbim and Selah, to the mountains here mentioned. By this it appears, the Israelites let so many of the old inhabitants remain in Canaan, that they settled themselves among them; insomuch, that, in the days of Solomon, we read of a remnant of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, (1 Kings ix. 20, 21.) and in far later ages, as I have often observed, the Gergesenes remained in the days of our Saviour, (Matt. viii. 28.) though it is likely they were all become proselytes so far as to worship the God of Israel, though not entirely of their religion.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AND an angel of the Lord.*] The Jews by an *angel* here understand a prophet, who was sent by God as his *messenger;* which the word *angel* imports: and they commonly take it to have been Phinehas, who was employed on this message. But I see no reason to depart from the natural signification of the word, when there is no absurdity in it, and it is not usual to speak in this metaphorical style: for there can no instance be given, that I remember, of a prophet called *an angel of the Lord;* which I take to signify more than an angel, which appeared from heaven on this occasion; that is, *the angel of the covenant.*

Came up from Gilgal.] Angels are not commonly said to *come up,* but to *come down;* which is one reason, I suppose, why this angel hath been taken for a prophet. But if we consider whence he was seen to come, and why from Gilgal, this phrase will appear to be most proper; of which I shall give an account presently.

To Bochim.] This was not the name of the place before, but was given it on this occasion, (ver. 5.) In all probability it was Shiloh; for there was no other place where all the people of Israel were wont to assemble, as they were now when this angel appeared to them, (ver. 4.)

And said, I made you to go out of Egypt.] These words evidently shew, this was not a created angel, but an uncreated; even that very person who appeared to Joshua hard by Jericho, Josh. v. 13, 14. which I have shewn there was God himself: for who but God could speak in this style, *I made you to go out of Egypt?* No prophet, nor any created angel, durst have been so bold; but would have prefaced to this speech in some such words as these, *Thus saith the Lord, I have made you to go,* &c. Supposing, then, this angel to be the same with him that then appeared, it was fit for him to appear now as coming from Gilgal, to put them in mind of that illustrious appearance of God near that place, and the assurance he then gave them of his presence with them in the conquest of the land, and the solemn covenant they made with him, by the renewing of circumcision in that place: which upbraided them with their base ingratitude to God, and their sloth in not endeavouring to expel the Canaanites.

And have brought you into the land which I sware to your fathers.] Of which he had given them possession.

And I said, I will never break my covenant with you.] If they proved not false to him, he assured them they should always find him present with them, to make good his promises to them. This Joshua told them they knew very well, that not one good thing had failed which he promised; and bade them be confident he would still continue the same faithful God. (See Josh. xxi. 45. xxiii. 14.)

Ver. 2. *And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land.*] Or rather, *But ye shall make no league,* &c. For this was the condition of the covenant on their part, Deut. vii. 2. and long before that, Exod. xxiii. 32. xxxiv. 12. and again more lately, Josh. xxiii. 12.

Ye shall throw down their altars.] See Exod. xxxiv. 13. Deut. vii. 5. xii. 3.

But ye have not obeyed my voice; why have you done this?] That is, you can give no account of your disobedience to such plain, and express, and repeated commands.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you.*] God, therefore, resolved to make good the threatenings pronounced in his covenant; as hitherto he had performed his promise. (See Josh. xxiii. 13.)

But they shall be thorns in your sides.] To vex and gall them, as Joshua there told them.

And their gods shall be a snare unto you.] As Moses had foretold them, (Exod. xxiii. 33. xxxiv. 12.) For they were taken, by their conversation with idolaters, as beasts are in a toil, and drawn to the worship of their gods, which was their ruin.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord*

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spake all these words unto all the children of Israel.] By this it appears they were all met at some solemn festival, as they were bound to do three times every year (for otherwise it cannot be conceived what should occasion such an assembly of the whole congregation), and, consequently, the place where these words were spoken to them was Shiloh.

That the people lift up their voice, and wept.] They made doleful lamentations; some, it is likely, when they reflected on their sin; others, when they thought of their danger.

Ver. 5. *And they called the name of that place Bochim.*] Which signifies *weepers*. It is possible the place where the angel, or where they stood, was called by this name, in memory of this great goodness of God; which, for the present, mightily wrought upon their hearts, as appears by what follows.

And they sacrificed there unto the Lord.] This shews it was the place of public worship where they now were; and offered upon this occasion whole burnt-offerings unto God, by way of supplication and prayer to him, with thanksgiving for his goodness in calling them to repentance. Some think, indeed, that they offered expiatory sacrifices to make atonement for their sin: but they would not have been called simply *sacrifices*, which commonly are meant of whole burnt-offerings, or peace-offerings, by which they acknowledged him to be the Lord, and promised to serve no other god.

Ver. 6. *And when Joshua had let the people go.*] Or, *Now when Joshua had broke up that last great assembly which he held before his death;* (xxiv. 28.) so some expound it. But the next words seem to direct us rather to understand it of his dismission of them, after he had cast lots, and divided the land among them, (Josh. xix. 51. xxi. 43.)

The children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.] To take possession of that land which fell to their share, and settle themselves in it. And they went with a resolution, no doubt, to serve the Lord only; as, we cannot but think, he exhorted them before they parted: for the lots were cast in Shiloh before the Lord, as we are often told in the book of Joshua, xviii. 6. 8. 10. xix. 51. From whence they going to take possession of their lot, it is reasonable to think he did not dismiss them without his blessing, and with a solemn charge to observe the laws of God, such as he gave to the two tribes and half, (xxii. 5, &c.) And this is the reason why the author of this book repeats this out of the book of Joshua, to shew when their apostacy began, and how it came about: for though they went to their possessions well-disposed, yet their love of the world, and study of their own private advantages, so increased, that they made them forget the public good, and take little care of their religion.

Ver. 7. *And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua.*] According to his exhortation, and their solemn promises, a little before he died, (Josh. xxiv. 14—16, &c.)

And all the days of the elders that out-lived Joshua.] Such as Eleazar, and the rest mentioned Josh. xix. 51. who were men of great authority, as well as piety; and often, no doubt, admonished them of their duty, and put them in mind of their promises made to Joshua in Shechem, where he made a covenant between God and them, and wrote it in the book of the law of God, (xxiv. 25, 26, &c.)

Who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel.] Both among the Egyptians, and in the wilderness, and in Canaan; which Joshua had represented to them as a motive to fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity, (Josh. xxiv. 5, 6, &c. 14, 15.) Of these things the elders, we may reasonably suppose, frequently reminded them, and thereby kept them steadfast in their religion. (See Josh. xxiv. 21.) For whatsoever bad inclinations they had in them, they were restrained, by the reverence they bare to these great men, from breaking loose from God while they lived.

Ver. 8. *And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died,* &c.] After he had made that excellent speech to them beforementioned, and engaged them in a solemn covenant to be God's people. (See Josh. xxiv. 29.)

Ver. 9. *And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres,* &c.] This is mentioned only to shew that they honoured him after his death, by attending his funeral, as they had done in his life. (See Josh. xxiv. 30.)

Ver. 10. *And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers.*] I suppose he means, not only all those who had seen the works of God in Egypt and the wilderness, but those also who had seen Jordan dried up, the walls of Jericho fall down, and the sun stand still at Joshua's word, and their enemies smitten down with hailstones, &c. Which had made such impressions on their hearts, that they generally continued in the service of God while they lived; and kept others in obedience to him.

And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord.] But the next generation did not regard the Lord, nor mind their religion; but only studied to settle themselves, on any terms, in their possessions, by making peace with the Canaanites, whom they should have driven out.

Nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.] Which they did not keep in mind, as they ought to have done; being wholly intent to their earthly concerns, in building houses, planting vineyards, and improving their lands. Unto which they were invited by the peace they enjoyed; by which men's minds are wont to be corrupted; as the Greeks and Romans were in future ages. According to those known words of the Roman satirist:

"Nunc patimur longæ pacis mala."——

Ver. 11. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.*] By this forgetfulness of God and of his works, and by their familiarity with the people of Canaan, they soon learned to do as they did, and that openly and publicly, not fearing the dreadful sentence of God against such evil-doers, who were most odious to him, whatsoever excuses men make for them. So that phrase, *in the sight of the Lord*, may be interpreted.

And served Baalim.] The gods of the nations whose land they possessed, who were called by this general name, which signifies *lords*. For among the heathen, as St. Paul observes, there were *gods many, and lords many*. In Hebrew he would have said *many Baalim*, who were their deified great men, as Mr. Mede hath shewn, (p. 776. of his works.) For Baal (in Chaldee, *Bel*) the king of Babel next after Nimrod, was the first that was deified, and reputed a god after his death, from whence they called all other de-

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mons by the name of Baalim; as from the first Roman emperor who was called Cæsar, all that followed him were styled Cæsars. Baalim, therefore, being the general name of the gods of Syria, Palestine, and the neighbouring countries, there were as many Baals as there were nations: for example, Baal of the Sidonians, and Baal of the Amorites, of the Moabites, and Ammonites, and the rest of the people thereabouts, who had their Baalim. (See also Selden, de Diis Syris, Syntagm. ii. cap. 1.)

Ver. 12. *And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods of the people that were round about them.*] By *other gods* may be meant the gods of the people of Canaan; which did not content them, but they worshipped also the gods of other neighbouring nations, none of which had bestowed any benefit upon them. This was a very high aggravation of their sin; that when all other nations made to themselves such gods as they thought had done them good, or could be helpful to them, they forsook the greatest Benefactor to their nation, who had made them a free people, and worshipped such gods as had done nothing for them, nor had been able to preserve those that worshipped them from destruction.

And bowed themselves unto them.] They did not only own them for gods, but publicly adored them.

And provoked the Lord to anger.] Who had told them he was a jealous God, and could not bear any rival, (Exod. xx. 1, 2.) It is not easy to give an account what moved them to forsake their God after such wonderful things as he had done for them, and their most solemn engagements to him. It is not unlikely that one reason was, the unusual rites prescribed in his Divine service, much different from all other nations; and several laws that made them unlike all the rest of the world, who hated them upon this account. This they could not bear, desiring to be conformable to other people and to gain their friendship. For Hosea saith, viii. 12. they looked upon the great things of the law *as a strange thing.*

Ver. 13. *And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*] Especially they worshipped the sun, and the moon, or Venus; which some understand by Astarte. In the next chapter it is said they worshipped *Baalim and the groves,* iii. 7. For in those groves several goddesses, under the name of Ashtaroth, were worshipped, as Mr. Selden conjectures in his Syntag. ii. de Diis Syris, cap. 2. where he shews there were many Astartes among the heathen, as there were Baals; and therefore the Scripture speaks of them in the plural number (as the LXX. here doth, ταῖς Ἀστάρταις), because of the multitude of images representing Juno, or Venus, or Diana, which had the name of Ashtaroth, signifying (as some think) as much as *Beatas, blessed.*

Ver. 14. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel.*] Brake out in very dreadful effects upon them.

And he delivered them into the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them.] Carried away their cattle and their goods.

And he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about.] Who carried away their persons, as well as their goods, and made them slaves. For that seems to be the meaning of *selling them,* which is a phrase often used in this book, (iii. 8. iv. 2.) and in other places, (Deut. xxxii. 30. Psal. xliv. 12, &c.) This was a just punishment of God upon them, that, as they served the gods of the people round about them, (ver. 12.) so they should be slaves to all those nations round about them.

So that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.] Being so far from being able to make any further conquests, that they could not defend themselves.

Ver. 15. *Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil.*] They had ill success in all their affairs, whether private or public business.

As the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them.] See Deut. xxviii. xxx. 17, 18. xxxi. 16, 17. and many other places.

And they were greatly distressed.] As soon as they slackened their endeavours to drive out the Canaanites, and made leagues with them (as we read in the foregoing part of this chapter), God began to withdraw himself from them, and would not drive out their enemies from before them, (ver. 3.) But when by this means they were ensnared to worship their gods, (as he foresaw they would, ver. 4.) then he gave them up into the hands of those enemies, with whom they had made friendship, and suffered them to tyrannize over them, and use them cruelly.

Ver. 16. *Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges,* &c.] Extraordinary rulers and governors, whose authority, I take to have been chiefly in time of war; they being raised up (by a particular inspiration and excitation from God), as it here follows, *to deliver them out of the hands of those that spoiled them.* So that commonly, when they had wrought deliverance for the people, and their army was dismissed, they became private men again; as appears by the story of Jephthah, who would not undertake to lead them against the Ammonites, unless he might be their governor when the war was done; (Judg. xi. 9.) and of Gideon, who refused to rule over them, when they offered the government to him, after the conquest of the Midianites, (viii. 22, 23.) Their business, therefore, principally was to preserve the people's liberties, to restore them, together with God's true religion, and to prescribe what was to be done in such cases; being a kind of dictators, whose power continued as long as there was occasion for it. Yet it must be acknowledged, that some of them had an established authority for their life over those whom they had rescued from slavery (not over the whole commonwealth of Israel, part of which was some time in peace, when another part was oppressed), and managed political matters, when they were too hard for the ordinary judges to divide them. (See Deut. xvii. 9.) Thus we read that Deborah, a prophetess, judged Israel, and that the people came to her for judgment, before she excited Barak to vindicate their liberties: but commonly they seem to have contented themselves with this, not minding judgment; as Samuel, the last of them, chiefly exercised his authority in matters of justice, 1 Sam. vii. 15, &c. where he is said in his house at Ramah to have judged Israel, and ended their controversies, and done right to every man: and when, by reason of age, he could do this no longer, he committed it to his sons. (See Corn. Bertram. de Repub. Judaica, cap. 9. p. 109, &c.)

Ver. 17. *And yet they would not hearken to their judges.*] Not constantly; but revolted again, (ver. 18, 19.)

But they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them.] Worshipped them publicly; which

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is commonly called going a whoring from God, who had espoused them to himself.

They turned quickly out of the way.] As soon as the judge was dead, who had wrought deliverance for them.

Which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord.] In the days of Joshua, and the elders which survived him, (ver. 7.)

But they did not so.] Whom the next generation would not imitate.

Ver. 18. *And when the Lord raised them up judges.*] This is the constant phrase wherein he speaks of these great men, whose spirit was stirred up by an extraordinary motion from God, to undertake things beyond the reach of human wisdom or power.

Then the Lord was with the judge.] Endued him with heroical courage, and gave him wonderful success. Here the Targum continues the same language, *The Word of the Lord was the helper of the judge.* (See chap. i. 19. 22.)

And delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge.] As long as he ruled over them, and kept them in obedience to him. This signifies, that if they did not exercise their authority, yet the effects of it remained all the days of their life.

For it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed and vexed them.] He altered the course of his providence, when they not only sighed and groaned under their oppressions, but cried unto him for help, and promised amendment, as we find they did, iii. 9. 15. vi. 7, 8, &c.

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, they returned.*] To their former idolatry.

And corrupted themselves more than their fathers.] Who lived in the former judge's time, and had sorely smarted for this sin, till God, upon their repentance, sent them deliverance.

In following other gods, to serve them, and bow down to them.] They either multiplied more strange gods, or devised still new rites of worship contrary to God's law. The common service they paid to every one of them was building temples to their honour, setting up altars, planting groves, burning incense, and sacrificing beasts.

They ceased not from their evil doings.] In the Hebrew, *Would not let fall their own inventions;* but retained them, notwithstanding all that God had done to bring them off from their idolatry.

Nor from their stubborn way.] But obstinately persisted in their evil courses, as if nothing had been done to reclaim them.

Ver. 20. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel.*] This highly incensed the Divine displeasure, and provoked him to punish them more grievously.

And he said, Because the people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, &c.] By making leagues with the Canaanites, and not throwing down their altars, &c. Arius Montanus very well observes, that this verse expresses what great reason there was for God's being exceeding angry with them. First, because they had forsaken him, to whom they owed their being a nation. Secondly, because they had violated that covenant, which was not a new or obscure thing, but made long ago with their fathers, who, it was very well known, had reaped the benefit thereof. And, thirdly, because (as this verse concludes) *they had not hearkened unto God's voice; i. e.* though he had often admonished them, by his prophets, of their duty, and chidden and threatened them; yet they would not mind what he said, but in a most rebellious manner gave themselves up to the impieties of other nations.

Ver. 21. *I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them.*] That is, not presently, or so soon as he intended, if they had pleased him. (See ver. 23.)

Of the nations which Joshua left when he died.] For God never intended they should be all rooted out at once, as hath been often noted from Exod. xxiii. 29, 30. yet their expulsion had been more speedy, if they had obeyed him, than now he resolved it should be. Nor could it well be otherwise; for, by being delivered into their enemies' hands, to spoil and to enslave them, their increase was thereby hindered; so that they were not able to people all the land so soon as they might have done if they had been obedient: for then God promised to multiply them exceedingly, (Deut. vii. 13, 14, &c.)

Ver. 22. *That by them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.*] That it might appear, whether they would continue firm, as their fathers resolved, in the service of God, (Josh. xxiv. 16. 24.) or revolt from him to serve other gods.

Ver. 23. *Therefore the Lord left these nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.*] This was one reason they were not all cast out at once, by the victorious hand of Joshua; for if none of them had been left remaining, there would have been no temptation to worship their gods; which would have been all abolished with them. Another reason is given of this, in the place beforementioned, Exod. xxiii. 29, 30. and Deut. vii. 22.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *NOW these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them.*] Having said in general, that God thought fit not to drive out all the Canaanites, that he might try the care and fidelity of his people in his service, (ii. 22.) he now names the particular nations that remained unsubdued.

Even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan.] Such as were born since the war was ended; and had seen none of the wonderful works of God in the conquest of the land; God intended to prove them, whether they would worship him, when they saw what they must expect if they did not; *viz.* that he would let the Canaanites, their mortal enemies, loose upon them.

Ver. 2. *Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know to teach them war.*] There was another reason why they were left remaining, as was observed before in the last verse of the foregoing chapter: but this had been sufficient, if there had been no other; that the Israelites might not grow sluggish for want of some to awaken and exercise their courage, and to keep up martial discipline among them; and that they might, by having powerful enemies so near them, betake themselves to God constantly, and depend upon his help and succour, by whose power their fathers had brought them under.

At the least such as before knew nothing thereof.] If this

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was not needful for all, it was at least for such as had never handled arms; that they might be trained up to be ready upon occasion to fight with their enemies. For they being wholly bred to husbandry, and feeding of cattle, would have had no military discipline among them, if they had not had the Canaanites so near to them.

Or this may be the meaning of this verse, *They shall know what it is to be left to themselves:* for their fathers fought by a Divine power, but now they shall learn what it is to fight like other men, without God to go along with them.

Ver. 3. *Namely, the five lords of the Philistines.*] See upon Josh. xiii. 2, 3. and Judg. i. 18. where it appears, that *three* of them had been, in some measure, conquered; but it seems had recovered their country again, by the sloth of the Israelites.

And all the Canaanites.] These were a particular people of that country (as hath been often said), near to the midland sea, many of which still remained scattered up and down the land.

And the Sidonians.] Who lived in the territory belonging to the famous city of Sidon; who was one of the sons of Canaan, (Gen. x. 15.)

And the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon.] A famous mountain in the north part of Canaan.

From Baal-Hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.] See in Josh. xi. 3. xiii. 5.

Ver. 4. *And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken to the commandments of the Lord,* &c.] That their virtue might appear, if they did not imitate these people; or their baseness, if they did.

Ver. 5. *And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites.*] The Israelites soon discovered their bad disposition, in suffering all sorts of the wicked people of this land to remain and dwell with them; as if they were still the possessors of this country, and the children of Israel but intruders among them.

Ver. 6. *And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons.*] Which was not only directly contrary to the law of God, (Deut. vii. 3.) but a higher breach of their covenant with him, than the mere making leagues with them.

And served their gods.] As Moses, in the same place, foretold they would, (Deut. vii. 4.) if they contracted such marriages with them.

Ver. 7. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgat the Lord their God.*] They grew in time so very wicked, that they not only worshipped other gods, together with the Lord; but quite forgot him, and worshipped them alone.

And served Baalim and the groves.] Some here take *groves,* literally, for the trees themselves that composed those shady places, which were anciently consecrated to *heroes;* being, some time, the place of their sepulchre; where their *manes* were supposed to haunt. For Baalim were the same with *heroes;* and trees were accounted sacred things, by the ancient heathen, who consecrated them to this or that deity, and trimmed them up with ribands, and adorned them with lights, and made vows to them, and hung the spoils of their enemies upon them. Insomuch, that travellers were wont to stop when they were to pass by them, as if they had been the habitation of some god. But Mr. Selden thinks, that by *groves* are to be here understood the *images* of their gods in the groves; as it is certain they must signify in some places. (See upon chap. vi. 25.) And he probably conjectures, that there were several goddesses, under the name of Ashtaroth, worshipped in them. (See the place mentioned above, in his De Diis Syris, Syntag. ii. cap. 2.)

And it is evident, that these deities, whatsoever they were, were different from Baalim; for the prophets of Baal, and the prophets of the *groves,* were distinct persons, in 1 Kings xviii. 19.

Ver. 8. *Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel.*] This expression we had twice before. (See chap. ii. 14. 20.)

And he sold them.] See in the same place.

Into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia.] Of that country which lay between the two great rivers of Euphrates and Tigris. So the first enemy that oppressed them were the Syrians; who, either out of hatred, or desire to enlarge their dominions, came over Euphrates and invaded them.

And the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years.] He forced them to buy their peace upon hard terms, and brought them under tribute to him; but did not impose garrisons upon them; so that they more easily recovered their liberty, when one appeared to head them. When these eight years began (that is, how long after the death of Joshua), is variously disputed; but it is certain it was in the next age (which in Scripture signifies about three-and-thirty years) after Joshua and the elders that survived him (during whose time they served God and lived in freedom). For Caleb's younger brother, as it here follows, was the first judge whom God raised up to them.

Ver. 9. *And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.*] Returned to him, and acknowledged him to be their only God, of whom they earnestly begged pardon, and implored help with fervent prayer; beseeching him to deliver them from this cruel servitude; as he did Jacob their forefather, from the bondage of Laban the Syrian.

He raised a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them.] All the judges are called by the name of *saviours,* or *deliverers,* in Nehemiah ix. 27. because they rescued them from the oppression of their enemies, when they could not help themselves.

Even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.] So he is called, i. 13. concerning which, see Josh. xv. 17.

Ver. 10. *And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.*] He had an extraordinary motion from God to take upon him the government of the people; which none durst presume to do, but such as were appointed by God, who was their king. Josephus thinks that God appeared to them, or some way revealed his will to them, in these matters; so that they were sure they acted by his authority. The Chaldee paraphrast seems to favour the latter opinion, who calls this spirit, *the Spirit of prophecy.* Certain it is, that they had not only an inward incitement to undertake the deliverance of God's people, but were endowed with extraordinary courage and conduct; and it is likely with a singular gift of Divine eloquence, to persuade the people to forsake their idolatry, and vindicate their liberty.

And he judged Israel, and went out to war.] This was

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the first part of the office of a judge, to plead their cause, and avenge them of their oppressors; as this phrase of *judging* is used, Deut. xxxii. 35, 36. and other places. Though here being set before going to war, it may be thought that he first rectified what was amiss among them, and especially reduced them to the worship of the Lord alone; and then went to fight against their enemies.

And the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand.] They overthrew and entirely routed all his forces, and, as the words seem to import, took or slew the king himself.

And his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim.] So that he could not recover his strength to oppress them any more.

Ver. 11. *And the land had rest forty years.*] It doth not suit with my design to enter into chronological disputes; and therefore I remit the learned reader to the Canon Chronicus of Sir J. Marsham, lib. ii. where he supposes the idolatrous generation to have risen in the thirty-fourth year after the death of Joshua; who lost their liberty, and fell under the oppression of Chushan, for the space of eight years, and after their deliverance from it, lived happily forty years. Which will appear in the sequel to be more reasonable, than to interpret these words as if they signified, *The land rested in the fortieth year after Joshua first settled them in peace and quiet.* So our great primate of Ireland: (vide A. M. 2599.)

And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.] It is not certain in what part of these forty years of rest he died; nor is it material whether in the beginning, middle, or end of it.

Ver. 12. *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord.*] Fell into the sin of idolatry after Othniel was dead.

And the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against them, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord.] As he raised up deliverers to Israel when they were penitent; so he stirred up enemies to them, and gave them power also to oppress them, when they revolted from him. And the next enemy to the Syrians were the Moabites; for since they worshipped the gods of the people round about them, (chap. ii. 12.) it was fit they should be punished by those very people.

Ver. 13. *And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek.*] Persuaded these two nations, who were his near neighbours (Moab lying between them), to associate themselves with him in this war. Unto which they were easily inclined; especially Amalek, who had an old grudge to the Israelites.

And went and smote Israel.] Either by a sudden invasion, or in a pitched battle.

And possessed themselves of the city of palm-trees.] That is, Jericho, as appears from Deut. xxxiv. 3. Judg. i. 16. Which, though it was destroyed by Joshua, yet the place where it stood remaining, it is likely they made fortifications, and placed a strong garrison there, that they might the better keep the whole country in subjection. For, as the country thereabouts was very fertile (of which they deprived the Israelites, and sent the riches of it to their own country, which was not far off), so they hindered all communications between those on this side Jordan, and those on the other side, but what they pleased to allow; and maintained a correspondence with their own people, from whom they could receive more forces, if there were need, by having the command of the passages over Jordan. By which means also they thought to secure their retreat, if there should be occasion, to their own country.

Ver. 14. *So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.*] He ruled all this time as an absolute master over them, and imposed what burdens he pleased upon them; of which, it is likely, the Ammonites and Amalekites had a share, as a reward of their help and assistance.

Ver. 15. *But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.*] Humbled themselves before him, acknowledged their offence, begged his pardon, and beseeched his help; as before, ver. 9.

The Lord raised them up a deliverer.] As he had done before. (See ver. 9.)

Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite.] Which tribe was the most immediately oppressed (the country of Jericho being in it), and therefore one of them was very proper to be their deliverer.

A man left-handed.] The Hebrew words *itter jad jemini* are very obscure, being used no where else but here, and xx. 16. In both places the LXX. translate them ἀμφοτεροδέξιος, whom the Vulgar follows, "qui utraque manu pro dextra utebatur," *who could use both hands, as we do our right.* This the Hebrew phrase will bear, which literally signifies, as we translate it in the margin, *shut of his right hand; i. e.* who did nothing with it, but used his left, though he could use both alike: or, as Josephus will have it, τῶν χειρῶν τὴν ἀριστερὰν ἀμείνων, *who of the two could use his left hand best.*

And by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon king of Moab.] Some understand by this the tribute that was laid upon them; but it rather signifies a voluntary present, above their ordinary payments; whereby they hoped to mollify him, and make him favourable to his loving subjects: for *mincha* is used for such offerings as were presented to God to obtain his favours.

Ver. 16. *But Ehud made him a dagger.*] Privately prepared this weapon, intending to make use of this opportunity for their deliverance.

Which had two edges, of a cubit length.] Therefore Josephus calls it ξιφίδιον, *a little sword;* which was long enough to do execution, but so short as to be easily concealed.

And he did gird it under his raiment.] Which the LXX. and the Vulgar take to have been a military garment; but the Hebrew word *mad* signifies any sort of raiment.

Upon his right thigh.] To avoid all suspicion (for men use to wear their swords on their left side), and that he might more readily draw it out, and use it with his left hand, when he should find occasion.

Ver. 17. *And he brought the present to Eglon king of Moab.*] Was admitted into his presence, and delivered the present with his right hand, as men usually do; which he could use, I suppose, as well as his left, though not, perhaps, with so much strength.

And Eglon was a very fat man.] Which made him unwieldy, and less able and ready to rise up, and avoid or defend himself from a sudden stroke. The LXX. translate it ἀνὴρ ἀστεῖος σφόδρα, *an exceeding civil or courteous man;* which made it the more easy for Ehud to give the blow,

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when he embraced him, perhaps, or stooped, when he rose out of his seat to receive his message, in an obliging manner.

Ver. 18. *And when he had made an end to offer the present.*] Which was done (as appears by this) with such ceremony as was in use in those days.

He sent away the people that bare the present.] It was brought by some of his retinue (consisting, it is likely, of several things), who being all withdrawn, and gone some part of their way homeward with him, he bade them go forward, and leave him to dispatch some private business which he pretended: for such designs, as he had in his mind, seldom succeed where many are engaged in them.

Ver. 19. *And he himself turned again.*] As if he had forgotten something, or had met with some new instructions by the way.

From the quarries that were by Gilgal.] Some understand by the word we translate *quarries*, a place where they digged or hewed stones; others, the twelve stones which Joshua placed in Gilgal. But the LXX. and the Vulgar take it for *graven images;* for so, indeed, the word *pesil* commonly signifies in Scripture, and so we translate it in the margin of our Bible: which when Ehud beheld, his spirit was mightily stirred within him (as Conradus Pellicanus explains this passage), and he proceeded no further in his return home, but went back, with a resolution to revenge this affront to God, as well as the oppression of his people. For it is to be supposed, the Moabites had set up these *graven images* in this place, rather than any other; which had been famous for the presence of God for a long time in it.

And said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king.] Being admitted again into the king's presence, he desired a private audience of him.

Who said, Keep silence.] He bade Ehud say no more till all his attendants were withdrawn, whom he would not have to hear the message.

And all that stood by him went out from him.] It may seem strange, that a prince should trust himself alone with one of that nation, who he knew groaned under his yoke; but his mind was blinded by the present, and by the compliments wherewith it was delivered; and God deprived him, at this time, of his wonted prudence. For, as Solomon observes, "There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord:" who intended he should be destroyed, (Prov. xxi. 30.)

Ver. 20. *And Ehud came unto him.*] Approached nearer to his person.

And he was sitting in a summer parlour.] In a *cool room* (as the Hebrew word imports), where he was defended from the heat of the sun, and enjoyed the fresh air.

Which he had made for himself alone.] Where he was wont to retire from all company, when he had a mind to sleep, perhaps in the heat of the day, or to dispatch business with which he entrusted nobody.

And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee.] Which in some sense was true, but not in that wherein the king understood it; who thought he had met with some Divine apparition in the way, or been at some oracle; for he doth not say he had a message from Jehovah the God of Israel (whom he would have despised, perhaps, as Pharaoh did), but from Elohim, which was a common name to all gods, (xxiv. 2. 15.)

And he rose out of his seat.] Out of reverence as to God, whose words, he supposed, he was to hear. A remarkable instance of the ancient veneration men paid to whatsoever carried the name and authority of God in it, and reproaches those who now behave themselves irreverently, even in his worship and service. (See Numb. xxiii. 18. 2 Kings xxiii. 3.)

Ver. 21. *And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh.*] If the king had his eye upon his hands, it was upon the right, and not the left, so that he might more unobservedly employ it as he designed.

And thrust it into his belly.] So that it pierced his heart (as Josephus understands it), or some other vital part; upon which he immediately died, without speaking a word, or making a noise to alarm his servants who were without. Nothing can justify this fact but an order from the Lord, which he not only pretended, but really had. (See ver. 26.)

Ver. 22. *And the haft also went in after the blade.*] The thrust he made was so violent, that not only the blade of the dagger, but the handle also, went into his bowels.

And the fat closed up the blade.] And the haft, so that they could not be seen.

So that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly.] But left it there, because he could take no hold of it.

And the dirt came out.] All agree that the word *parschedona*, which is no where found but here, signifies the dung or excrements; which came not out at the wound (for that was closed), but at the usual place; it being common for bodies to purge after they are dead, especially such corpulent ones as his was, in whose bowels, no doubt, there were violent convulsions made by this sudden stroke.

Ver. 23. *And Ehud went forth through the porch.*] It is very uncertain what the Hebrew word *misredona* signifies, which we translate *porch*. Some take it for the guard-chamber (as the LXX. seem to understand it), or a place where the king's servants sat; through which he passed boldly, that he might give no suspicion of any mischief he had done: or, as Kimchi explains it, the place where the people sat, who waited for audience.

And shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.] As he came out of the parlour, he not only shut the doors after him, and locked them; but, it is likely, took the key away with him. There seem to have been double doors, an inward and an outward, as is usual.

Ver. 24. *And when he was gone out, his servants came.*] Seeing Ehud was gone from the king, his attendants came into the antechamber (as we speak), to be ready at the king's call, to wait his pleasure.

And when they saw, that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in the summer parlour.] They concluded he was easing nature, as this phrase is commonly understood here, and in 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. for when they were about that business, the long garments which they wore in those countries were so disposed as to cover their feet. (See Gataker in his Cinnus, lib. ii. cap. 3.) But it may be understood, I think, of laying himself down to sleep, which they were wont to do in those countries in the heat of the day; (2 Sam. iv. 5.) and then, lying down in their clothes, it was necessary to cover their feet for decency's sake, to keep their garments from slipping up, and exposing those parts which should not be

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seen. And this suits better with the story than the other; for they thought fit to wait a great while before they entered the chamber, that they might not disturb his rest; whereas the other business being soon dispatched, would not have occasioned their waiting so long. (See the Arabic and Syriac version, both here and upon 1 Sam. xxiv. 3.)

Ver. 25. *And they tarried.*] Waiting in the antechamber.

Till they were ashamed.] Till they were in a great confusion, not knowing what to think should be the cause that he slept longer than ordinary.

And, behold, he opened not the door of the parlour.] At which it is likely, after tedious expectation, they knocked, and had no answer.

Therefore they took a key and opened them.] For in kings' courts, there were more than one who had keys to the same room.

And, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth.] Perhaps they did not at first perceive that he was killed; which might something retard their pursuit of Ehud.

Ver. 26. *And Ehud escaped while they tarried.*] Their long expectance of the king's awaking out of sleep, gave him the advantage of making his escape.

And passed beyond the quarries.] From whence he returned to do this exploit, (ver. 19.) which had been murder, if he had not had a Divine warrant for what he did: unto which none can pretend now, without blaspheming God as the author of sin; but then was evident, by the wonderful gifts of wisdom, and courage, and might, wherewith such men were divinely inspired. (See Grotius, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. i. cap. 4. sect. 19. n. 4.)

And escaped unto Seirath.] Gilgal was so near to the garrison which the Moabites had in those territories, that he did not think himself safe till he was got out of the tribe of Benjamin into the mountainous country of Ephraim, where this town was, upon the confines of the tribe of Benjamin.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, when he was come.*] To Seirath.

That he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim.] To summon those who were disposed to recover their liberties, to take arms and follow him.

And the children of Israel went down with him from the mount.] A considerable body of men, no doubt, presently met together (being before prepared, it is likely, by his emissaries), and marched after him into the country of Benjamin, where the Moabites were settled.

And he before them.] He led them on as their captain; and had many more, in all probability, joined him as he marched further into the country.

Ver. 28. *And he said unto them, Follow after me.*] Be not afraid to venture your lives, as I will do, for the liberty of your country.

For the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand.] He was assured that God, who had succeeded his enterprise, and deprived the Moabites of their supreme head (whereby, no doubt, they were in great confusion), would accomplish what he had begun, and give them a perfect deliverance: with this belief he endeavoured to possess their souls, as if the thing was already done, which he knew would inspire them with such courage as could not be withstood.

And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan.] He proceeded prudently, as well as courageously; and therefore led them directly to the fords of Jordan, of which they possessed themselves; that the Moabites who had settled themselves in that part of Judea, (ver. 13.) might not be able to save themselves by retreating into their own country, nor they in Moab be able to come to their assistance.

And suffered not a man to pass over.] To carry or bring any intelligence.

Ver. 29. *And they slew of the Moabites at that time about ten thousand men.*] Who had taken possession of the city of palm-trees, (ver. 13.) and posted themselves thereabouts, to keep the Israelites in subjection.

All lusty men.] In the Hebrew it is, *all fat men;* that is (as some understand it), men of estates, or very wealthy persons: men of quality, or of the better sort (as others expound it), who chose to transplant themselves hither, because of the richness and deliciousness of this country; but it may be interpreted *strong men*, as our translation imports, who were culled out from among the Moabites, to keep the Israelites in greater awe.

And all men of valour.] Who had given proof of their undaunted spirit in war.

And there escaped not a man.] But they were all cut off, either by those that guarded the fords, and intercepted their passage into their own country, or by the other part of the army of Israel who fell upon them, and drove them thither.

Ver. 30. *So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel.*] This doth not signify that they brought the country of Moab under their subjection, as the Moabites had brought theirs, but that they freed themselves from the yoke they had laid upon them, and served them no longer. (See ver. 14.)

And the land had rest fourscore years.] Which the same great man, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, thus interprets: ad A. M. 2679. "Et quievit terra anno octuagesimo, post quietem priorem ab Othniele restitutam." *And the land had rest in the eightieth year, after the former restored to it by Othniel:* but there is another way which some learned writers among the Jews suggest, of bringing the years of servitude and of peace, mentioned in this book, into such a compass, as may agree with what is said in 1 Kings vi. 2. concerning the number of years that passed from the deliverance out of Egypt to the building of Solomon's temple: for they suppose that there was scarce any of the judges who ruled over the whole country of Israel, but some in one part, and some in another; so that at the same time there were several judges in several parts of the land; and peace in one part, when there was war in another. Accordingly our learned chronologer Sir J. Marsham (who follows this opinion) understands here by *the land which had rest fourscore years,* not the whole land of Israel, but the eastern part of it, which had shaken off the yoke of Moab; but in the meantime the Philistines invaded the western parts, as it here follows, and were repulsed by Shamgar, while the eastern countries enjoyed perfect peace. This I take to be the clearest account of these words, *the land had rest fourscore years;* that is, the eastern part of the country, which had shaken off the yoke of Moab, not the whole land of Israel: for, as the Philistines invaded the western parts, so Jabin afflicted the northern (as it follows

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in the next chapter), while the oriental tribes remained in peace.

Ver. 31. *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath.*] It is not said of what tribe he was, and it is in vain to inquire about it; but it is probable he was one of those tribes that bordered upon the Philistines, because what he did was against them, and those were Judah, Dan, and Ephraim: nor is there the least signification how long he judged them; but he succeeding Ehud, his government was in some part of the fourscore years beforementioned: and, perhaps, it was not long before that time wherein Jabin oppressed Israel in the northern parts, as may be probably gathered from ver. 6.

Which slew of the Philistines six hundred men.] Now some of the people of Canaan made an attempt upon the Israelites, in the western parts, to bring them under their power. And these words sound as if Shamgar alone made opposition to them, and slew the number mentioned; being excited by the mighty power of God, which gave him unwonted courage and strength; for he was raised up, as the two foregoing great men had been, by a Divine inspiration, to be their judge, as appears by the last words of this verse.

With an ox-goad.] The Vulgar takes the Hebrew word *malmud* for a *plough-share*, and the LXX. favour this interpretation: but if we may judge by the derivation of the word, our translation is more probable; wherein we follow Kimchi and other learned Jews, who take it for the instrument whereby oxen are provoked (and, as it were, put in mind of their duty) when they draw the plough lazily. And thus Lycurgus is said to have overthrown the forces of Bacchus, without any other arms but βουπλῆγι, *an ox-goad.* So Homer describes the Bacchæ as put to flight ἀνδροφόνοιο Λυκούργου βουπλῆγι. (See Bochartus, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 18.)

And he also delivered Israel.] From hence it appears that he was a judge as well as the two former, though some both ancient and modern have questioned it; for this is the very phrase whereby they are described, ii. 9. 15. And the first words of this verse signify as much; which say, that *after him* (i. e. Ehud) was Shamgar, who succeeded him; that is, in the office of a judge, as the words naturally signify: and the great slaughter he made of the Philistines argues the same; for it manifestly was an heroical act, like that of Samson, who slew a thousand with the jaw-bone of an ass: neither of which could have been performed but by a Divine power wherewith they were possessed. It is not said here, indeed, how long he continued to judge them, nor from what oppressions he delivered them; but he is a deliverer who preserves a nation from being oppressed, as well as he who rescues them from oppression when they groan under it: and that it is likely was the case of Shamgar, who, when the Philistines came to invade his country, gave them a repulse with the loss of six hundred of their men; which, it is probable, discouraged them from further attempts. And this being done without any weapon but an ox-goad, it is likely he was at plough when the Philistines made this inroad to plunder and spoil the country; feeling a strong impulse upon him to oppose them, though he had no other arms, nor any to assist him, but such of his servants as were, perhaps, at plough with him. Thus some great men among the ancient Romans were called from the plough to be their dictators. But I will only add a strange passage out of the Midrash upon Lev. xvii. 3. who, mentioning these words, *and he also delivered Israel,* saith, "Thus he saved them by the hand of other judges, who being but flesh and blood, yet fell into slavery again; but in the age to come (*i. e.* of the Messiah) I in my own substance will redeem you, and ye shall not be reduced into servitude any more. According to what Isaiah saith, xlv. 17. *But Israel shall be saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation,*" &c. (See Raymund in his Pugio Fidei, p. 510.)

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *AND the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord.*] See iii. 12.

After the death of Ehud.] And of Shamgar. Concerning whom there is no further mention made, because he did nothing more than this one memorable act; religion being reformed by Ehud, who left it so at the time of his death; when, it is likely, the Philistines, seeing their chieftain gone, made the forenamed inroad upon the Israelites; but they being not yet openly fallen into idolatry, God was pleased to raise up Shamgar to give them a repulse, before they could possess themselves of any part of the country, as the Moabites had done. After which blow, given them by this single champion, it was a long time before we read of any disturbance they gave them; though Shamgar, it is probable, lived but a short time after this noble achievement. And then, when Ehud and he had been some time dead, the Israelites forgot the wonderful works of God, and returned to their old sin: for so the words in the Hebrew are to be understood, which run thus, *and Ehud was dead:* for that particle *ve,* which we translate *and,* oft-times signifies *because;* and here makes these words the reason of their relapse, *because Ehud was dead,* who had been the great instrument of bringing them back to God, and keeping them, while he lived, in his service.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord sold them.*] Delivered them up to be made slaves. (See iii. 8.)

Into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan.] Of that part of the country where the people, properly called Canaanites, now dwelt under his government.

Who reigned in Hazor.] In the region belonging unto Hazor; for the city itself was burnt by Joshua, (Josh. xi. 10.) and the king of it also slain, as we read there, xii. 9. whose name also was Jabin, (Josh. xi. 1.) of whose posterity it is probable this Jabin was; whose name was common to all the kings of that country, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt. It is possible, indeed, that Hazor might be rebuilt, as some other cities were, and possessed by the ancient inhabitants; but there is no need to suppose that; for he might reign in Hazor, just as the Moabites possessed Jericho; that is, the region appertaining to it. And according to the opinion I mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 30. Jabin is supposed to have invaded and brought under only the northern tribes; those in the east remaining at the same time in peace, after the expulsion of the Moabites; twenty years after which (Sir John Marsham makes account) Jabin's dominion over the northern tribes began. The text, indeed, makes no such distinction, *the children of*

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Israel in general being represented as sold under Jabin for their sins; yet it is said, ver. 10. that Barak gathered his army out of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, which are the tribes supposed to be alone oppressed by Jabin. Other tribes, indeed, joined with them, and they that did not, are very much blamed for it by Deborah in her song, even the Reubenites, and they beyond Jordan, (v. 14—16.) for it might very well be expected, that they who lived in peace and ease should be ready to assist their brethren who were heavily oppressed.

The captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the gentiles.] If we suppose that Hazor lay in its ruins, then Harosheth was the royal city, wherein Jabin dwelt, as well as Sisera. Which is called *Harosheth of the gentiles,* because people of several nations fled hither to be under his protection, when they heard that he had possessed himself of that country, and kept the Israelites out of it.

Ver. 3. *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, for he had nine hundred chariots of iron.*] His power was so increased, that they had no hope to redeem their liberty but by the help of the Lord. It may seem strange, that in this petty kingdom they should be so strong in chariots, when Mithridates had but a hundred in his army, and Darius no more than two hundred, as good authors inform us. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 9. p. 156.) I suppose they placed their chiefest strength in these, being not able to set out a great number of horsemen.

And twenty years they mightily oppressed the children of Israel.] Who groaned under a long servitude; during which time Jabin squeezed them, I suppose, by heavy exactions, which enabled him to raise greater forces than he had at first, when he brought them under his power. For God's anger increased by their frequent revolts from him; and he punished them more severely than he had done before by the Moabites; the Canaanites being the old inhabitants of the land, who hated them mortally, and kept them under a sorer as well as a longer oppression, than the Moabites had done.

Ver. 4. *And Deborah the prophetess.*] Such a one as Miriam, endued with Divine gifts of wisdom to instruct, direct, and govern others. For she was not only instructed with the knowledge of Divine things, but also was excited by the Holy Spirit (as Kimchi here notes) to declare the will of God to the people (which was the proper office of a prophet), as appears by the following part of this history. Her name in Hebrew signifies a *bee;* which hath been given (as learned men have observed) by other nations, to illustrious women. As among the Greeks, the nymph, said to be the nurse of Jove, is called Melissa; and the wife of Periander king of Corinth had the same name.

The wife of Lapidoth.] Or, as others translate it, *a woman of Lapidoth;* taking this word to signify a place, not a person. But our translation seems the most natural, and is to be preferred to that of R. Solomon and others, who translate it *a woman of splendours;* that is, an illustrious woman.

She judged Israel at that time.] Had the supreme authority over them; being so well known to be divinely inspired, that it procured her universal reverence, and submission to her judgment.

Ver. 5. *And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah.*] Or, as the LXX. and the Vulgar understand it, *she sat under the palm-tree,* when she administered judgment. Whence the tree was called by her name; because it was the place where all resorted to her.

Between Ramah and Beth-el.] That is, in the confines of the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim. For Ramah was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, and Beth-el in the tribe of Ephraim.

In Mount Ephraim.] In one of the mountains in the borders of that country; for though the tree was near both tribes, yet it stood in the tribe of Ephraim. The Jews (as appears by the Chaldee paraphrase) from hence conclude she was a very great woman, who had noble plantations in Jericho, Ramah, Beth-el, and other places; that is, of palms, saith R. Solomon, in Jericho, of vineyards in Ramah, and of olive-yards in the plain of Beth-el. And from her dwelling in a mountain, and being a prophetess, and a governess, and other things, some learned men imagine the story of the Theban sphinx was invented by the Greeks. (See Bochartus, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 6.)

And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.] For direction and the ending of differences, by deciding causes; which none could do with such satisfaction as she did. By which it appears, that though Jabin oppressed them sorely, yet it was rather by rigorous taxations, than infringing all their laws; the course of which he did not stop, but suffered to be administered by their own officers. And he took the less notice of it, perhaps, because the supreme judicature was exercised by a woman; from whose power and authority he thought there was no reason to apprehend any danger. It may be probably hence gathered, that there was no such Sanhedrin in these days, as the Jews conceive there always was in the most early times: for why should they go to her for judgment, if there were a court of seventy eminent persons, then sitting at Shiloh?

Ver. 6. *And she sent and called.*] A plain act of authority, which was owned by the whole nation.

Barak the son of Abinoam.] Concerning whom we know no more (for, that he was Deborah's husband, or, as others say, her son, are ungrounded conceits of some of the Jews), but that he was born or dwelt in a famous city in the tribe of Naphtali, as it follows in the next words.

Out of Kedesh-Naphtali.] There were several cities of this name. One in the tribe of Issachar, (1 Chron. vi. 72.) another in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 23.) and therefore, for distinction's sake, this is called Kedesh-Naphtali; which was a city of great note, in the upper Galilee, belonging to the Levites, and a city of refuge.

And said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying.] She could not think he doubted of the commission she now gave him from God; which he received as an oracle.

Go, and draw.] The Vulgar takes the word *draw* to signify gathering forces together: but the LXX. take it to be of the same import with the foregoing word; signifying that he should go till he drew near to Mount Tabor.

Towards Mount Tabor.] A noble mountain in Galilee, not far from Kedesh, in the tribe of Zebulun, and in the confines of Issachar and Manasseh; which had a very large plain at the top of it, as Josephus tells us, who calls it Staburium, lib. iv. de Bello Jud. cap. 2. where he

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might draw up an army, and exercise them very conveniently.

And take with thee ten thousand men.] Who were moved to list themselves under him, by the proclamation of this commission, which he brought with him from God.

Of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun.] She thought he need go no further than these two tribes, which were nearest to him; but others also offered their service out of Manasseh and Issachar, as appears from ver. 14, 15.

Ver. 7. *And I will draw unto thee.*] These are the words of God (which Deborah pronounced in his name), signifying, as Arius Montanus understands the word *draw*, that he would, by his secret providence, incline Sisera to come within his power to destroy him; as hunters (unto whom warriors are compared) entice wild beasts to fall into their toils.

To the river Kishon.] Which was near Mount Tabor; having its beginning at the foot of it.

Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude.] Wherewith he intended to encompass this mountain; and block up Barak till he forced him to yield up himself unto him.

And I will deliver him into thine hand.] This shews Deborah to have been endued with the highest gift of prophecy; which was to foretell certainly things to come.

Ver. 8. *And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then will I go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.*] He is commended for his faith in God by the apostle, Heb. xi. 32. as well as other great worthies in ancient time; though it was so weak and imperfect, that he made conditions with God's messenger, and absolutely refused to obey unless they were granted. He had great reason, he thought, for it; because he might want her advice in doubtful matters, and her authority also, both to gather soldiers, and to keep them together in good order, and to inspire them with courage. The LXX. here add a great many words, which make this the reason of his backwardness; that without her he should not be able to know the best time of giving Sisera battle.

Ver. 9. *And she said, I will surely go with thee.*] She saw he had faith enough to undertake the enterprise, and therefore consented to his proposal.

Notwithstanding the journey that thou takest.] In the Hebrew it is, *the way that thou takest.* Which may signify the course which he had resolved upon, not to go without her.

Shall not be for thine honour.] Though his faith was accepted, yet the weakness of it something eclipsed his glory.

For the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.] It is a great part of the glory of a conqueror to take the general of the enemy's army, or to kill him with his own hand; which she tells him should be denied him, as a small punishment of his backwardness to do as he was bidden; and as he would not go without a woman, so a woman should take away this honour from him.

And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.] She made no delay, but immediately accompanied him to his own city; where he began, I suppose, his levy of men.

Ver. 10. *And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh.*] He caused proclamation to be made of God's command, and his own intentions, in these two tribes; who resorted to him in great numbers.

And went up with ten thousand men.] He picked, I suppose, ten thousand men out of those who flocked to him; and went up with them to Mount Tabor.

At his feet.] That is, they followed him as their leader. Though it may signify that they were all *footmen;* there being no horses in Judea, which they brought out of other countries. This made the victory the more glorious, by the overthrow of a great many chariots and horses in the opposite army.

And Deborah went up with him.] To encourage him and his forces, now they were gathered.

Ver. 11. *Now Heber the Kenite, who was of the children of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses.*] See Numb. x. 29. This is interposed to explain what follows concerning Jael, who was Heber's wife.

Had severed himself from the Kenites.] Who went along with the children of Judah, to settle among them, (Judg. i. 16.) What the reason was of Heber's leaving them, as they all left the plain of Jericho, is not known; but there was a special providence of God in it.

And pitched his tent.] The Kenites lived after the manner of the Midianites (from whom they descended), in tents, not in houses.

Unto the plain of Zaanaim.] A place in the tribe of Naphtali, (Josh. xix. 33.) where there was a plain, or (as the LXX. expound the Hebrew word *alon*) a grove of oaks, under the shadow of which their tents were pitched.

Which was by Kedesh.] Though they loved to live in the open fields, yet not far from a city.

Ver. 12. *And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to Mount Tabor.*] They could not want intelligence of a thing done so publicly as this was; and the words seem to import, that Sisera had *many* who informed him of all that passed.

Ver. 13. *And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron.*] In which (as I said ver. 3.) their main strength consisted. But they being unfit for service in mountainous countries, as I have often observed, it is probable they placed them so below the mountain as to coop up Barak there; by seizing all the avenues, and hindering all provisions from being brought to him.

And all the people that were with him.] As great a number of footmen, as came to him upon the summons he sent forth, to require them to appear on this occasion. For so the word *gathered together* signifies in the Hebrew (as we observe in the margin of our Bibles), *gathered by cry or proclamation.*

From Harosheth of the gentiles, unto the river Kishon.] With whom he marched from that city to this river; which descended, as I said, from the foot of Mount Tabor.

Ver. 14. *And Deborah said unto Barak, Up.*] Make no delay.

For this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand.] She speaks of the victory as already gained, that she might work in him a full assurance thereof. This doth not contradict what was said ver. 9. that God would *sell Sisera into the hand of a woman:* for both were true; he and his army were delivered into the hand of Barak, to be routed by him; but he, in his flight, fell into Jael's hands to be killed. How long this was after Sisera encamped at the river Kishon, we have no means to know;

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but it was upon some day when Deborah knew the army of Sisera lay secure in their quarters, or were about fortifying the passages more strongly; or were to be joined with greater forces; or some other way might be taken at advantage.

Is not the Lord gone out before thee?] As a general doth before his army; to animate, and raise their courage.

So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.] It is not said that Deborah went with him any farther than to Mount Tabor: where, it is likely, his faith was grown so strong, that he durst undertake any thing without her presence with him.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord.*] Who conducted Barak, as he did his army, (ver. 14.)

Discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host.] They did not expect such a bold sally as this, which struck a sudden terror into them; for he fell upon them, it is likely, before they were aware, which put them into the greater confusion. The Lord also struck a terror into them (as the word *hamam* imports) by a noise of thunder and lightning; as the word is used 1 Sam. vii. 10. and also in Josh. x. 10. where we read the Canaanites were discomfited by great hailstones falling down upon them: or he made a terrible sound of horses and chariots rattling in their ears, by the ministry of his angels, in the clouds; as he did in the days of Elisha, (2 Kings vii. 6.) which seems to be acknowledged by Deborah, in her song in the next chapter, (ver. 20.)

With the edge of the sword.] This terror and confusion wherein they were, exposed them to be slain easily.

So that Sisera lighted down off his chariot.] Which he thought did not make haste enough to carry him out of danger; and, besides, made it known where he was.

And fled away on his feet.] As a common soldier, that he might not be discovered; and that he might likewise secure himself, by his speedy running: for anciently valiant men were wonderful swift of foot, as it is noted of Asahel, 2 Sam. ii. 18. and every one knows it was the character of the famous Achilles among the Greeks.

Ver. 16. *But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the gentiles.*] He resolved to follow his blow to the very gates of their own city.

And all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword.] In the pursuit, he and his men cut off all they overtook.

And there was not one of them left.] Which was their whole army; not one escaping to carry the news of their defeat to Jabin. Or, there was not one man to be seen in the way to Harosheth; but they were all scattered to shift where they could for themselves.

Ver. 17. *Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael wife of Heber the Kenite.*] Only Sisera, by his swift running, got, as he thought, into a place of safety, in the tent of Jael; her husband, perhaps, being abroad in the field, and she only at home. Women also had their apartment by themselves, in a tent of their own, as appears by Gen. xxiv. 67. see there, and Gen. xxxi. 33. where he imagined no search would be made for him.

And there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.] It seems Heber was a considerable person, who had a great family, and many dependants; like that of Abraham, Gen. xiv. 14. How he came to escape the sore oppression under which the Israelites groaned (being incorporated into their nation and religion), and to live at ease in a time of great distress, we can but conjecture. Perhaps their manner of life, retired from towns and company, made Jabin not fear any danger from them; and if they still kept close to their religion, when the Israelites were apostates, God inclined the heart of Jabin to be favourable to them, and give no molestation to his harmless neighbours; who, perhaps, purchased their freedom from vexation, by their frequent incursions.

Ver. 18. *And Jael went out to meet Sisera.*] She watched, it is likely, to hear the event of Sisera's expedition; and seeing him come with great speed towards her house, went out, to invite him there to repose himself.

And said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in; fear not.] She assured him there was nobody in the tent to do him any hurt. Which was true; and it is not certain that she now intended to do, what afterward she did.

And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle.] Being weary, he desired to take some rest; when it was proper to throw a covering over him, to preserve him, being very hot, from taking cold. What kind of covering this was, which the Hebrews call *semicha* (and we translate *mantle*), is not very material. They say it was a thick covering, which hath flocks of wool on both sides; such as our double rugs. (See Bochart, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 42.)

Ver. 19. *And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.*] By the heat of the fight, and his long running.

And she opened a bottle of milk.] Out of respect to him, she brought him the best liquor she had, and of the best sort; for it appears by ver. 25. of the next chapter, that the cream was not taken off from it. It is possible also she might design, by this draught, to throw him into a sounder sleep; for milk, when largely drank, flies up into the head, and causes drowsiness. But however that be, it is certain milk was anciently accounted the most agreeable nourishment, which Hippocrates calls ἀδελφὸν καὶ συγγενὲς to human bodies. And therefore the most warlike nations lived upon it, more than any other food; as Hermannus Conringius hath shewn at large in his book de Habitus Germanorum Corporum causis.

And gave him drink, and covered him.] He rose up to drink; and then lying down again, she covered him as before.

Ver. 20. *Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent.*] Because he doth not say, Stand *I pray thee* (as he did before when he asked for drink), some fancy (particularly Arius Montanus) that he spake this imperiously; laying his commands upon her, as a confederate of his master: but I see no ground to think, that, when he was in such need of her friendship, he would take upon him so much as to give her a charge to do any thing, but rather entreat it of her.

And it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here?] Who was not of their own family.

That thou shalt say, No.] They imagined there was no harm in telling an officious lie to deceive an enemy; that they might preserve a friend or ally, as he was.

Ver. 21. *Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent.*]

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Or one of the great pins wherewith the tent was fastened to the ground. For she had no better instrument at hand (sword, or such-like weapon, being not usually kept in women's tents), and this she knew how to use more readily than any other; being accustomed, it is likely, when they removed from one place to another, to take up her tent, and to fasten it again by striking such nails into the earth.

And took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples.] Where it would most easily enter (being the thinnest part of the skull), and most speedily dispatch him.

And fastened it into the ground.] Upon which he lay (not on a bed), with a carpet, or some such thing under him; as the manner was in those countries.

For he was fast asleep and weary.] His weariness made him sleep soundly.

So he died.] She might as well have let him lie in his profound sleep, till Barak came, and took him; if she had not felt a Divine power moving her to this, that the prophecy of Deborah might be fulfilled. Nothing but this authority from God, of which she was certain, could warrant such a fact as this. Which seemed a breach of hospitality, and to be attended with several other crimes; but was not so, when God, the Lord of all men's lives, ordered her to execute his sentence upon him.

Ver. 22. *And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him.*] As she had done Sisera, (ver. 18.).

And said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest.] Before he made any inquiry, she knew he was desirous, above all men, to take Sisera; and, perhaps, she knew, by an inspiration, that he was in quest of him.

And when he came into the tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.] He lay in the place and posture wherein he was killed, that Barak might see the prophecy of Deborah made good.

Ver. 23. *So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel.*] So that he was not able to oppress them any longer, but they were restored to perfect liberty.

Ver. 24. *And the hand of the children of Israel prospered and prevailed against Jabin king of Canaan.*] They prosecuted this day's victory with new successes; wherein his forces were overthrown in other battles, and his cities taken.

Until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.] To the utter ruin of this kingdom of the Canaanites in Hazor: for Jabin himself, as Arius Montanus thinks, was slain at the brook Kishon, Psal. lxxxiii. 9. (though, it must be confessed, that may be meant only of his forces), so that we hear of none of his name in future times. And herein the Israelites seem to me to have begun to be sensible of their duty; which was to extirpate the people of Canaan, and not merely to bring them under tribute, (Deut. vii. 2—4.)

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *THEN sang Deborah, and Barak the son of Abinoam, in that day, this song.*] It was composed by Deborah, (ver. 7.) being a prophetess, one of whose special gifts was to sing God's praises, (1 Chron. xxv. 1—3.) and commanded to be sung by the authority of Barak; who was now, I suppose, become a judge, upon this great deliverance God had wrought by him. For it is not to be thought that these two persons alone sang this song; but all the elders of the people were called together in one assembly to sing it with them; and they afterward delivered it to the people. It was likely it was composed and sung after they had completed their victory by the destruction of Jabin's kingdom. For the prophets were taught such sublimity of thought and speech, as is used in these songs, by their admiration of such wonderful events as they observed.

Ver. 2. *Praise the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.*] It is evident to all, that this hymn is expressed in another kind of language, than the historical part of this book; and in a language so majestic, in such variety of elegant figures, and such native expressions of those affections which the occasion required, that none of the ancient Greek or Latin poets have equalled; at least it appears, there was a most excellent spirit of poetry among the Hebrews, especially such of them as were divinely moved, when the Greeks lay in dark ignorance.

And first she excites all the people to give thanks unto God, and acknowledge his wisdom and power, in taking vengeance of their oppressors, and in moving the hearts of so many especially in Naphtali and Zebulun, voluntarily to list themselves to fight against the Lord's enemies: where it is to be noted, that she very wisely excites them so to ascribe the victory unto God, as not to forget the instruments he used to obtain it; for that she knew would be a great encouragement to others in time to come, to engage themselves in such enterprises, when they saw these men so highly praised, and looked upon as employed by God in his service.

Ver. 3. *Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes.*] Next, she calls upon all the neighbouring potentates to give attentive heed unto her song; whereby they might understand what God had done for Israel, and learn from thence not to oppress them, when it was in their power; for fear of the same vengeance which God had taken upon Jabin.

I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praises to the Lord God of Israel.] Who she would have the world know was superior to all in power, and would defend his people, while they depended on him alone.

Ver. 4. *Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of Edom.*] This is but a repetition of the same thing; Edom and Seir signifying the country where the posterity of Esau dwelt, who refused to give Israel a passage through their land, as the Lord led them into Canaan; and therefore he conducted them from thence another way, and made them encompass that land: (Numb. xxi. 4. Deut. ii. 1.) and when they had left it behind them (which is here called *marching out of Edom*), then he wrought for them astonishing things, as it follows in the next words.

The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.] These are poetical phrases, to express the great consternation in which all those countries were, when they saw Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan, overthrown on a sudden by the Israelites, and utterly destroyed. (See Numb. xxi. 21, &c.)

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Ver. 5. *The mountains melted from before the Lord.*] All the inhabitants of those mountains.

Even that Sinai, from before the Lord God of Israel.] Just as Sinai trembled and quaked at the giving of the law.

In these two verses she turns her speech unto God, and commemorates his wonderful acts in former times, with which she compares the glorious deliverance he had given them now: as much as to say, his power was not at all decayed, but he was as terrible to his enemies in her days, as he had been in former times.

Ver. 6. *In the day of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael.*] The sense of this verse will be very plain, if we translate these words, as I think the Hebrew will bear, *from the days of Shamgar*, &c. After his death they fell into sin and great misery. And Jael is here mentioned, not as a judge (as Rasi and Ralbag fancy), but as a great woman of a masculine and valiant spirit, who yet could do nothing to hinder those spoils that were committed.

The highways were unoccupied.] The people being corrupted in their religion, broke out into all manner of violence, and turned highway-robbers; so that men durst not travel in the common road upon their occasions, but were fain to seek for by-paths, because the highways were infested by thieves: or this may be meant of robberies which Jabin's soldiers committed, after he had brought them in subjection to him; who took no care to protect the Israelites, but suffered their country to be ravaged by his troops.

The travellers walked through by-ways.] In the Hebrew (as in the margin of our Bibles is observed) the words are, *the walkers of paths:* by which we may understand men accustomed to travel, who, though they went in great companies together, yet durst not venture in the direct road, but went about through *crooked ways* (as the Hebrew word signifies, which we translate *by-ways*), by which means commerce was very much obstructed.

Ver. 7. *The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel.*] Men were not safe in their own houses; which were broken open, if they lived in villages, and therefore they forsook them, and fled to walled towns, and fortified places.

Until that I Deborah arose.] This some of the Jews take to be a proud and arrogant expression, for which the Holy Spirit was taken from her: but Rasi (who reports this conceit) soberly acknowledges, that they are not words of boasting, but of joy and gladness.

That I arose a mother in Israel.] A judge or ruler of God's people. For, as men that governed were called fathers of their country, so it was proper for her, being a woman, to call herself a *mother in Israel;* among whom she did such great things, and governed with so much prudence, that it made her famous in other countries. For very learned men think, as I noted above, that the story of Sphinx among the Greeks was made out of the history of Deborah, she being a judge among the Bœotians, as Deborah was in Israel. (See Bochart in the book beforenamed; and Hermannus Witsius more lately, in his Miscellanea Sacra, lib. i. cap. 23.)

Ver. 8. *They chose new gods.*] That is, the Israelites, after the death of Ehud, forsook the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth, (as they had done formerly, ii. 13. iii. 7.) or perhaps they introduced the worship of some other gods, whom they had not served before, fancying they might be more powerful than their former had proved.

Then was war in the gates.] This was the fountain of all their calamities; for God immediately delivered them into the hand of some enemy or other, who possessed themselves of their cities and strong holds; for that is the meaning of *war in the gates.* Their enemies seized on their cities and fortresses; for their strength was in their *gates;* where sat also the courts of justice.

Was there spear or shield seen among forty thousand in Israel?] They were generally disarmed, for the securing their subjection to the Canaanites; as afterward the Philistines took the same course with them, (1 Sam. xiii. 19.) Here the Targum makes a strange excursion in mustering up the many thousand commanders, and sword-men, and spear-men, and archers, &c. that were in the army of Sisera.

Ver. 9. *My heart is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people.*] It seems there were some of the greatest men in the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, who, of their own accord, hazarded their lives, among the common people, in this service: towards whom she expresses a singular affection; and, with the praises of God, mixes the commendation of those who were his instruments in this deliverance.

Bless ye the Lord.] This is added, like a prophetess, who, when she commends the most deserving men, carries their thoughts up to God, who gave them that courage and good success. Abarbinel had a conceit came into his head, as he tells us, when he was commenting on these words, that by *chokkee Israel* (which Kimchi interprets as we do, *the great men of Israel*), are meant the *scribes,* whose office it was to register all notable passages, particularly the causes of wars, and their events; whom Deborah exhorts to bless the Lord, and when they wrote the history of this war, to ascribe the success to the Divine favour. But it is not likely they had such scribes in these ages, as it is likely they had in future times; much less such plenty of them now in these confused days, that Deborah should make a particular address to them to do their duty.

Ver. 10. *Speak.*] *i. e.* Give thanks to God.

Ye that ride on white asses.] She calls upon such men, as the governors beforementioned, to proclaim aloud the praises of God. There were no horses in Judea, but what were brought out of other countries, so that the greatest persons rode on asses, as appears by the Scripture story; but in this country they were commonly of a red colour, (whence an ass hath the name of *chamor,* as Bochart observes, lib. ii. Hieroz. cap. 12.) and therefore white asses (or, as he translates this word, *whitish,* or that were of a colour inclining to white) were highly esteemed for their rarity, and used only by honourable persons; who could not appear in any splendour during their servitude under Jabin, but now were restored to their dignity; for which she would have them praise the Lord.

Ye that sit in judgment.] With whom she exhorts the judges to join, who now sat in the gates, as they were wont to do, which were not possessed by their enemies, (ver. 8.) Or perhaps this belongs to the foregoing clause, it being

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probable that these judges rode about the country on white asses to do justice. (See upon x. 4.)

And walked by the way.] All the merchants who now travelled safely about their business, which they durst not do before this deliverance; (ver. 6.) for which, therefore, they were bound to praise the Lord.

Ver. 11. *They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water.*] Together with the princes, judges, and merchants, she would have the shepherds praise the Lord every time they came to water their flocks; remembering how they were disturbed formerly by the archers, that lurked in woods or thickets, and shot whole quivers of arrows at them and at their cattle, which now they brought safely to the springs of water.

There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord.] Who had taken a just vengeance on their oppressors, and most graciously delivered them from their tyranny; for *righteousness* frequently signifies the great goodness of God.

Even the righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel.] She would have the meanest peasants (as we speak) bear them company in the praises of God; for now they lived as quietly in their open villages, as if they had been in the strongest cities.

Then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates.] She sums up all in these words; that the whole country was bound to praise the Lord, who had given the law its free course; every man having liberty to go down safely to the gate of his own city, where judgment was administered.

Ver. 12. *Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake; utter a song.*] Having called upon all others to praise the Lord, she now excites herself, with the most earnest and zealous affection (expressed by the repetition of the same thing four times), to celebrate his wonderful works, by composing a song in his praise.

Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.] She calls upon Barak to go in triumph, carrying (as the manner was in ancient times) his principal captives and spoils along with him unto the house of God: for one cannot think she meant merely a secular pompous show; since the Romans themselves in their triumphs marched to the capitol, and there offered sacrifice to Jupiter. Some ask, what captives he had to lead, when the whole army of Sisera was cut off? (iv. 16.) To which the answer is easy, That when Barak, after he had routed their army, pursued his victory as far as Harosheth, he brought several persons, and perhaps of the best quality, captive with him, out of that country.

Ver. 13. *Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people.*] Or, *then he shall make him that remaineth*, &c. that is, when Barak triumphed, that small remnant of Israel (as the best of the Jews interpret *him that remaineth*) who were not utterly dispirited by the oppression of Jabin, but had some courage left in them, triumphed together with him over the nobles of Canaan.

The Lord made me have dominion over the mighty.] She, who was but a weak woman, triumphed also over the most powerful enemies.

Ver. 14. *Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek.*] Now she makes a catalogue of those who any way assisted in this war, as Homer doth of those people who equipped ships for the war against Troy: and I find no sense of these words so plain as this, that the Amalekites coming to assist Sisera, as they had done the Moabites, (iii. 13.) a small party of the Ephraimites (called here *a root*) opposed their passage, and hindered them from joining their forces with the Canaanites. Peter Martyr by a *root* understands a great captain among them, as in Isa. xi. 10. the word is thought to be used. But a most learned friend of mine (Dr. Alix) admonishes me, that Amalek doth not only signify the people descended from Amalek, but a mountain in the tribe of Ephraim, mentioned xii. 15. And, if we understand it so in this place, it makes this clear sense far easier and more natural than the other, *out of Ephraim was their beginning* (so the word *root* may be interpreted) *about Amalek.* That is, the Ephraimites, who came to the assistance of Barak, began their listing of men near to this mountain. And so the particle *beth* (I observed upon Josh. x. 10.) signifies as well *near* or *about*, as *in* or *against.*

After thee, Benjamin, among thy people.] Following the example of the tribe of Benjamin; who seem to have all of them engaged in this quarrel, with whom a few of the Ephraimites joined.

Out of Machir.] An eminent family in Manasseh; which is put here for all that tribe on the other side Jordan, where Machir was settled, (Numb. xxxii. 39. Josh. xiii. 31.) Which made their zeal the more remarkable, in coming so far to the aid of their brethren; when they heard they were engaged in this enterprise.

Came down governors.] Some of the principal persons of that country; who, no doubt, had their followers, that accompanied them in this expedition.

And out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the ready writer.] They were nearer to Mount Tabor than any of the forenamed; but are therefore highly commended, that though they were better skilled in books than in arms, yet offered their service to Barak on this occasion: for *scribes* in Scripture signify men of letters, that studied the law, and expounded it.

Ver. 15. *And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah.*] Came and offered their service, when they heard that Barak, by her order, had summoned their neighbours Zebulun and Naphtali to come to him, (iv. 10.)

Even Issachar.] And the people of that tribe followed the example of their princes.

And also Barak.] The Hebrew *chen* (translated here *and also*) signifies *as*, or *like unto*; that is, they were as forward as Barak to march into the field, though they had no summons.

He was sent on foot into the valley.] That is, when he was sent down from Mount Tabor, by the order of Deborah, (iv. 14.) to fall upon Sisera in the valley; whither he went on foot, against his chariots and horsemen: or, he went with his footmen (as the LXX. translate it), and engaged that vast number of chariots, which were of greatest use in the valley.

For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.] But the Reubenites were so divided in their counsels, that they stayed at home (as if they were separated from their brethren in their affections, as they were in their situation, beyond Jordan), which begat many sad thoughts in the hearts of the rest of the Israelites; who could not understand the reason of it.

Ver. 16. *Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear*

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the bleatings of the flocks?] It was a shameful and an unaccountable thing, that they should wholly mind their private business (which was feeding cattle, Numb. xxxii. 1.) and neglect the public good.

For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of hearts.] And therefore she could not sufficiently bewail it; which she doth, by repeating what a great trouble it was to all their brethren; who were not able to discover the reason, and give any account of their being no more concerned than their beasts, for their common religion and liberties.

Ver. 17. *Gilead abode beyond Jordan.*] She complains also of the Gileadites, who were men of valour; and notwithstanding sat still, and would not step over Jordan to help their brethren. Under the name of Gilead, are comprehended the Gadites, who had half of Gilead, (Josh. xiii.) as the other half was given to the children of Machir. Who did come to the aid of their brethren; at least their governors engaged with them, (ver. 14.) Which hath moved some to read these words interrogatively, *Did Gilead abide beyond Jordan?* as if she still upbraided the Reubenites; who had not this to allege for themselves, that they were far off, beyond Jordan; for so were the Gileadites (that is, those descended from Machir), who they suppose comprehended the rest; and yet the best and most worthy of them came to join with their brethren, in the common cause of the nation.

And why did Dan remain in ships?] She reproves this tribe, which was near the sea (the famous port of Joppa belonging to it), that they minded nothing but their merchandise; while their brethren hazarded their lives in the field.

Asher continued on the sea-shore.] This tribe also bordered upon the Mediterranean; Tyre and Sidon being part of their portion. Which they did not possess; yet, no doubt, they held several other lesser places upon that sea; from which they would not stir in this common danger.

And abode in his breaches.] Or, *in his creeks*, as it is in the margin; and as the LXX. take it, who expound the Hebrew word *miphratsim (fractures)* by διεξόδους, *outlets*, or small havens; where vessels lay, to go out to sea. Some take the words to signify, that they were busy in repairing the breaches made in their walled towns, by length of time, or other ways.

Ver. 18. *Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death.*] They were the only people (which was much for their honour) who unanimously despised life, in comparison with the liberty of their country and religion. For the Hebrew word *charaph* doth not signify merely to expose one's self to danger; but to expose one's self to reproach, as we observe in the margin of our Bibles: and here denotes that they *made no account* of their lives, &c.

In the high places of the field.] They went down from Mount Tabor (where they were drawn up in a large plain, as I observed on iv. 6.) with a resolution to conquer or die.

It is observable, that, in this narration, there is not a word said of Judah, or Simeon, or Gad (unless comprehended under Gilead, as I said before); and that as Reuben, Dan, and Asher are taxed for their cowardly carelessness in this case, so Ephraim, Benjamin, part of Manasseh, and Issachar did afford some assistance; but nothing comparable to what Zebulun and Naphtali did; who, as one man, engaged to hazard their lives and fortunes (as we now speak) for the regaining of their liberty; which was the more highly commendable, because they were but a handful of men, when they first engaged, in comparison with the vast army which they undertook to assault.

Ver. 19. *The kings came and fought.*] When the Israelites conquered Canaan, Hazor had several kingdoms subject to it, or depending on it, (Josh. xi. 10.) And now, it is likely, there were divers kings, who were, at least, Jabin's confederates; and came to join their forces with his, to reduce the Israelites to his obedience.

Then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo.] These were two cities belonging to the Manassites, but in the tribe of Issachar; (Josh. xvii. 11.) between which, as Rasi understands it, the army of Sisera lay; reaching from Taanach to Megiddo, by which the river Kishon ran.

They took no gain of money.] The simple sense seems to be, that they were kings of such bravery, as fought not for money, but for glory and dominion; so Rasi and Ralbag among the Jews understand it; They fought not for pay, but came *gratis* (as we speak) to the assistance of Jabin. But the Vulgar takes it otherwise; They got nothing but blows, no spoil or prey at all, as they expected. And Kimchi still much differently (which the words will bear), They came so enraged against the Israelites, that they would have spared no man's life, though he offered great sums of money for his redemption; because they thirsted only after their blood.

Ver. 20. *They fought from heaven.*] But, on the other side, God fought for the Israelites, by sending thunder, and lightning, and hailstones from heaven upon the Canaanites (as he did in the days of Joshua); and, perhaps, as P. Martyr conjectures, raising a great dust, which a stormy wind blew so violently into their eyes, that they could not see. As Livy saith it fell out to the Romans, in the great battle at Cannæ.

The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.] Some take these words literally, and render the words, not *in their courses*, but *in their exaltations*, *i. e.* with all their power and strongest influences: whence the saying of Rasi, on this place, *The head, or beginning of the stars is in heaven; but the feet, or the end of them, is upon the earth.* That is, hither they send their influences. But others think these words signify, that all this was done by the ministry of angels, who are here called *stars*, (as in the book of Job, xxxvii. 7.) because he is speaking of heaven; from whence they came to raise this terrible tempest, and, by other means which we are ignorant of, to trouble the host of Jabin, as they did that of Pharaoh in the Red Sea: and this they did in such rank and order, as is observed in that heavenly host.

It may be also thought, that, this fight lasting till night, the stars may be said to fight against Sisera, because they shone brightly to give light to the Israelites to pursue their victory.

Ver. 21. *The river Kishon swept them away.*] It so swelled at this time, that, though otherwise it was very shallow, many of them were drowned in it; being carried away with a rapid stream: for so the word *jerapham* signifies, which we translate *swept them away.* It is no where else found; but frequent among the Arabic authors, among whom it is

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commonly used in this sense; as Bochart shews, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 16. and 42. It is likely there was a great flood, which was made by that sudden violent rain, which fell in the forenamed tempest.

That ancient river, the river Kishon.] It is an elegancy used by orators themselves (as we find in Cicero) to repeat the same words, when there is great occasion. And here she makes an addition to the same word; by calling Kishon that *ancient river;* because of some other great exploit performed there in ancient time; the memory of which is now lost. But *Kedumim* some take to be a proper name, and another name of the same river Kishon.

O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.] This is an elegant apostrophe (or turning of her speech) to herself; whose happiness she applauds, in beholding the most powerful enemies quite vanquished, by her commission which she gave from God, and by her prayers to him: for none can doubt that she implored help from heaven, while Barak fought with Sisera.

Ver. 22. *Then were the horse-hoofs broken.*] They could not save themselves by flight, their horse-hoofs being broken in stony places, when they ran away as fast as they were able.

By the means of their prancings.] The more haste they made the worse speed (as the common saying is), for they running full gallop (so the Jews interpret the Hebrew word *dahar* [*prancings*] to signify the *swiftest course*), they trod the harder on the ground, and were in the more danger to break their hoofs.

The prancings.] The Hebrews wanting a superlative degree in their language, are wont to double a word (as Peter Martyr here observes); and therefore *prancings, prancings,* he thinks, are not here an ornament of speech, but signify the most vehement motion, when a horse is in his full speed.

Of their mighty ones.] Of their best and strongest horses: for the word *abbirim* in Hebrew, as Bochart observes, signifies not only strong bulls, but horses also. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 6.)

Ver. 23. *Curse ye Meroz.*] Most interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, understand by Meroz a city not far from the place where the fight was. Which seems to be proved by the following words, where he speaks of *the inhabitants thereof.* But R. Sol. Jarchi thinks Meroz signifies a potent person in those parts, who being able to give great assistance to Barak, and living near Mount Tabor, refused to do any thing. And this is the opinion of the Talmudists (whom Jarchi is wont to follow), as Mr. Selden shews out of the Gemara Babylon, lib. i. de Synedriis, cap. 6. p. 123, &c. where they fancy that this great man was excommunicated by Deborah, with all his adherents; and hence they fetch the ground and original of the excommunication in use among them: which is an idle conceit; there being no such thing as excommunication practised among them, till they had quite lost their civil government, and it was in the hands of the heathen.

Saith the angel of the Lord.] She would not have it thought that this curse proceeded from her anger, but from the authority of God, who, by his angel, which spake to her, denounced it against Meroz. And who should this angel be, but the Captain of the Lord's host, mentioned Josh. v. 14.? (See there.)

Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof.] They that take Meroz for a person, by *inhabitants* understand those that dwelt near him, and were his dependants or associates; which is very forced.

Because they came not to the help of the Lord.] The battle was the Lord's, as the Scripture elsewhere speaks, and therefore they that refused to engage in it, refused to maintain his cause: and the people of this place are so heavily cursed, when all others that came not in to help their brethren are only discommended, because they lived so near, that they might easily have joined their forces with them, whereas some others lived a great way off, which might something excuse them.

To the help of the Lord against the mighty.] According to this translation of the last word, she means their most powerful enemies; but the Hebrew may as well be translated *with the mighty;* that is, with other valiant men, who freely offered their service in this enterprise. This aggravated their guilt, that when they had such noble examples of zeal from others, who were less able to help, they would afford no assistance.

Ver. 24. *Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be.*] On the other side, she desires Jael may be ever praised; or rather foretells she shall always continue famous, and her husband too, in future generations.

Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.] This is thought to be a wishing, or promising her all happiness in her domestic affairs. But P. Martyr thinks it may be interpreted, *Blessed shall she be for what she did in her tent.* Which was no less glorious, than what others did in the field.

Ver. 25. *He asked water, and she brought him milk.*] Her prudence is first commended, in treating him with great respect, that he might entertain no suspicion of danger.

She brought forth butter.] Milk from which the cream (of which butter is made) was not separated.

In a lordly dish.] The Hebrew word *sephel* (which we translate *dish*) is no where else found, but in the story of Gideon in the next chapter, vi. 38. where we translate it *a bowl.* From whence Bochart rightly concludes, it signifies a large and wide vessel, (par. i. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 49.) which explains the word *lordly* or *princely;* which doth not signify that she had any gold or silver vessel in her tent (which was not agreeable to their manner of living), but that she brought him milk in the best vessel she had, and that very capacious: for out of such great men were wont to drink, as Pet. Martyr observes out of Cicero against M. Antony.

Ver. 26. *She put her hand to the nail.*] Next her courage and fortitude is celebrated: and by *hand* is to be understood her left, wherewith she held the nail, as with her right hand the hammer.

And her right hand to the workmen's hammer.] A lively description how she went about this work; just as if she had been fastening her tent.

And with her hammer she smote Sisera.] The Hebrew word *halam,* which we translate *smote,* signifies such a blow as makes a contusion.

She smote off his head.] The word *machak,* which is commonly translated *cut off,* cannot have that signification here; because there is not the least indication in this story

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of her cutting off his head from the body, but only of *striking it through*, as here it must be understood.

When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.] Here are two words more, *machatz* and *chalaph*, signifying *penetrating* and boring quite through. And the place is specified where his head was perforated, which was in his temples, the softest part of it, which gave the easiest entrance to the nail.

Ver. 27. *At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down.*] In the Hebrew, *between her feet*, &c. which some of the Talmudists have abused to a lewd sense; justly censured by Kimchi: who observes, that this is according to the style of the Hebrew language, which reduplicates words, that they may more strongly affirm what is said; and these words, *he bowed, he fell*, signify (he thinks) such a fall that he never rose up again. But taking all these expressions together [*he bowed, he fell, he lay down*], they seem to me to import, that, at the first stroke, he started and lifted up his body; but being very much stunned, he soon laid down again.

At her feet he bowed, he fell.] Then I suppose she repeated her stroke, which perfectly disabled him to move.

Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.] And at the third stroke, it is likely, she fastened his head to the ground. But this repetition doth not certainly argue that she gave so many blows (though it may pass for a probable conjecture); for it is an usual elegancy in such composures, wherein she intended to set out this fact of Jael's with the highest encomiums. Some may fancy, indeed, that it deserved reprehension, rather than commendation, upon many accounts; being a breach of the laws of hospitality, and of the peace which was between her family and Jabin, &c. But this fact is not to be measured by the common rules which are to govern us, it being an extraordinary, heroic, and Divine work, unto which she was excited by God; whose people Jabin oppressed with a cruel servitude, from which God ordered Barak to be their deliverer; who, having defeated all his forces in a miraculous manner, Jael understood there was a Divine hand in this victory, and was moved by the same spirit which stirred up Deborah and Barak, to help, by this act, to complete their shameful overthrow. For nothing could be more dishonourable, than for a great captain to fall thus by the hand of a woman.

Ver. 28. *The mother of Sisera looked out at a window.*] Was in earnest longings and expectations to see him return victorious.

And cried through the lattice.] Either fear of some miscarriage, or impatient desire, made her cry out with a lamentable voice; as the word *jabab* in the Hebrew signifies.

Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?] Having such numerous forces, they promised themselves an easy and speedy victory over a handful of the Israelites; and therefore wondered what retarded his coming back, with all his chariots, in triumph.

Ver. 29. *Her wise ladies answered her.*] The Vulgar takes the Hebrew words to signify, *one of the wisest of his wives* (who was not so apt to despair as his mother) replied to her. For it is well observed by Terence, in his Adelphi (as Pet. Martyr here notes), "Multo satius est, ea evenire nobis quæ de absentibus suspicantur uxores quam ea quæ parentes." *It is much better that those things should happen to their absent husbands, which their wives suspect, than those which their parents fear.* But I see no reason to depart from our translation, which is the same with the LXX. αἱ σοφαὶ ἄρχουσαι, *the prudent noble women that attended her*, &c.

Yea, she returned answer to herself.] Upon better consideration, her hopes exceeded her fears.

Ver. 30. *Have they not sped?*] She did not think it possible they should miscarry.

Have they not divided the prey?] She was willing to be confident they had got the victory; and therefore imputed their stay to the time that must needs be taken up in making an equal division of the spoil. For those days were not like to ours, wherein every man keeps to himself what he can lay his hands upon; but after the battle, they were obliged to bring all that they had gotten to the general of the army; who considered every man's quality and desert, and accordingly distributed the prey among them.

To every man a damsel or two.] Young virgins are by all historians and poets reckoned as a principal part of the soldiers' prey. And she puts here an unusual word for a *damsel*, which is *racham;* for it properly signifies *a womb*, and seems here to be spoken by way of contempt, as if they were good for nothing but to serve their filthy appetites.

To Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides.] These were the richest part of the spoil, being highly esteemed by all people, as Pliny observes, lib. viii. cap. 48. where he mentions great variety of them, both in his own and in ancient time: for he takes notice, that Homer mentions *pictas vestes*, as he calls them, *painted garments*, which shined with flowers and trees in beautiful colours; which the Phrygians afterward wrought with needles; and Attalus invented the interweaving gold in them: but for divers-coloured garments, Babylon was above all places famous; from whence they had the name of *Babylonish garments*, which were much valued even in those early times, as appears by the story of Achan, Josh. vii. 21. and they were of such account in aftertimes, that every one was not permitted to wear them, but only the greater sort of persons (as Pet. Martyr observes out of the Roman laws), which may be the reason that here they are appropriated to Sisera as his part of the spoil.

Meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?] That is, of the chief commanders, to whom the spoil, as I said, was brought to be divided. In the Hebrew the words are, *for the necks of the spoil;* which Kimchi expounds, *the head of the prey.* As if she had said, These are to be put in the head of the prey; and therefore fit to be given only to the general of the army.

Ver. 31. *So let all thy enemies perish, O Lord.*] From hence she takes occasion to convert her speech to God, beseeching him, that all his enemies may be thus disappointed of their vain hopes.

But let all them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.] Increase in power and force, as the sun doth from the time of its rising till it comes to its meridian height.

And the land had rest forty years.] These forty years are to be computed from the time of Ehud, as our great primate

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thinks, who thus translates these words, *The land rested in the fortieth year*, after the former rest which was restored to it by Ehud. (See him ad A. M. 2719.) But it is far more reasonable to compute them from the conquest of Jabin by the northern tribes; after which, the whole country lived in peace for the space of forty years, till the Midianites, as it follows, sorely oppressed them.

I conclude this chapter as Conradus Pellicanus doth; "Let some Homer or Virgil go now, and compare his poetry, if he be able, with the song of this woman. And if there be any one that excels in eloquence and learning, and hath more leisure than I, celebrate the praises and learning of this panegyric more copiously."

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *AND the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.*] After the death of Deborah and Barak (who kept them, I suppose, in the true religion), they relapsed to idolatry.

And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.] Because it is not said, that *the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel*, (as in chap. ii. 14. iii. 8, &c.) nor that he *sold them* into the hand of Midian (which is the expression, iv. 2. and other places), Pet. Martyr thinks they were not altogether so bad as they had been formerly; and therefore God was pleased to shorten the tyranny of the Midianites over them; who, being their old enemies, as they came through the wilderness, and having been, in a manner, utterly destroyed by the Israelites, (Numb. xxxi.) were very much disposed to take a sharp revenge: for that those Midianites who were neighbours to Moab are here meant, is evident from their situation, which was beyond Jordan, (vii. 24, 25. viii. 4.) and by the people that joined with them, who were the *children of the east*, (ver. 3.) whereas the other Midianites, where Jethro lived, were in the *south*, near the Red Sea. Some fancy, indeed, that the Midianites, neighbours to Moab, being cut off by Moses, there was no such nation. But it must be considered, that some of them saved themselves by flight into other countries, and, after the Israelites were settled in Canaan, returned again; and, in near two hundred years' time, may well be thought to have repeopled their country, especially by the help of other people, who came, it is likely, and planted among them; and being seated in the same country, are all called Midianites.

Ver. 2. *And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel.*] They brought the Israelites in subjection to them, and were the fourth nation that oppressed them, after the Mesopotamians, Moabites, and Canaanites.

And because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them the dens that are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.] They betook themselves to these places for safety; for, I suppose, they did not now make them, but made them their retreat. And by the first word *minhareth*, is meant those hollow places in the rocks upon the mountains, where men might hide themselves, and make them their habitation; there being cracks and holes in them here and there, to let in light, as the Hebrew word signifies. And the second word *maharoth* denotes such caves as were in the fields, made either by nature, or by art and labour; which being dark, were fit only to hide their goods and provision in them. And the third word *mitzaroth* signifies such fortresses, as secured themselves, and families, and cattle, and all they could carry thither. But this shews their condition was very lamentable, in that they were driven from their houses in the villages, and cities too; at least the richest of them durst not trust themselves there, but fled to strong holds for safety.

Ver. 3. *And so it was, that when Israel had sown.*] They did not disturb them in seed-time, but let them be quiet till they had ploughed and sowed their land.

Then the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east.] This shews, that some of the same people joined with the Midianites, that did formerly with the Moabites, when they oppressed Israel, (iii. 13.) For by the *children of the east*, are meant some of the people of Arabia, as Procopius notes, who observes Josephus to be of the same mind: for Arabia lay east of Egypt, where the Israelites learnt to speak in this manner.

Even they came up against them.] Entered the land of Israel with such armies as might destroy the fruits of the earth; as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 4. *And they encamped against them.*] The Vulgar translate it, *They pitched their tents among them;* which signifies them to have been an Arabian people, or such as lived after their manner.

And destroyed the increase of the earth.] Having formed a camp, they sent out parties from thence well armed to destroy all the corn, and the rest of the fruits of the earth.

Until thou come unto Gaza.] That is, they made an universal devastation from one end of the country to the other; for they came from the east, and destroyed all till they came to the western coast, where Gaza was.

And left no sustenance for Israel.] Whom they intended to famish.

Neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.] Their camels and other cattle, which they brought along with them, having eaten up all; for they were so numerous, as we are told in the following verse, that they overspread the whole country.

Ver. 5. *For they came up with their cattle.*] Not merely an army of men, but of cattle of all sorts, came on purpose to make this destruction.

And their tents.] With their whole families, that they might be able to consume the more.

And they came up as grasshoppers for multitude.] Or, as *locusts* (as the word *arba* is commonly translated), which have their very name from the vast numbers wherein they were wont to come, and were most devouring creatures.

For both they and their camels were without number.] No country more abounded with camels than Midian; (as I observed before out of Bochart's Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2.) and they are only peculiarly mentioned, because the Midianites were more famous for them than for horses or other beasts.

And they entered into the land to destroy it.] Their very design was to depopulate the country by this means.

Ver. 6. *And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites.*] For the fruits of their land being thus destroyed, their money was drained from them to purchase corn from other countries.

And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.] Who never failed to help them, when they truly turned to him.

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Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, because of the Midianites.*] Though the poverty which pinched them was that which moved them to cry unto God for relief, yet he was so gracious as to send one to make them sensible of their sin.

Ver. 8. *That the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel.*] Whom the Jews fancy to have been Phinehas, which is not probable, men not commonly then living to the age of two hundred years, which he must be of, and more, if he were the prophet now sent to them. It is far more likely, that God still continued other prophets among them, beside the high-priest, to put them in mind of their duty, and to call them to repentance when they forsook him. And it appears by the foregoing story, that there was a woman who had the spirit of prophecy; which shews that, at least, upon special occasions, he raised up such persons among them.

Which said unto them.] At some great festival, it is likely, when they were all assembled.

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel.] This is the style in which the prophets commonly spake.

I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage.] All the prophets put them in mind of this, as the greatest obligation upon them, to be entirely devoted to God's service. See Exod. xix. 4—6. where God himself tells them for what purpose he had delivered them from that bondage. And see Josh. xxiv. 5, 6.

Ver. 9. *And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians.*] Who, when they pursued them to bring them back into slavery, were all drowned in the Red Sea.

And out of the hand of all that oppressed you.] That endeavoured to oppress them; such as the Amalekites, Sihon, and Og, who opposed their passage to Canaan.

And drave them out from before you, and gave you their land.] By the hand of Joshua, who settled them in the land which God promised to them. All this is said to put them in mind how faithfully God had performed his covenant with them, and to upbraid them with their own infidelity.

Ver. 10. *And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God.*] See Exod. xx. 1. Deut. v. 6. vi. 4.

Fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell.] Do not worship them, nor imagine they can do you any harm, (Deut. vii. 12—14. Josh. xxiv. 14, 15.)

But ye have not obeyed my voice.] Which was the cause of all the evil that had befallen them, and would still continue, if they did not now hearken unto him, as they desired him to hear their cry. This, no doubt, the prophet pressed upon them, in more words than are here set down, these being only the heads of his speech.

Ver. 11. *And there came an angel of the Lord.*] The Israelites laid the application of the prophet's speech to their heart (it is to be supposed), and began to reform their ways, which moved him to send an angel to appoint them a deliverer; for he is called *an angel of the Lord,* both here and ver. 12. 20—22.

And sat under an oak.] In a grove of trees (as Arius Montanus understands it), where there was one great well-spread oak, in which there was a seat.

Which was in Ophrah.] The city where Gideon was born and lived, (viii. 27.)

That pertaineth unto Joash the Abi-ezrite.] This is added to shew what Ophrah he means; for there was another in the tribe of Benjamin, (Josh. xviii. 23.) whereas the family of Abiezer belonged to the tribe of Manasseh, (Josh. xvii. 2.)

And his son Gideon thrashed wheat.] The Hebrew *chabat,* in this place, signifies to *thrash* out with a stick or rock, as Kimchi here observes. And so the LXX. ῥαβδίζων. But the common way of thrashing corn out of the ear was by treading it with oxen, which they called *dash,* 1 Chron. xxi. 20. This Gideon did not use, partly for privacy, but chiefly because he had but a little to beat out.

By the wine-press.] Where none would suspect his thrashing of corn.

To hide it from the Midianites.] Who watched narrowly all the thrashing-floors of the Israelites, who might have bought sheaves of their neighbours, or, perhaps, sown and reaped a little corn, in some private fenced places, where the cattle of the Midianites did not come to eat it up.

Ver. 12. *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him.*] Gideon, I suppose, turning his face that way, beheld him sitting under the oak.

And said unto him, The Lord is with thee.] He did not take him to be one of the Midianites by his posture, and manner of appearance, and was made more certain of it by this salutation. Wherein he doth not pray God to be with him, but declares him to be with him (as appears by Gideon's answer), that is, to assist him to be the deliverance of his people. The Targum here translates it, *The Word of the Lord is thy help.* Whereby it appears, the ancient Jews did not look upon this angel merely as a heavenly messenger sent from God, but as the Lord himself, as he is called, ver. 14. 16. 23—25. 27. Which is confirmed by the following verse, as the same Targum translates it.

Thou mighty man of valour.] He was naturally courageous, but made more so by a Divine inspiration, and yet did not disdain to mind husbandry, as the greatest persons did in ancient time. Insomuch that Pliny saith, The earth brought forth its fruit more happily and abundantly, "cum imperatorum clarissimorum manibus tractaretur," *when it was cultivated by the hands of the most famous commanders:* for they had more skill and industry in their management, than the ordinary people.

Ver. 13. *And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my Lord.*] The Hebrew word *bi* (which we translate *O,* or *I beseech thee*) may literally be translated, *with me;* by way of interrogation: as much as to say, *How can that be?* It appears by the word *Adonai (Lord)* which is used to all great men, that he did not yet think him to be an angel, but some person of extraordinary quality, who wished well to the Israelites.

If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where are all the miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt, &c.] He thought their present condition sufficiently shewed that their whole nation was forsaken by God; who had thrown them into that slavery, out of which he delivered their fathers, and did not appear, by any miraculous works, to be present among them as he was in Egypt, but left them to be devoured by the Midianites.

Here the Targum makes Gideon's answer to have been this, *Is the Schechinah of the Lord our help? Whence then hath all this happened unto us?* Which paraphrase shews that they took the Word of the Lord to be the same with

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the Schechinah of the Lord, who had most gloriously appeared for their help. (See ver. 16. and Josh. xiv. 12.)

Ver. 14. *And the Lord looked upon him.*] This shews it was not a mere angel, but the same Jehovah, who appeared to Joshua (v. 13, 14.) in the likeness of an angel, and now cast a gracious aspect upon him: for to have respect unto a man, or unto his sacrifice, is graciously to accept him, and to be favourable to him; as the Lord now declared he was, by his very countenance, which had great kindness in it.

And said, Go in this thy might.] This seems to intimate that Gideon was immediately inspired with a great courage, by that gracious aspect of the Lord upon him.

And thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.] See those wonders renewed, which appeared in the deliverance of their fathers out of Egypt, of which Gideon said there was no token, (ver. 13.)

Have not I sent thee?] Is not this a sufficient authority, that thou hast a commission from God? great care is taken throughout all this book, to shew that the judges all acted by a Divine warrant.

Ver. 15. *And he said unto him, Oh, my Lord.*] Still he took him to be only some extraordinary man.

Wherewith shall I save Israel?] He doth not reject the commission, but modestly declines it (as Theodoret observes), considering his own meanness, in comparison with many others.

Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh.] And consequently of little power to raise forces, to oppose so potent an enemy: the word we translate *my family*, is in Hebrew *my thousand:* for the Israelites were distributed, by Jethro's advice, into hundreds and thousands; and the thousand to which Gideon belonged, was the meanest of all the rest in that tribe. The Jews will have it, that Gideon was the *chiliarch*, or chief commander of this thousand; others say, his father Joash, who, it appears by the story, was a considerable person; but it is uncertain whether he had such a government.

And I am the least in my father's house.] This shews that Gideon had no such command as the Jews imagine.

Ver. 16. *And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee.*] Do not consider thy poverty, but the power of God, which shall accompany thee: here the Targum thus paraphrases, *My Word shall be thy help;* who was the same that appeared to Joshua, with a sword in his hand.

And thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.] Defeat them as easily, as if he had but one man to deal withal.

Ver. 17. *And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight.*] Am so highly favoured as to have this honour.

Then shew me a sign.] He doth not so much make a doubt, as desire to be confirmed in his belief.

That thou talkest with me.] That thou hast brought this commission from God, and that I shall be able to destroy the Midianites. He said this (as Conr. Pellicanus thinks) not because his faith wanted confirmation, but that he might make others believe, who would require a sign before they joined with him.

Ver. 18. *Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee.*] Stay here till I go home, and return.

And bring forth my present.] So we rightly interpret the Hebrew word *mincha;* which, though it signify *a meat-offering* (as we observe in the margin), yet there was nothing of a sacrifice intended here, nor was Gideon a priest, or this a place of sacrifice.

And set it before thee.] He intended to entertain him, by making a feast for him.

And he said, I will tarry till thou come again.] It was a great thing he was to undertake, and so God graciously condescended to give him all manner of satisfaction about it.

Ver. 19. *And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour.*] For expedition's sake he made such cakes, they being soonest prepared: for it is a mere fancy of the Jews, that this was done about the Passover in the days of unleavened bread.

The flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it unto him under the oak, and presented it.] Set it before him on a table, and desired he would be pleased to eat: in which he followed the example of Abraham and Lot, and seems to have entertained him nobly, according to the way of feasting in those days; for a whole kid (part of which was boiled, and the other part, perhaps, otherwise prepared), and so many cakes, as an ephah of flour would make, was enough for several guests; and therefore so much set before one man, was to shew his great respect to him.

Ver. 20. *And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes.*] He did not taste of them, intending to turn them into a sacrifice unto God.

And lay them upon this rock.] Which was near the grove of oaks, in the higher part of the city of Ophrah, as Bertram conjectures, in his book de Repub. Judaica, cap. 15.

And pour out the broth.] As Elijah, in aftertimes, bade them pour water upon his sacrifice.

And he did so.] He obeyed him; though, it is likely, he thought it strange he should command him thus to dispose of the good cheer he had prepared for him.

Ver. 21. *Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand.*] For he appeared, I suppose, in the form of a traveller, who were wont to walk with a staff in their hand.

And touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock.] He did not smite the rock with his staff (by which stroke the fire might have been thought to be stirred up), but only gently touched the flesh and the cakes with it.

And consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes.] Together with the broth, that was poured on them; which was as great a miracle (if not greater) as if fire had come down from heaven, as in the sacrifices which Moses, and Elijah, and others, offered: by which the faith of Gideon was mightily strengthened, that the miracles done in ancient times (which he inquired after, ver. 13.) were not ceased, and that God would be as good as his word to him, for this was a token of God's acceptance of him.

And the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.] Went up into heaven, as the Chaldee paraphrase interprets it.

Ver. 22. *And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord.*] He was convinced, by this wonder, that he was not a mere prophet that appeared to him.

Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.] He speaks as a man in a fright, and cuts off part of his words; for his meaning was, *I*

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shall die: such was the opinion of good men in those days, that if they saw apparently an inhabitant of the other world, he came to call them away from this: as appears more fully in the story of Manoah and his wife, in the thirteenth chapter of this book: and this opinion was very ancient, as may be gathered from the words of Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 30. and they were confirmed in it, perhaps, by the words of God to Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 20.

Ver. 23. *And the Lord said unto him.*] Though the angel disappeared, and nothing was to be seen, yet the Lord, who appeared in that form to him, made him know he was still present with him, by speaking the following words in an audible voice.

Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.] He bids him fear no harm, but quite contrary, expect all manner of good (which is comprehended in the word *peace*), and that in this world, where he should still continue, to work that deliverance which he promised by him: from such places as this the ancient Christians rightly gathered, that the Son of God appeared, upon some great occasions, in old time; which is not incredible, but a matter of easy belief, if we be persuaded that he did really appear in our flesh, which he took of the Virgin Mary, and dwelt among us for a long time, and then ascended in it to heaven, where he lives for ever: for why should we think it strange, if, for a short time, he appeared some time in human shape, as a prelude to what he intended in the fulness of time? "Fuit sane id majus quod nobis præstitit," &c. (as Peter Martyr speaks.) *It was indeed a greater thing which he did for us at last;* but he that did the greater, may well be granted to have done the less, and there is no reason to doubt of it.

Ver. 24. *And Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord.*] Not for sacrifice (which had been directly contrary to the law of God), but as a monument of that heavenly vision, and of the mercy promised to him, in that place where he built the altar; *viz.* where the angel stood and touched the flesh and unleavened cakes, and consumed them: such an altar the Reubenites made, Josh. xxii. 10, &c.

And called it Jehovah-shalom.] That is, *the Lord here pronounced peace to me,* (ver. 23.) or (as we understand it in the margin), *the Lord grant peace:* which he had the greatest reason to expect, when God had declared it, at that very time when he looked for death.

Until this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.] It was remaining when Samuel wrote this book.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass the same night.*] After the angel's appearance.

That the Lord said unto him.] In a dream, it is most likely, because it was in the night.

Take thy father's young bullock.] In the Hebrew the words are two, *par, shor,* signifying a bullock full-grown; which his father, it is probable, had fatted up for a sacrifice to Baal.

Even the second bullock.] Our translation supposes there was but one bullock, which he was ordered to take (because we read in the next verse, that this alone was sacrificed); but in the Hebrew, and the LXX. and the Vulgar (and our margin also), the words are, *and the second bullock;* which was next to the first in age.

Of seven years old.] Which was calved, as Arius Montanus observes, when their oppression under the Midianites began; and was now ordered to be sacrificed, in token that it should end with this bullock's death.

And throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath.] Which was in his ground, and built, perhaps, at his charge; but was for public use, as appears from ver. 28.

And cut down the grove that is by it.] Or rather, *upon it;* for so the Hebrew word *alau* signifies; and so the LXX. translate it ἐπ' αὐτῷ, upon the altar beforementioned. And therefore by *ashereh,* which we translate *grove,* must be meant the image in the grove, which stood upon the altar. And so the word is used in other places, (1 Kings xxiii. 6.) Which Mr. Selden probably conjectures was the image of Ashtaroth, or Astarte; for she was worshipped together with Baal, ii. 13. where they are said to have worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth (for there was more than one Astarte), which is the same with iii. 7. where it is said they worshipped Baalim and the groves. (See Syntag. ii. de Diis Syris, cap. 2.) There could be no hope of deliverance till religion was reformed; with which therefore God orders him to begin.

Ver. 26. *And build an altar unto the Lord thy God upon the top of this rock.*] Where the angel appeared to him; from whence Bertram thinks the Israelites learnt to sacrifice in high places; if it were not rather a custom derived from the gentiles.

On the top of this rock there was a fortress, as I take it; which, it is likely, had been built to secure them from the Midianites. For the word for *rock* is not the ordinary one, *viz. tzor,* or *sela,* but *mahoz;* which signifies a strong hold.

In the ordered place.] Which St. Jerome took to be the place where the flesh and unleavened cakes were laid in order upon the rock; (ver. 20.) but it may signify, as we translate it in the margin, *in an orderly manner.*

And take the second bullock, and offer a burnt-sacrifice.] If there were two bullocks which he took, it is hard to say what became of the first. Arius Montanus supposes it was offered for himself, and for his family; but this *second* is only mentioned, because it was the sacrifice that was offered for the whole nation, to implore God's mercy to them; for sacrifices were a kind of prayer and supplication. Gideon was no priest, but by God's special order was required to do this; which otherwise would have been a presumptuous sin.

With the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.] This was also an extraordinary command, whereby things employed to idolatry were converted to a sacred use: otherwise, God had ordered them all to be utterly destroyed, (Deut. vii. 5. xii. 3.)

Ver. 27. *Then Gideon took ten men of his servants.*] In whom he could confide; and this number was as many as was necessary to make a congregation for public worship; and was sufficient also to execute what God had commanded.

And did as the Lord had said unto him.] Broke down the altar of Baal, cut down the grove, and built an altar unto the Lord, and offered the burnt-sacrifice.

And so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day.] Without endangering a tumult, which might have ended in a fray.

That he did it by night.] When he was likely to meet with no opposition. In this he gave an early proof of his faith in God, for it was a bold undertaking: but prudence

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is not excluded in the execution of the Divine commands: yet the greater speed men make, the more acceptable it is; and some think his zeal moved him to do this the very same night wherein God appeared to him.

Ver. 28. *And when the men of the city rose early in the morning.*] And came to worship Baal, before they went about their business.

Behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove cut down that was by it.] They were very much surprised to see such an alteration.

And the second bullock was offered.] Which they knew was designed for a sacrifice to Baal.

Upon the altar that was built.] Not upon the altar of Baal which was thrown down, but on a new one which was built in another place; upon which the flesh of the second bullock was still flaming, being not quite consumed, when they came thither.

Ver. 29. *And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing?*] Their superstition made them very solicitous to find out the author of this impiety, as they accounted it.

And when they inquired and asked.] Here are two words in the Hebrew, importing that they made a diligent inquisition; examining many persons what they knew of it.

They said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing.] Who gave this information, we are not told; nor how the discovery was made: perhaps some had seen him that morning stand by the sacrifice; which it is likely he would not forsake, as long as he durst attend it. Or some of his servants might let fall such words as gave suspicion: or, the altar and image standing in Joash's ground, and his bullock being offered, they thought that none, without the knowledge of his family, could come to attempt it: and, besides, it is probable that Gideon was known to be no zealous servant of Baal; and when all were so very much concerned for the demolishing of his altar, he expressing no concern at all, they confidently charged him with the fact.

Ver. 30. *Then the men of the city said to Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die; because he,* &c.] It seems they were all zealous idolaters; and thought him worthy of death who dishonoured those who were accounted gods.

Ver. 31. *And Joash said unto all that stood against him.*] That is, against his son; demanding to have him produced and punished.

Will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him?] *i. e.* Will you take upon you to avenge his quarrel, and to be his patrons? Doth it belong to you to be his defenders and deliverers? It seems to have been a popular tumult, which he endeavours to repress; by representing to them, that such crimes were not to be punished by them, but by the magistrates of the city; and that they would bring themselves in danger of what they intended to do to Gideon, if they did not desist; as it follows in the next words.

He that will plead for him, let him be put to death.] That is, Let me tell you, he that thus moves sedition in this cause, by my consent, should be put to death himself. And, it is likely, Joash was a magistrate in the city; who terrified them by declaring what his opinion would be, if they came to be tried for this riot.

While it is yet morning.] That is, immediately. For it was early in the morning (ver. 28.) when they came in this manner to Joash.

If he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.] If the magistrates neglected to punish the pretended crime, Baal, he tells them, in case he were a real god, would take care to do himself right; and therefore they need not be so much concerned about it: and so some understand the latter part of this verse, *He deserves to die presently, who is an adversary to Baal: but let the execution be done then by Baal himself. For if he be a god, he will take care of his own honour; and you need not trouble yourselves about it.* It is likely Joash had been convinced by his son, that God had given him a commission to deliver his people; and to begin it with this reformation: which made him appear thus boldly in his son's cause; because he knew it was the cause of God.

Ver. 32. *Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal.*] In 2 Sam. xi. 21. he is called *Jerubbesheth;* for so some called Baal, in contempt, by the name of *Besheth,* that is, *shame* and *confusion;* which well expresses the nature of such idols.

Saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.] This is the reason why he gave him this name; which is as much as to say, *the adversary of Baal;* or, *him whom Baal hath a quarrel withal;* upon the account of the affront put upon him, in throwing down his altar. The Phœnicians called him Jerombalus, as appears by Sanchoniathon, whom Eusebius often quotes, as he is translated by Philo-Byblius into Greek: and Porphyry saith, he received certain commentaries from Jerombalus, the priest of the god Jevo. Which can be nothing but the books of Moses, which contain the laws delivered by Jehovah; as Huetius justly observes in his Demonstr. Evangel. propos. iv. cap. 2. for the remains which we have of his writings plainly taste of the doctrine of Moses.

Ver. 33. *Then all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, were gathered together.*] As they were wont to do every year, to waste the country, (ver. 3—5.)

And went over.] The river Jordan.

And pitched in the valley of Jezreel.] Which alarmed Gideon, and gave him occasion to execute his commission; it being not far from Ophrah; for Jezreel in the tribe of Judah is not here meant, (mentioned Josh. xv. 36.) but Jezreel in the tribe of Manasseh, or Issachar, which is frequently spoken of in the book of the Kings, being one of the royal seats of the kings of Israel; where there was a noble valley, running from the east to the west, mentioned Josh. xvii. 16. Hosea i. 5.

Ver. 34. *But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon.*] Or (as the words are in the Hebrew, and as the LXX. translate it), *clothed Gideon:* which is a phrase St. Paul uses to signify a man is replenished with that wherewith he is said to be clothed; or that he is fully possessed of it. So was Gideon with courage, and all other qualities necessary in a great commander.

And he blew a trumpet, and Abi-ezer was gathered unto him.] Came and offered their service to fight under his banner. This was a wonderful change, if the city of Ophrah, who were lately so incensed against him, that they would have killed him for destroying their idol, now not only submitted to him, but were ready to join with him against all his enemies: but though this be not incredible, that they were converted from the idolatrous worship of

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Baal, when they saw no hurt befal Gideon for throwing down his altar, &c. yet this may be meant only of the rest of the Abi-ezrites, and especially those of his own kindred and family.

Ver. 35. *And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also were gathered after him.*] That is, the rest of his tribe; whose hearts God moved to resort unto him.

And he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali.] After his own tribe was come in, he invited these three who bordered upon the tribe of Manasseh northward to come to his assistance: but he did not send unto the tribe of Ephraim, who were neighbours to the Manassites on the south; which afterward begat a quarrel, as we read chap. viii.

And they came to meet them.] One of the copies of the LXX. refers this to Gideon, that he went up to meet those of the three tribes beforementioned; but others refer it to them who came up to meet Gideon; and so the Hebrew words seem to import. But which way soever we take it, they all joined their forces together; and from hence Sir J. Marsham infers, that the oppression fell only on this part of the country; though the whole story represents all the Israelites as in a miserable condition, and as submitting to his government, after he had delivered them.

Ver. 36. *And Gideon said unto God.*] In a prayer, which, I suppose, he made unto him.

If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said.] He did not doubt of God's intentions, who had promised to be with him: for in pursuit of his commands he had done one great thing already, in throwing down Baal's altar; and had also blown a trumpet and listed soldiers; and had likewise seen wonderful effects of God's power, in consuming the flesh and the cakes that were laid upon the rock, by fire coming out of it: therefore he desired only a confirmation of his faith; and that, perhaps, for the sake of those who were to go with him, who might possibly be timorous: or he might desire by some sign to know, whether at this time he would make him victorious over the Midianites, or he was to wait for some other opportunity.

Ver. 37. *Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor.*] Where they were wont to thrash corn; which was done in the open air, not in barns, as we do now.

And if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said.] He supposed that the dew which distilled from heaven was a Divine gift, (as the Scripture often testifies, particularly Gen. xxviii. 28.) which he desires might be so governed by God, that though it commonly fall every where, it might now, by his extraordinary providence, water only his fleece.

Ver. 38. *And it was so: for he rose up early in the morning, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl-full of water.*] When there was not a drop upon the earth round about it. The word *sephel*, which here we translate *bowl*, was used in the foregoing chapter, ver. 25. Which see.

Ver. 39. *And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once.*] Though God did not chide him for his former desire, nor charge him with any distrust of his power and will to do what he promised; yet Gideon was afraid lest he should be very angry at his renewing the same request, because it looked like a diffidence in God's word. But if we consider, that it was for the farther and fuller satisfaction of those that were to go with him, it may be excused; and as he promises that he will ask no more signs, so we do not find the Lord took it ill of him that he asked this.

Let me prove thee, I pray thee, with the fleece.] This is a bad word, when it denotes men's infidelity, that no sign will be given them; but a good one, when it signifies an humble desire to have such a sign granted them, as here it doth.

Let it be dry now only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.] Upon these words Ralbag hath this observation, "The former miracle was not sufficient for his conviction, because it is in the very nature of wool to draw moisture to it; and therefore he desires this second miracle, which is contrary to the first."

Ver. 40. *And God did so that night.*] For some dewdrops in the morning, other in the night. And here God was pleased, not in the morning, but in that very night when he asked this sign, to sprinkle all the floor with dew, and let none fall upon the fleece. So ready (saith Bochartus) is God to hear our prayers; which his benefits do not so much follow, as go before them, or immediately accompany them.

For it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.] Not upon all the country of Israel, but upon all the floor, or the land thereabout. By these quite contrary signs his faith was fully confirmed; and perhaps there was some need of it, when he saw the number of his followers reduced to a small handful of three hundred men, (vii. 10.) There are those who think he chose a fleece of wool for that purpose, not only because it was ready at hand, but the better to express how the earth was shorn by the Midianites, as the sheep had been by him; and when he begged the dew (a sign of the Divine favour) might fall upon the fleece, it was to represent the kindness of God to him; and when he begged it might fall upon the whole ground, it represented his favour to all the people: and, lastly, that these two miracles, opposite one to the other, do notably set forth the state of that nation, who were moistened with the dew of heaven (the knowledge of God) when the rest of the world were dry; and now are dry, when the rest of the earth are filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *THEN Jerubbaal (who is Gideon), and all the people that were with him, rose up early.*] The very next morning, I suppose, after the last miracle.

And pitched beside the well of Harod.] It is but conjectured where this well was; *viz.* not far from Mount Gilboa.

So that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh.] The Vulgar takes the word Moreh to signify high; and then this high hill can be no other than the forenamed Gilboa. Here Pellicanus observes, that prudence and diligent forecast is to be used, even when we are under the Divine conduct; for he thinks Gideon acted like a skilful commander, when he quartered his army so, as to have the enemy on the north of him, rather than the east or the south.

In the valley.] Of Jezreel, as was said before, vi. 33.

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which had Hermon on the north, and Gilboa on the south of it.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand.*] They were but thirty-two thousand, against an innumerable army of the enemies, (ver. 3. 12.) which was a vast disproportion; and yet God would not use the service of such a company, lest it should obscure his glory; as it follows in the next words.

Lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.] He knew their humour, and foresaw they might be so vain as to ascribe the victory to their own power and prowess, and not to him who intended to shew to all the world it was his miraculous work.

Ver. 3. *Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people.*] According to the command of Moses, Deut. xx. 8.

Whosoever is fearful and afraid.] The word which we translate *afraid*, is in the Hebrew *harod*: from whence some have conjectured the well where they pitched (ver. 1.) was called by the name of *Harod*, because here a great fear came upon most of Gideon's army.

Let him return and depart early.] As soon as he can: or, as a great many understand it, *make what haste he can to his home;* it being a metaphor, they think, from the flying of a bird.

From Mount Gilead.] Not that mountain which is so often mentioned in Scripture; for that was on the other side of Jordan, and in the most eastern part of their country (as appears from the story of Jacob, when he returned from Padan-Aram), but another mountain on this west side of Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh: the name of whose grandson Gilead (from whom all the tribe descended) was given, it is probable, in memory of him, to some mountain in this country; which was called Mount Gilead, just as another mountain in the tribe of Ephraim was called Mount Ephraim. This seems to me a far more rational account of these words, than theirs who translate them *towards Mount Gilead*, or *about it;* or devise some other such-like explication of the particle *min* (which we rightly translate *from*), as may consist with their opinion, that the mount on the other side Jordan is here intended. Gataker hath collected many interpretations of this kind in his Cinnus, lib. ii. cap. 18.

And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand.] As God thought there were too many, so they thought there were too few, to fight with such a host as came against them: and therefore, though they were at the first forward to list themselves under Gideon, yet, when they saw no greater number come in, as they expected, their hearts failed them; for they trusted not in God, but in their own strength.

And there remained ten thousand.] Who had more courage, and were resolved to venture their lives in the cause. Ralbag thinks the greater number that went away were men of bad lives, whose consciences made them afraid; and that these who remained were better men, which made them valiant and undaunted. And they were just the same number that went down with Barak from Mount Tabor, in their last deliverance, (iv. 10.)

Ver. 4. *And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many.*] The more valiant they were, the more they might be apt to ascribe to themselves.

Bring them down unto the water.] Which, it is likely, ran from the well or fountain of Harod, and made a brook.

And I will try them for thee there.] Give thee a proof who are fit for the service. The Hebrew word *tzaraph* signifies to scour, purge, and purify; as fullers do cloth from its filthiness, or as refiners do gold and silver from their dross. So God intended to purge Gideon's army, from all such persons as he judged unmeet for the undertaking.

And it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.] He intended by such a voice as now spake unto him, to declare who should go with him, and who should not.

Ver. 5. *So he brought down the people unto the water.*] Where it was proper to purge them.

And the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.] They were thirsty, we may well suppose, by the heat of the weather, and by their march, which made them greedily betake themselves to the water: where he bid Gideon observe the different postures which they used in quenching of their thirst. The LXX. here translate it πᾶς ὃς ἂν λάψῃ τῇ γλώσσῃ αὐτοῦ, *Whosoever licketh up the water with his tongue.* Which is the very word the great philosopher uses in his History of Animals, lib. viii. cap. 6. where he saith, those creatures whose teeth are continued close together, sup up water as horses and oxen do; but such as he calls καρχαρόδοντα, *that have teeth like a saw*, do λάπτειν, which is of the same signification with our English word *lap*, and the French *laper*, as Bochart observes.

Ver. 6. *And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.*] Some ascribe it to the sloth and laziness of these three hundred men, that they would not stoop down to drink as the rest did; others to their timorousness, and the great fear they were in of being suddenly surprised by their enemies, which is the opinion of Josephus and Theodoret; both which great authors think, that God chose these three hundred men, on purpose because they were poor-spirited, that the victory might be acknowledged to be entirely owing to himself: and Grotius is of this mind, who thinks they lapped, just as the dogs do of the river Nile, as they run, for fear of the crocodiles. (See Sixtiri Amama's Antibarbarus, lib. iii. p. 385.) But it is evident that all the fearful persons were dismissed before; and it is not likely that courageous men were lazy; therefore I take it, as others do (particularly Procopius Gazæus), to be a token of their temperance, and of the nobleness of their spirit, which made them so desirous to engage the enemy, that they would not stay to drink; but though they were very thirsty, contented themselves to moisten their mouth with a little water; whereas the rest indulged themselves so far, as to drink their belly-full. And it is the opinion of Ralbag, among the Jews, that their lapping standing, was a sign of their alacrity and fortitude. R. Solomon, and Kimchi, also think, that the rest had been worshippers of Baal, and, by bowing their knees to drink, were discovered, which is a far-fetched conceit.

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Ver. 7. *And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand.*] It was sufficient to let all the world see God saved them and not men, that he employed only three hundred persons in this service, yet it was necessary these three hundred should be men of extraordinary faith and courage (such as Gideon had) to embolden them to this enterprise.

And let all the other people go every man unto his place.] He had sent away above two-thirds of his army before, and now of that third part he keeps only the thirtieth.

Ver. 8. *And the people took victuals in their hands.*] They that returned home left so much provision as would serve to maintain three hundred men for some time.

And their trumpets.] If we suppose every thousand men to have ten trumpeters belonging to them, it was easy to furnish three hundred men with every one a trumpet, which we read (ver. 16.) they had, that they might, when they sounded, make a noise, as if they were a greater number than really they were. It is hard to say, how Josephus came to say, that they carried in their hand κριοῦ κέρας, *a ram's horn*, which they used ἀντὶ σάλπιγγος, *instead of a trumpet*, (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 8.) for rams' horns are not hollow: and the LXX. only call them κερατίνας, not saying of what they were made. It may be supposed, indeed, that rams' horns were made hollow for this use, as the Jews make them at this day.

And he sent all the rest of Israel, every man, unto his tent.] Who, it is probable, did not go so far, but that they were ready to join with those who pursued the Midianites after their defeat, (ver. 23, 24.)

And retained those three hundred men.] Kept no more with him than this number whom God had chosen to accomplish his promise.

And the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.] It seems his small handful of men lay encamped upon a hill, where the Midianites thought it not safe to assault them, not knowing what number they were, nor how entrenched, and therefore they lay still in the valley of Jezreel.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass the same night.*] After he had reduced his forces to this small number.

That the Lord said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host of the Midianites.] Who lay in the valley below him.

For I have delivered it into thy hand.] There, he means, he should understand, and be fully satisfied by what he should hear, that his victory over them was as sure as if he had already obtained it.

Ver. 10. *But if thou fear to go down.*] As he had some reason, having now such a slender company with him.

Go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host.] Every man is more afraid alone, than when he hath a trusty companion with him; yet it was not fit to carry more than one, whose fidelity was known to him; for secret designs are not to be committed to many.

Ver. 11. *And thou shalt hear what they say.*] Hear the discourse that some of them would have with another.

And afterward shall thine hand be strengthened to go down unto the host.] Whereby he should be encouraged to attack that great army, with so small a number as he had remaining with him. This shews how exceeding acceptable his faith and obedience was to God, in sending away as many of his army as he bade him dismiss; for now he gives him a further confirmation of his faith without asking.

Then went he down with Phurah his servant.] Faith had quite expelled all his fear.

Unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host.] To the out-guards, as we now speak, who seem to have consisted of fifty men, as the LXX. think the Hebrew word *chamuschim* signifies; for they translate it τῶν πεντήκοντα.

Ver. 12. *And the Midianites, and Amalekites, and all the children of the earth.*] Who joined with them in this invasion.

Lay along in the valley.] Of Jezreel beforementioned, into which Gideon now went down.

Like grasshoppers for multitude.] See vi. 5.

And their camels were without number.] Both Midian and Amalek, and the countries about them, abounded with camels, which were serviceable to them in their wars, as well as in carrying burdens. (See Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2.) And in them they placed their principal riches, as he observes out of Leo Africanus, who saith, that when the Arabians would express the great wealth of their prince, they do not say, he hath so many thousand pounds of gold or silver, but so many thousand camels.

As the sand by the sea-side for multitude.] So the Hebrews are wont to express a vastly great number. The certain knowledge of their number, it is likely, never came to the knowledge of the Israelites; but we read of a hundred and twenty thousand men that were slain, and fifteen thousand that escaped, with their two princes, viii. 10. And how many were taken captive, is not recorded.

Ver. 13. *And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow.*] Which troubled his thoughts, I suppose, when he was awake, as the dream of Pharaoh, and his butler, and baker, and of Nebuchadnezzar, in aftertimes, disturbed them.

And said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley-bread.] Or, as the Vulgar translates it, *A loaf baked in the ashes*, which was the meanest of all other bread, and hastily prepared.

Tumbled.] Came tumbling down like a bowl from the mountain.

Into the host of Midian.] Through all the guards, into the very middle of the army, which was a sign that Gideon should break through all opposition.

And came unto a tent.] The principal tent, which was pitched for their kings, or their general, in the midst of the host.

And smote it, that it fell.] This seemed strange to the man, that so small a thing as a cake, or a loaf of bread, should throw down a tent, which was not shaken by a strong wind.

And overturned it, that the tent lay along.] It not only fell, but was so shattered that it could not be reared up again; which was a lively emblem of the utter overthrow of the Midianites, and their numerous host, by Gideon, and his small company, as his fellow-soldier interpreted it.

Ver. 14. *And his fellow answered and said.*] It appears by the example beforementioned, that God sometimes sent dreams into the minds of pagan people, who were much concerned to find an interpreter of them: but here, by a single providence, one of his comrades was inspired to tell the meaning immediately.

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This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash.] The barley-cake was a fit emblem of Gideon and his soldiers, who were a small number, as a cake is made of a little flour kneaded together; and was mean also, and contemptible, in comparison with the Midianites, as a barley-cake is in comparison with wheaten bread: but the man could not have understood this, unless God had suggested it to him, for the confirmation of Gideon's faith and resolution.

A man of Israel.] *i. e.* A great commander; for so the Hebrews truly interpret the word *isch*, who (as L'Empereur observes out of R. Schamaja) called the governor, or chief commander of those who guarded the temple, *isch har habeth, the man of the mountain of the temple.* (Cod. Middoth, cap. 1.)

For into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.] All their confederates. Nothing is more vain than our common dreams, yet God hath sometimes admonished men that way of future things, as many of the heathen themselves acknowledge (and those, the wisest of them, such as Hippocrates). But that a common soldier should give such an exact interpretation of another soldier's dream, and that against themselves, and their own nation, is very extraordinary.

Ver. 15. *And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof.*] He understood the Midianitish language, it is likely, having been long a subject to that nation; or, perhaps, it did not differ much from the Hebrew.

That he worshipped.] Gave humble thanks to God for his goodness, in giving him new encouragement to proceed in his undertaking.

And returned to the host of Israel.] So he calls it (though it scarce deserved that name), because God intended to do the same by this small number, as if they had been a great host.

And said, Arise, for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.] He bids them make no doubt nor delay, for God had given fresh assurance of success.

Ver. 16. *And he divided the three hundred men into three companies.*] Under three commanders-in-chief, as the Hebrew *raschim* imports, which signifies *heads.*

And he put a trumpet into every man's hand.] That they might make a sound of a great army.

With empty pitchers.] Earthen pitchers, which had no water in them; wherein they hid their lamps till they should think fit to light them.

And lamps within their pitchers.] Or, rather, *torches;* for, no doubt, they were made of pitch, or wax, and rosin, and such-like things as would burn long, and not be blown out by the wind, as lamps made of oil only are apt to be.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto them, Look on me and do likewise.*] Follow my example.

And, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp.] Where he began the assault.

It shall be, that as I do, so shall ye do.] I suppose he told them what he would do, *viz.* after they heard him blow the trumpet (as it follows in the next verse), they should do the same, and then break their pitchers and light their torches, &c.

Ver. 18. *When I blow with a trumpet, I, and all that are with me.*] It is likely he commanded one of the three troops with whom he began the attack, as the next verse imports.

Then blow ye the trumpet also on every side of all the camp.] By this it appears that they did not fall upon them all in one place, but some on one part of their camp, some on another, that they might strike the greater terror into them, and put them into confusion.

And say, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.] The word *sword* is not here in the Hebrew, where these words run thus, *for the Lord, and for Gideon:* but there being mention of the *sword*, ver. 20. it moved our translators to add it here also: and it is not to be thought contrary to the design of God, (who would have the victory ascribed to himself, ver. 2.) that Gideon here joins his own name with God's when they went to fight; for, as he puts God in the first place, and names himself only as his minister, so it is likely he had directions from God for it, who knew the name of Gideon, of whose extraordinary courage, no doubt, the Midianites had heard, would be very formidable to them.

Ver. 19. *So Gideon and the hundred men that were with him.*] The Vulgar took a hundred to be put for the whole host of Gideon, and therefore saith, *The three hundred men that were with him:* but the LXX. expressly follow the Hebrew; and it is most probable that he led only a hundred men himself, the rest being commanded by some other valiant captains.

Came to the outside of the camp.] It is not said on what quarter; but it is probable on the east part of their camp, as the second troop set upon them on the north-east part, and the third on the south-east: for this way they knew they would bend their flight when they were routed, and endeavoured to escape; their own country, and the fords of Jordan, lying on the east: and if they ran westward, there were Israelites enough to pursue them, and cut them off.

In the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch.] That is, a little after midnight: for there were three watches among the Hebrews and the rest of the eastern nations, as Bochart observes out of Kimchi, R. Solomon, and others; the night being divided into three parts: and when the first third part was ended, they that had watched went to sleep, and another company succeeded them, till the morning watch. The Romans afterward divided the night into four parts, from whence we read, in the gospel, of the fourth watch.

And they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands.] Though Gideon placed his hope in God alone, yet he did not neglect such prudent stratagems as are used in war, but made an appearance of a greater number of men than he had with him: for, hearing three hundred trumpets sound, the Midianites could not but apprehend a great army was come to assault them: the breaking of the pitchers also made a clattering noise, and the torches then, on a sudden, flaring in their eyes, was very amazing, especially when they heard them shout, *for the Lord, and for Gideon:* he chose also to make his attack at midnight, when they were in a dead sleep, and expected no disturbance.

Ver. 20. *And the three companies.*] The former words were concerning Gideon and his men, who began the attack; whose example the rest of the three companies followed, as he required, ver. 17, 18.

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Blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hand, and the trumpets in their right hand to blow withal.] So that they made no use of their swords, in the first onset; both hands being full of something else.

And they cried, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.] But this stratagem had been of no efficacy, if God had not struck such a terror into them, when they heard these words, as quite confounded them: and yet these words do not import, as I said before, that the victory was divided between the Lord and Gideon; for it is most likely (as Pet. Martyr observes) that God suggested even this stratagem to Gideon, and made it successful.

Ver. 21. *And they stood every man in his place round about the camp.*] Not one of the three hundred men stirred a foot from his place, but stood there without striking a stroke; as if they had been only torch-bearers, to give light to their army, to see their way to the camp, and to do execution.

And all the host ran, and cried, and fled.] They did not stand in their ranks to repel the Israelites; but brake up their camp (as the Hebrew word *jaratz* may be translated), and cried out with a lamentable voice, fleeing as fast as they could to their own country.

Ver. 22. *And the three hundred men blew the trumpets.*] That is, continued to blow them without ceasing.

And the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host.] Being suddenly awaked out of their sleep in the middle of the night, and hearing such a noise, as if a vast multitude were falling upon them, they were in such disorder (which was increased by the clattering of the pitchers, and the blaze of the torches), that they could not distinguish their friends from their enemies, but killed one another; every man falling upon him that was next to him, whom he fancied to be one of Gideon's army. Thus the Philistines were defeated by Jonathan, (1 Sam. xiv. 16. 20.) and the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, in the days of Jehoshaphat, (2 Chron. xx. 22, 23.)

And the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath.] We find none of these places mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, but only Abel-meholah, in 1 Kings iv. 12. xix. 16. which being in the tribe of Manasseh, not far from the river Jordan, may support a conjecture, that the rest of the places were in the way thither.

Ver. 23. *And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher.*] He had sent to these tribes at the first raising of his army, and also to Zebulun, who, being neighbours, came to join him, (vi. 35.)

And out of all Manasseh.] Who were the forwardest in this enterprise, being his own tribe.

And pursued after the Midianites.] Though they had been lately disbanded by God's order, yet it is likely they lay ready, if there should be occasion, to help to complete the victory.

Ver. 24. *And Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim.*] He was desirous that others should have some share with him, in finishing this work; though he alone, with some few began it, and were exposed to all the danger. Would to God (saith P. Martyr on this occasion) that we were of this spirit in the church of Christ, that when any noble work is begun, we would call in all to help to perfect it: but, alas! such are our sins, we oft-times do all we are able to hinder one another.

Saying, Come down against the Midianites.] He invites them to come to his assistance against the common enemy; which his small handful of men were not sufficient to destroy, though they had entirely routed them.

And take before them the waters.] He would have them make such haste, as to possess themselves of the fords, before the Midianites could get to them.

Unto Beth-barah and Jordan.] It is very probable, that Beth-barah is the same place with Beth-abara in St. John's gospel, (i. 28.) being the place where the Israelites passed over Jordan, when they first entered Canaan: and then by Jordan must be meant all the fords upon this river, from Beth-barah to the lake of Gennesaret.

Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan.] Posted themselves all along the river, from the lake beforementioned unto Beth-barah.

Ver. 25. *And they took two princes of the Midianites.*] Two great commanders, as the word *sarim* signifies, which we translate *princes*.

Oreb and Zeeb.] From hence some gather that the Midianitish language did not much differ from the Hebrew: in which *Oreb* signifies a *crow*, and *Zeeb* a *wolf*; from which creatures, and such-like, it seems very anciently great men thought fit to take the names of their families: as the Romans did afterward, (among whom we read of the Corvini, and Gracchi, and Aquilini, &c.) either as omens, or as monuments of their undaunted courage and dexterity in military achievements.

And they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb.] It is likely that there he was taken hidden in some hole, and from his slaughter there the rock had its name in future times.

And Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb.] Where he also, in like manner, being taken and slain, gave name to this place.

And pursued Midian.] Did not content themselves with this, but pursued them to the other side of Jordan; whither some of them had escaped, before they would obey Gideon's summons.

And brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon.] As the manner was in aftertimes, when they would gratify a great conqueror with a welcome spectacle: for thus Pompey's head was offered to Cæsar, and Cicero's to Mark Antony.

On the other side Jordan.] Over which we read (viii. 4.) Gideon passed, in the pursuit of the enemy.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *AND the men of Ephraim said unto him.*] When they presented the heads of the two princes unto him.

Why hast thou served us thus?] They thought themselves slighted by their brethren of the tribe of Manasseh; which they took the more heinously, because they looked upon themselves to be every way superior to them, by the blessing of Jacob.

That thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites.] As he had done other meaner tribes, (vi. 35.) who were not so able to assist him as themselves.

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And they did chide with him sharply.] Spake very angry words, as if they would have come to blows.

Ver. 2. *And he said, What have I done now in comparison with you?*] Proud men love to be praised; and therefore he magnifies their service as far surpassing his own.

Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim, better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?] A common proverb, I suppose, in those days, whereby they were wont to commend the smallest action of one, as superior to the greatest of another: and here it is most fitly applied; for it is as if he had said, These scattered parties that you have gleaned and picked up (as we now speak) at the fords of Jordan, are far more than those which I and my whole host (as it is called, vii. 15.) have destroyed.

Ver. 3. *God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb.*] Which he was content they should think more considerable than all the common men that he had vanquished.

And what was I able to do in comparison with you?] To yield unto others the glory which they affect, wonderfully appeases their highest displeasure.

Then their anger was abated towards him when he had said that.] According to that of Solomon, Prov. xv. 1. This is an argument of the singular modesty and prudence of Gideon, and no less conspicuous in him than his courage; which is a mixture that rarely meets together, but is absolutely necessary to make a truly great man; who never appears so great, as when he treats insolent men with humility, and angry men with meekness.

Ver. 4. *And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over.*] Or rather, *had passed over;* for he was gone over Jordan before Oreb and Zeeb were taken; but it is not related till now, that what concerned the Ephraimites might be told altogether without interruption.

He and the three hundred men that were with him.] Not one of which was lost.

Faint, yet pursuing them.] Tired with a long march, and eager pursuit; which notwithstanding they continued, being more solicitous for the public safety than their own.

Ver. 5. *And he said unto the men of Succoth.*] A city in the tribe of Gad, mentioned in Gen. xxxiii. 17. and other places.

Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me.] A small request, considering their great merits.

For they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna.] He gives two reasons for his request; because his men were faint with a whole night's labour for the public safety, and he had not made his victory so complete as he hoped to do, if his men were refreshed and enabled to pursue the enemy.

Kings of Midian.] It is no wonder we read of more kings than one in this country, there being five in Moses's time, (Numb. xxxi. 8.) and more than five times five in Canaan, which was divided into many petty kingdoms: and therefore, if we take Oreb and Zeeb also to have been kings, there is no improbability in it.

Ver. 6. *And the princes of Succoth said.*] The rulers and governors of the city, who had the chief authority among them; as Oreb and Zeeb had in the army of Midian, for it is the very same word in the Hebrew.

Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thy army?] They bid him first take those kings captives, and bring them thither with their hands bound behind them, before he made any demands of them. It is a bitter sort of taunt or derision, arising from irreligion; which made them think there was nothing of God in this victory, and that he would not be able to perfect it.

Ver. 7. *And Gideon said, Therefore when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand.*] As he was confident he would.

Then will I tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, and with briers.] This city was near to a wilderness, in which there were plenty of thorns and briers; with which he threatens to *thrash* their flesh, as the word is in the Hebrew: which some think signifies, that laying briers and thorns on their naked bodies, he intended to bring the cart-wheel over them (as the manner was of thrashing out their corn) to fasten them deep in their flesh, and then crush them to death: such a kind of punishment David inflicted on the Ammonites, (2 Sam. xii. *ult.*)

Ver. 8. *And he went up from thence.*] He would not stay to avenge this repulse at present, but sacrificed his private resentments to the public service, and therefore went on after the enemy.

Unto Penuel.] Another city in the tribe of Gad, not far from Succoth; unto both which Jacob gave their name, (Gen. xxxii. 30. xxxiii. 17.)

And spake unto them likewise.] Desired some provision of them, for the same reason.

And the men of Penuel.] *i. e.* The principal persons of the city.

Answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him.] It is very likely they were idolaters; and therefore hated Gideon, who began to reform religion: and, trusting to the strength of their tower, despised the small forces he had with him.

Ver. 9. *And he spake unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.*] In which they confided; and perhaps pointed to it, when they gave him their rude answer.

Ver. 10. *Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor.*] We read of this place no where else; and therefore it is but a conjecture that it was in the confines of the tribe of Gad. St. Jerome saith, there was a castle in his time called Carcaria, about a day's journey from the city Petra; and Eusebius saith the same.

And all the hosts with them.] That is, all the troops or regiments, as we now speak, that fled with them.

About fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east.] This moved those of Succoth and Penuel to mock at Gideon; that he should think with three hundred men, and they fatigued (as we now speak), to vanquish fifteen thousand, and that he should make demands to them, as if he had his enemies already in his power.

For there fell a hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword.] Besides all the people that attended their baggage.

Ver. 11. *And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents.*] He fetched a compass, by the country of the Arabians called Scenitæ, because they dwelt in tents: and so he came upon the back of Zebah and Zalmunna; where they suspected no danger.

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On the east of Nobah and Jogbehah.] Two cities, the last of which is expressly said to be in the tribe of Gad, Numb. xxxii. 35. and the former in the tribe of Manasseh, on the borders of Gad, as may be gathered from this place.

And smote the host: for the host was secure.] He fell upon them, it is very probable, in the night, as he had done upon their main army at the first: and they having fled as fast as they could, the day, and part of the night before, were gone to take their rest; supposing they had been out of all danger of disturbance, now they were got so far from the place of battle.

Ver. 12. *And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them.*] We read of no refreshment that he and his men had all this time; but either they met with some by the way, or God miraculously supported them.

And took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.] Having routed their army, the two kings could make little resistance.

Ver. 13. *And Gideon the son of Joash returned from the battle before the sun was up.*] The Hebrew words *milmahaleh hachares* are so variously translated by very learned men, that it hath made it uncertain whether he returned after sun-rise, or a little before it set (as Kimchi among the Jews, and Mercer among Christians understand it), or, as our translation, *before sun-rise:* so the Vulgar, with Junius, and Tremellius, and others. And then it shews, both that Gideon had smote the army in the night, and that he made such haste to return, that he came to Succoth before they were aware, by break of day.

Ver. 14. *And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him.*] Surprised him in the field, and examined him who were the principal men of the city.

And he described to him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even threescore and seventeen men.] He wrote down (as the Hebrew word for *describe* signifies) the names, and, perhaps, the dwellings of the great men of the city, and of the judges; who were the persons that derided him, and whom alone he intended to punish; not all the people, who were not in the guilt.

Ver. 15. *And he came unto the men of Succoth.*] Got into the city very early; and called those men before him, who had put the late affront upon him.

And said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom you upbraided me.] He kept these two kings alive, on purpose that the princes of Succoth might see the Lord had delivered them into his hand; and made their jeers turn to their own shame.

Saying, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary?] He repeats their own words to them, (ver. 6.) that he might reproach them with their inhuman usage of him; when he was in distress, and had done such wonders for their preservation.

Ver. 16. *And he took the elders of the city.*] Under this name of *elders,* all their great men are comprehended.

And thorns of the wilderness, and briers.] Which he had ready at hand.

And with them he taught the men of Succoth.] He thrashed or tare them (as he threatened, ver. 7. and as some copies here have it), and by this severe correction taught them better manners, and more wisdom. It is not said that he tormented them till they expired, (as some think he did, see ver. 7.) for then it would have been as plainly said, as it is in the next verse of the men of Penuel.

Ver. 17. *And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.*] It is not said the princes and elders, and therefore this looks as if the whole city had been guilty of the affront put upon him, and consequently punished by him. But the *men of the city* in this story, hath signified only the principal persons in it, as I interpreted ver. 8. (see ver. 15, 16.) and therefore it is probable no other men are here meant, who fled into the tower, perhaps, for safety (knowing their own guilt, and the danger they were in of suffering for it), and were there slain.

Ver. 18. *Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?*] Where Gideon brought them before him to be judged, is uncertain: and when it was that they slew some Israelites at Tabor, we can but guess. It is probable he brought them out to receive their sentence after he came home: and that some who hid themselves in dens and caves, which were in the mountains, (vi. 2.) being found out, were slain by the Midianites. And Gideon's brethren being missing, he desired to find out, whether they were the persons whom they slew.

And they answered, As thou art, so were they.] They were very like him, and perhaps resembled him in their countenance; as brethren frequently do one another.

Every one resembled the children of a king.] By this it appears, that Gideon was of a goodly presence; carrying greatness and majesty in his aspect: and that kings took care in those days to match only with graceful persons; by whom they might hope to have children like to themselves.

Ver. 19. *And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother.*] Though, perhaps, not by the same father.

As the Lord liveth, if ye had spared them alive.] As generous men are wont to do comely and graceful persons; who look like men of quality, as we now speak.

I would not slay you.] For not being of the race of Canaan, he was not bound by the law to cut them off.

Ver. 20. *And he said unto Jether his first-born, Up, and slay them.*] It was not unusual for great persons to do execution upon offenders in ancient times; no more than it unbecame them to sentence them to death: and therefore they had not, as now, such as the Romans called *carnifices,* public executioners; but Saul bade such as waited on him kill the priests; and Doeg, one of his great officers, did it, (1 Sam. xxii. 17, 18.) And Samuel himself is said to have hewed Agag to pieces in Gilgal; and Benaiah, the general of the army, to have fallen upon Joab at the horns of the altar. Accordingly Gideon would have had his son do this execution, that he might be early animated against the enemies of Israel; as Hannibal is reported, when he was a boy, to have been incensed against the Romans.

But the youth drew not his sword; for he feared, because he was yet a youth.] They were men, it is likely, of great stature, and of a fierce and stern countenance, who (as appears by the story) feared not death; which made the youth afraid even to look upon them.

Ver. 21. *Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Arise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength.*] They

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thought it more honourable to die by the hand of Gideon, who was a man of as great strength as dignity; and would sooner dispatch them, than a stripling could do.

And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were about their camels' necks.] As well as all the ornaments which they wore themselves. The word *saharonim* is found no where but here, and ver. 26. and in Isaiah iii. 18. where we translate it *round tires like the moon*. So our margin also in this place, *ornaments like the moon;* following the LXX. who translate it μηνίσκους, *little moons*. So ancient was this custom of wearing ornaments of this figure; which was spread afterward over many nations. Huetius thinks it came originally from the Phœnicians, who were the worshippers of Astarte, *i. e.* the moon; and went from them to the Arabians, who were very anciently devoted to the moon, who propagated it to the Turks; and the Brachmans also are wont to adorn their heads in the same figure; as he observes in his Demonstr. Evangel. propos. iv. p. 197.

Ver. 22. *Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also.*] They would have made his dominion over them hereditary.

For thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.] They pretended to make this offer out of gratitude to him; but, in truth, they were disposed now (as their posterity were afterward) to throw off the Divine government; being desirous to set a king over themselves, like the rest of the nations round about them. And now they thought was a fit opportunity; when such an extraordinary judge was raised up, as had done wonders beyond all his predecessors; and might, they thought, be ambitious enough to establish the supreme authority in his family.

Ver. 23. *But Gideon said, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you.*] He absolutely rejected their offer; because he looked upon God as their king, who appointed what deputy he pleased to rule them: and therefore he accounted this to be an attempt to alter the government of God without asking his consent.

The Lord shall rule over you.] As he hath done hitherto. This shews that these two could not consist together; a successive dominion of kings and such governors as they now had by the Divine appointment. Such a one was Gideon, raised up by God when they needed a deliverer; and therefore he durst not accept of the authority they offered him, because it was a thing sacred, and proper only to the Divine Majesty to order who should govern: whence it is that the judgment which was administered among that people was called *God's judgment*, Deut. i. 17. and Solomon is said to sit upon *the throne of the Lord*, 1 Chron. xxix. 23. and the kingdom of his posterity is called *the kingdom of the Lord*, 2 Chron. xiii. 8. because, before kings were settled in Israel, the Lord was their king; from whom the government was derived to the house of David by a special act of God.

Ver. 24. *And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you.*] Which he thought, after such a great offer from them, they would not deny him.

That ye would give me every man the ear-rings of his prey.] He doth not ask all the ear-rings they had got; but from every man one, or as many as he pleased.

For they had golden ear-rings, because they were Ishmaelites.] The Chaldee paraphrast well expresses it, *because they were Arabians*, who are called the *children of the east*, (vi. 3.) and generally wore such ornaments, as I observed upon Exod. xxxii. 2. Ishmaelites, also, and Midianites, were so near neighbours, and so mixed together, that the Scripture speaks of them as one people. (See upon Gen. xxxvii. 28.)

Ver. 25. *And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the ear-rings of his prey.*] They made no difficulty to grant his request; but, as we speak, no sooner said than done.

Ver. 26. *And the weight of the golden ear-rings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold.*] It is easy to compute what this makes of our money, by considering the value of a shekel, and the proportion that silver holds to gold. Of which see the very learned treatise of the Bishop of Peterborough, concerning Scripture Weights and Measures, chap. 4.

Besides ornaments.] Of which see above, ver. 21.

And the collars.] The Hebrew word *hanetiphoth* is thought to signify *little pots of precious ointments*. For *neteph* signifies a *drop*, or a *tear;* the most precious of which is balsam. Among the spoils of Darius (as Arius Montanus observes) historians mention boxes of ointments set with precious stones, and curiously wrought with elegant art.

And purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian.] Who were distinguished from other men, as kings are now, by robes peculiar to them.

And beside the chains that were upon their camels' necks.] All these, I take it, fell to Gideon's share, by the custom of war, without asking. For it was the ancient manner, as Grotius observes, to give the commander-in-chief the best of the spoils they had taken.

Ver. 27. *And Gideon made an ephod thereof.*] He would not have them think that he requested the ear-rings for his own private gain; but to employ them religiously in the service of God, by making a monument of his victory, as obtained solely by the miraculous mercy of God, for the restoring of his true religion among them. It is commonly said, that so much gold could not be laid out upon an *ephod;* and therefore some take this for a short expression, to signify the breast-plate, with the *urim* and *thummim;* that he (being now supreme governor) might consult God at his own house, in such difficulties as might occur: and they think it probable that he made also a private tabernacle with cherubims: for how else could he employ such a quantity of gold? An *ephod* being only fine linen embroidered with it, &c. which would not cost much. (See Exod. xxviii. 6.) Theodoret and St. Austin seem to incline to this opinion; for which I refer the reader to our Dr. Spencer, in his most learned work De Leg. et Rit. Hebr. p. 881. But I do not see how Gideon can be excused from apostacy from God, if he set up an oracle in his own house; nor was there any need of it, Shiloh being not far from him, in the tribe of Ephraim, which adjoined to this of Manasseh. Therefore I take this *ephod* to have been only a monument of his victory, and of God's great mercy, which conquerors were wont to erect: but he would not follow the common custom in erecting a pillar, and hanging up trophies, or any thing of that nature; but chose to make an *ephod*, as a token that he ascribed his victory only to God, and triumphed in nothing, but only in the restoration of the true religion by his means. As for the gold that was laid

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out upon it, the reader may observe, that it is said *he made an ephod thereof;* that is, out of this offering; but not that it was all spent in this.

And put it in his city, even in Ophrah.] This is to be well noted; because I think it shews that Gideon did not make this that he might have resort to God thereby on all occasions at home; for he went and dwelt at another place, (ver. 29.) It was kept here therefore as a monument of God's appearing to him, and of the sacrifice the angel here offered, and of all the wonders that followed, by the power of God who dwelt in the sanctuary. There are those who think, that because God bade Gideon build an altar, and offer his father's second bullock in Ophrah, (vi. 26.) he thence concluded, he might take upon him to have priestly garments made, and the high-priest came to minister at Ophrah upon extraordinary occasions. But he understood religion better than to make such conclusions, unless he had received a Divine command for this, as he did for the building of an altar.

And all Israel went thither a whoring after it.] This, I suppose, was after his death, when the people began to return to idolatry; and had this fancy, among others, that God would answer them here where this ephod was, as well as at his tabernacle in Shiloh, where he dwelt.

Which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and his house.] Occasioned the ruin of him and of his family. For though they perished after his death, yet he may be said to have suffered with them, because his name and memory, which is preserved in men's posterity, was in a manner extinct in Israel.

Ver. 28. *Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more.*] To oppress the Israelites; or, perhaps, to disturb any of their neighbours.

And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.] The country was in quiet in the fortieth year after the former rest restored to it by Deborah and Barak, as our primate Usher understands it, in his Annals ad A. M. 2759. and in his Chronologia Sacra, par. i. cap. 13. where, in more words, he thus interprets it: *In the fortieth year after the rest restored by Deborah and Barak, the land began to rest again in the days of Gideon, after he had subdued the Midianites, who had oppressed them seven years.* But the plainest account is, that after seven years' oppression by the Midianites, the country was in peace forty years in the days of Gideon, who was their deliverer; and died, as we read ver. 32. in a good old age.

Ver. 29. *And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house.*] Having refused to be a king, and dismissed his army, he went from Ophrah (as I understand it), and lived not so publicly as he had done, but in a private house of his own in the country.

Ver. 30. *And Gideon had threescore and ten sons, of his body begotten.*] These last words are added to shew, that they were none of them adopted sons.

For he had many wives.] According to the manner of those times. And this is said to lessen the wonder of having so many children; many women bringing two or three at a birth, and one woman having had above twenty children by one man.

Ver. 31. *And his concubine.*] The difference between a wife and a concubine hath been often noted. Their wives administered the affairs of the family, the concubines meddled not with them; but, as the word signifies, were only admitted to their beds: and their children did not inherit, though they were married to them; for they were not harlots, but a secondary sort of wives.

That was in Shechem.] A famous city in the tribe of Ephraim, adjoining to that of Manasseh; where, going frequently to judge the people, he took a wife of this sort, who lived constantly with her father in this city, and not in Gideon's family.

She also bare him a son.] Beside the seventy beforementioned, as Josephus understands it.

Whose name was Abimelech.] His name is here set down when nothing is said of the names of the rest, because the following story depends upon it. And perhaps his mother gave him this name (signifying *my father a king*) out of pride and arrogance, that she might be looked upon as the wife of one who was thought to deserve a kingdom, though he did not accept it: which afterward, it is likely, inflamed the mind of this son to affect the royal dignity.

Ver. 32. *And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age.*] This is a phrase often used in Scripture, to signify that such persons lived long and in great prosperity and happiness.

And was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.] Which was accounted a great blessing in those days.

Ver. 33. *And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again.*] He preserved them, it seems, in the true religion while he lived; but they had no great affection to it, it appears, by their revolting from it as soon as he was dead.

And went a whoring after Baalim.] This seems to have been a general name of all the gods which they worshipped, particularly of demons, which were all called Baalim from the first demon, or deified king in the world, Belus or Baal, as Mr. Mede thinks, book iii. p. 777.

And made Baal-berith their god.] They worshipped a new god, which was not known to them before, nor ever mentioned but here and in the next chapter: who was reputed, as some think, the god that punished those who broke their covenants and contracts; or, as others, was so called because his servants covenanted to maintain his worship and service. But Bochartus, by a more probable conjecture, interprets it Baal of Berith, *i. e.* of Berytus. That Baal which was worshipped in that famous city which had its name from Beroe, the daughter of Venus and Adonis, who was there worshipped, as Nonnus tells us. This he takes to be the Baal here mentioned; for Baal is of the feminine gender as well as of the masculine, as appears from St. Paul, Rom. xi. 4. and many places of the LXX. which Bochartus mentions, lib. ii. Canaan, cap. 17.

Ver. 34. *And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side.*] Out of the hand of the king of Mesopotamia, and then of the Moabites, and after that of the Canaanites, and now lately of the Midianites and the children of the east.

Ver. 35. *Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely Gideon.*] No wonder they were so ungrateful to his family when they were so forgetful of God: the fear of whom is the foundation of all virtue.

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According to all the goodness which he had shewn unto Israel.] In hazarding his life freely, and working for them a glorious deliverance; and in leaving them in their liberty, by refusing the despotic power which they offered to put into his hands; and in governing them so prudently many years, that he left them in peace, and in the possession of God's true religion, when he died.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *AND Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went.*] From his father's house, where it is likely he was educated.

Unto Shechem.] The place of his nativity.

Unto his mother's brethren.] Though the word *brethren* has many times a large signification, yet it is reasonable here to understand it properly, of his uncles by the mother's side; for his other near kindred are mentioned in the words following.

And communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying.] Discoursed with them, and with all the rest of his cousins, and his near kinsmen, descended from his grandfather.

Ver. 2. *Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem.*] By the *men* of this city are to be understood, the chief persons of authority in it, as in the foregoing chapter the *men of Succoth* signify the princes and elders of that place.

Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal (which are threescore and ten persons) reign over you, or that one reign over you.] He wickedly supposed that the sons of Jerubbaal were ambitious of the kingdom which their father refused; and therefore prays them to consider, what horrible divisions and confusion it would make, if so many were permitted to pretend to the government; and how much better it would be to choose one of them from among the rest; pointing then (in the next words) to himself. He uses the argument of Homer, mentioned by Aristotle, οὐχ' ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη, &c. It is better to be subject to the rule of one man than of many.

Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh.] Since there must be a king, he represents himself, as the most desirable to them of all other single persons, he being of the same tribe, and their fellow-citizen.

Ver. 3. *And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of the men of Shechem, all these words.*] They were ready enough to promote his design, hoping for preferment under him. But neither he nor they considered, that it did not belong to them to set a judge over the people, much less a king, which was to shake off the government of God.

And their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, He is our brother.] This consideration of their interest in him, prevailed with them against the clearest reason. For if it had been in any person's power to appoint a king, but God alone, the men of Shechem had it not in them, but all the men of Israel ought to have been consulted.

Ver. 4. *And they gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith.*] Out of the public treasury, which was in this temple. It is uncertain what is meant by *pieces of silver;* but, in all probability, more than shekels; for they would have been but a small present to make a man a prince. Therefore the Vulgar translates it so many pound weight of silver, which learned men approve of, particularly Stanislaus Grepsius, in his book de Siclo et Talento. For seventy shekels were too little for his occasions; and so many talents too much for them to give. And thus Josephus interprets Gen. xxxvii. 28. where it is said, Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver; that is, for so many pound weight of it.

Wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons.] The Hebrew word *rekim,* which we translate *vain,* signifies *empty;* that is, poor and needy persons: and the other word, *pochazim,* idle, vagabond fellows, that could settle to no business, but wandered about the country; who being commonly men of loose lives, were fittest for his purpose. Therefore Kimchi understands by them *light-headed persons* (as we speak), who have no settled principles, but are disposed to do any thing, though never so wicked. Such Zephaniah saith the prophets in his time were, (iii. 4.) *light and treacherous.*

Which followed him.] As a constant guard to him.

Ver. 5. *And he went into his father's house at Ophrah.*] With this wicked crew to attend him; who, I suppose, beset the house, that none might escape out of it. I supposed that he had a house in the country, viii. 29. for I could not see with what propriety he could be said to go and dwell in his house at Ophrah, in which he had always lived. But this was the house of the family, where all his children lived.

And slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons.] All of them except Jotham. Thus Romulus slew his brother Remus, as Tully observes, (lib. iii. de Officiis) " Specie quadam utilitatis," *under the specious pretence of the public good;* that the kingdom would be governed more happily by one, than by two persons.

Upon one stone.] Some understand this, as if he intended to make them a great victim to Baal; for a stone was sometimes used for an altar, 1 Sam. vi. 14, 15. And so they take this to have been done in revenge of the sacrifice of the bullock prepared for Baal upon the rock, (vi. 25, 26.) which crime of Gideon, as these idolaters accounted it, they designed to expiate by the sacrifice of all his sons that they could lay hold on. For that the men of Shechem joined in this impious slaughter, is manifest from ver. 18. and 24. of this chapter.

Notwithstanding, yet Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, was left; for he hid himself.] Either he had some notice of their intention, and saved himself by flight, or, when they came to seize them, got into some secret place in the house, where they could not find him; or, by some that pitied his youth, he was preserved from falling into their hands. So the LXX. and the Vulgar translate it, *He was hid.*

Ver. 6. *And all the men of Shechem gathered themselves together, and all the house of Millo.*] None seem to have understood these words better than Corn. Bertram, in his little book de Republ. Jud. cap. 9. where by *col-baale Shechem* he understands all the principal men or lords of that city; *principes civitatis, the princes of the city,* by whom it was governed: and by *col-beth Millo,* all the citizens, who in a full assembly (for *Millo* signifies *fulness*) agreed upon what follows: and so we read in the next chapter, (x. 18.) that the *people and princes of Gilead* consulted together,

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who should fight for them; that is, all the citizens met together, with their elders, (as these princes are called, xi. 5.) to advise about this matter: for when the Canaanites, and other people, ruled over the Israelites and oppressed them, they contented themselves with setting such a power over them, as should make them pay what tribute they imposed, and other taxes; but left them to their own government and laws, as appears from viii. 14. where we read of the *elders of Succoth* in the time of the Midianites.

And went.] To the place where they were wont to meet for public business.

And made Abimelech king.] Voted him their king, in full senate.

In the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.] Or the *oak* (as St. Jerome commonly translates this word *elon*), where Joshua set up a pillar as a token of the covenant between God and them, Josh. xxiv. 26. That is, in a very remarkable place, as the manner was to do such things: but here, I suppose, they proclaimed him king, after they had chosen him in the common hall of the city: and some think they intended hereby to declare, that they would not forsake the worship of God, to which they were engaged, but only to join the worship of Baal with him: but see what I have noted of this pillar, Deut. xxvii. 13. And after all it must be confessed, that the Hebrew word *mutzab* doth not certainly signify a *pillar;* for I cannot find it so used in any other place of Scripture: and therefore St. Jerome translates this passage thus, *By the oak which stood in Shechem,* and the LXX. ἐν βαλάνῳ τῆς ὀτάσιως, which seems to signify as if it was the place where they had their stations, or solemn assemblies. See Mr. Mede's Discourse xviii.

Ver. 7. *And when they told it Jotham.*] Who had some friends among them, that took care to inform him of what passed: but it is an amazing thing, that in all Israel there should none be found to revenge the murder of this noble family: of which no account can be given, but that, with the sense of God and religion, they had lost all goodness and virtue. (See viii. 34, 35.)

He went.] From the place where he lay hid.

And stood on the top of Mount Gerizim.] Which overlooked the city of Shechem. (See Deut. xxvii. 12, 13.)

And lifted up his voice and cried, and said unto them.] This was not on the same day that Abimelech was inaugurated, but some time after; when he, it is probable, was absent, and all the people met (as Josephus saith) at a public festival; which was a fair opportunity for him to declare his mind to them.

Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.] It is a form of adjuration, whereby he not only intreats, but obliges them to be as attentive to him, as they desired God would be to their requests.

Ver. 8. *The trees went forth on a time.*] By this it appears, that such fictions as these, wherein the most serious truths are represented, were in use among the Jews (as they are still in the eastern countries) long before the time of Æsop, or any other author that we know of. And they made choice of them for two reasons; because men would suffer themselves to be reprehended this way, when they would not endure plain words; and they heard them also with delight and pleasure, and more easily remembered them than a rational discourse. So A. Gellius observes of Æsop's Fables, that they slid into the mind and affections of men, *cum audiendi quadam illecebra,* with a certain enticement to hear them, (lib. ii. cap. 29.)

To anoint a king over them.] This was two hundred years (as Mr. Selden observes in his Titles of Honour) before the first kings of Israel (Saul and David) were anointed. Which shews the great antiquity of this custom; and that it was the same to anoint a person, and to declare him king.

And they said unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us.] By this they would easily apprehend he meant his father Gideon; to whom all the Israelites had offered the kingdom, when he was in a most flourishing condition, and had newly triumphed over their enemies.

Ver. 9. *But the olive-tree said unto them.*] In this reply he represents his refusal of the offer, and the reason of it.

Shall I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man.] He makes the trees speak after the manner of men; who, when they are in a plentiful condition, and live at ease, are not willing to take upon themselves a great deal of care and trouble, especially when they think themselves to have honour enough already; as Gideon had, in being such a glorious conqueror over mighty enemies. God and man are said to be honoured by oil, because it was offered in sacrifice to God, and fed the lamps of his house; and priests were wont to be anointed with it among men. (See Lev. ii. 1. 4. Numb. xv. 4. 6, &c.)

And go to be promoted among the trees?] This is a most lively representation of the duty of a good man; who, for the public good, denies his own quiet and tranquillity. For the Hebrew word we translate *promote,* signifies (as is noted in the margin) action and agitation to and fro; shewing how a man must bestir himself who executes the kingly office; and what solicitude and continual carefulness is the concomitant of authority, when it is duly administered.

Ver. 10. *And the trees said unto the fig-tree, Come thou and reign over us.*] He intends to represent the same mind to be in all Gideon's sons that was in their father: for as Gideon refused the kingdom himself, so he did for his posterity, saying, *I will not rule over you, neither shall my son, or my son's son* (*i. e.* any of mine) *rule over you,* (viii. 23.) Therefore Abimelech had most vilely slandered them in suggesting that they affected a regal power over the people.

Ver. 11. *But the fig-tree said unto them, Shall I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?*] No fruit is more luscious than a fig, which makes this an apt representation of the sweet content, or rather full pleasure, that may be enjoyed in a private life, which it would be folly to exchange for the troubles and cares which men meet withal in the managery of public affairs, if they be not drawn to it purely out of love to the public good.

Ver. 12. *Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us.*] All these are noble trees, setting forth the same thing, that better men than Abimelech had refused that of which he was ambitious.

Ver. 13. *And the vine said unto them, Shall I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?*] The same thing is repeated for the fuller illustration of the thing intended, according to the manner of all such ways of speech: for A. Gellius, in the place beforenamed, makes the birds among the corn, when it was to be reaped, say the same thing more than once to their dam before she bade them be gone. As for wine *cheering God*

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and man, it is a form of speech imitated by the heathen, particularly by Virgil, lib. ii. Georg. ver. 101. where speaking of noble vines, or wine, he saith, they were "Mensis et Diis accepta secundis." For wine, as the Hebrew doctors note, was not only used in their sacrifices, as it was also among the heathen; but Jarchi saith, Till the drink-offering was poured out, they did not begin the hymn that was then sung to God. (See upon Numb. xv. 5.)

Ver. 14. *Then said all the trees unto the bramble*, &c.] The meanest of all trees, good for nothing but to be burnt, aptly representing Abimelech, from whom they could receive no benefit, but much trouble and vexation from his ambitious cruelty.

Ver. 15. *And the bramble said unto them, If in truth ye anoint me king over you.*] This well sets forth Abimelech's distrust of the sincerity of the Shechemites; for which he had great reason, having no title to the kingdom but the great achievements of his father, and he the basest of all his sons.

Then come and put your trust in my shadow.] Be assured of my protection, if you live quietly under my government. This represents how ridiculous Abimelech was, in imagining that he should be able to maintain the authority of a king; for a bramble doth not spread itself so as to afford any shelter or shadow, it being a kind of a thorn, which the Hebrews call *atad*. From whence, as Avenarius observes, came the word *aphris* among the Greeks, and in Dioscorides the word ἀταδίμ. And from hence he thinks was derived the word οὐτάω, and οὐτάζω, which signify *to wound*, as a thorn doth when it pricks.

And if not, let fire come out of the bramble.] It is a wood that easily catches fire, as Forsterus observes out of Josephus, lib. v. Antiq. cap. 11.

And devour the cedars of Lebanon.] This represents the vengeance Abimelech would take of the greatest of them, if they proved unfaithful to him.

Ver. 16. *Now therefore.*] Here follows Jotham's application of this apologue, as the Greeks call it, unto his purpose.

If ye have done truly and sincerely in that ye have made Abimelech king.] If his preferment was a righteous act.

And if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hand.] And if they had requited Gideon and his family according to his merits, which were exceeding great.

Ver. 17. *For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far.*] Put it in great hazard.

And delivered you out of the hand of Midian.] When they were sorely oppressed by them, and could not help themselves.

Ver. 18. *And ye are risen up against my father's house this day.*] This shews the men of Shechem consented to the murder, and assisted Abimelech in it.

And have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons.] For they intended the slaughter of Jotham, as much as of the rest, if he could have been found.

Upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maid-servant.] For concubines were often put to do the work of the house

King over the men of Shechem.] Who could not pretend to make him king over all Israel: no, nor over the whole tribe of Ephraim, but only of their city and territory.

Because he is your brother.] Without any title to it, but because he was a native of their city.

Ver. 19. *If you have done truly and sincerely.*] Like honest and upright men.

With Jerubbaal and his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him rejoice in you.] He wishes they may be happy in one another.

Ver. 20. *But if not, let fire come from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo.*] This is not a prediction, but an execration or curse, as appears from the opposition to the foregoing wish, and from ver. 57. where it is called Jotham's curse. Which was not causeless, but like that of Joshua's, (Josh. vi. 26.) which was fulfilled, as this was. Not by fire, properly so called, breaking forth from Abimelech, but by his rage and furious revenge, which is fitly compared to fire, in allusion to what is said of the bramble, (ver. 15.)

And let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.] He wishes they may mutually destroy each other, which came to pass by the righteous judgment of God, who hears the cries of the oppressed.

Ver. 21. *And Jotham ran away, and fled.*] As he might easily do, I have shewn upon Deut. xxvii. 13. The first word signifies, he made what haste he could away, as soon as he had done speaking; and the second, that he stopped not till he had got to a place of safety.

And went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.] It is not certain where this place was, whether in the land of Israel, or out of it. It is probable, that it was in the tribe of Judah, about eight miles from Eleutheropolis, as both Eusebius and St. Jerome affirm.

Ver. 22. *When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel.*] It is not said, *over all Israel*, who, it cannot be thought, would submit to the ambitious tyranny of so cruel a man as Abimelech was. And if Beer was in the tribe of Judah, we may be sure they did not own him for their king; for then Jotham could not have dwelt in safety there. The meaning therefore is, that he called himself king of Israel, and reigned over a great part of them, who were so desirous of a king (it appears by their offer made to Gideon), that they were content with him, rather than have none at all.

Ver. 23. *And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem.*] At the three years' end, I suppose, God ordered things so in his providence, that they grew jealous and distrustful one of another, and fell into dissensions and discords.

And the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech.] Conspired against him. So true is the observation of Grotius upon these words, that nothing is more unstable than the popular breath which is won by evil arts, and that men hate the wickedness which hath done them service.

Ver. 24. *That the cruelty done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon their brother Abimelech, which slew them.*] By this means God intended to punish Abimelech for the cruel murder of his brethren, whose blood cried for vengeance on him.

And upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren.] And to punish the men of Shechem, who enabled him to commit that wickedness, and helped him in it.

Ver. 25. *And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for*

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him, on the top of the mountains.] They were not yet broken out into open hostility against him; but there being a misunderstanding between them, Abimelech, I suppose, left the city in anger; but they thought he would return again, and thereupon set men to lie secretly on the top of the mountains over which he was to pass, to seize his person.

And they robbed all that came that way by them.] That the report coming to Abimelech's ears (as Arius Montanus understands it) how insecure his subjects were who passed that road, he might make the more speed, as good kings are bound to do, to clear the way from those thieves which infested it, and thereby give them an opportunity to seize him.

And it was told Abimelech.] What robberies were committed, and, perhaps, that they lay in wait for him.

Ver. 26. *And Gael the son of Ebed.*] We have no means to know who this Gael was, nor whence he came. R. Solomon thinks he was a gentile, and not one of the Jewish nation.

Came with his brethren.] He passed accidentally that way (as P. Martyr thinks) with his brethren and his attendants, about some business they had in that country: but the common opinion is, that he was a known enemy of Abimelech's, who hearing the men of Shechem were at defiance with him, came to offer them his service against him.

And the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.] That is, put themselves under his protection.

Ver. 27. *And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trod the grapes.*] Their first action under this new commander, was to go out of their city into their vineyards, which were in the fields, and gather their grapes, and press them, which they durst not do before, though the vintage was ripe, for fear of Abimelech; who being told how things stood there, had raised forces I suppose against them, but durst not now disturb them in their business, they being defended by Gael.

And made merry.] As they were wont to do in time of vintage, and now especially, when they were full of joy in hope to be rid of Abimelech's tyranny. The LXX. of the Vatican edition retain the Hebrew word, and translate it they made Ἐλλουλίμ, whereby some understand songs, as others dances: both are expressed by the Vulgar, and other copies of the LXX. have χορούς; for their merriment consisted very much in dances, with music and songs; which, as Max. Tyrius observes, were among the Greeks first used, and in honour of Bacchus, when they pressed out their grapes. (See Dr. Spencer, lib. iii. dissert. i. cap. 9.)

And went into the house of their god.] It is most likely into the temple of Baal-berith; there to offer their first-fruits, or such other sacrifices as were customary at that festival.

And did eat and drink.] Upon that part of the sacrifices which fell to the share of the people, who, perhaps, engaged in a covenant against Abimelech.

And cursed Abimelech.] Some think they only scoffed at him with taunts and reproaches, as men used to do in their cups: but the LXX. translate it κατηράσαντο, which signifies *cursing*, as we translate it; that is, they wished their god would confound him. And so we translate this word, Lev. xx. 9. Prov. xx. 20. A marvellous change, that they who lately gave him a great sum of money to advance him to the throne, should, in that very house from whence they took it, reproach him with imprecations of the Divine vengeance upon him.

Ver. 28. *And Gael the son of Ebed said.*] In the midst of this jollity, Gael (being elevated, I suppose, with wine) burst forth into this insulting language.

Who is Abimelech.] That is, he is but the son of a maid-servant, (ver. 18.)

And who is Shechem.] Some think he means the city of Shechem is as noble as he is base: why, therefore, should they be subject to him? but it seems, by what follows, to be rather the same thing repeated, *Who, I say, is the Shechemite?*

That we should serve him?] Suffer him to rule over us, and use us as he pleases.

Is he not the son of Jerubbaal?] Who threw down the altar of that god whom you worship.

And Zebul his officer.] Hath he not set one of his servants over you to be your governor?

Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem.] If we must be servants, let us restore the dominion of the old lords of this city, and subject ourselves to those who are descended from the ancient stock of Hamor; who was the father, as it were, of the Shechemites.

For why should we serve him?] But what reason can be given for our subjection to this upstart; who is famed for nothing, but his ambition and cruelty to his own brethren? this shews pretty plainly, that R. Solomon's opinion is true, that Gael was a gentile; who would have been glad to see the authority of the Canaanites restored. For though he suggests it only as comparatively more desirable than Abimelech's rule over them, yet, it is likely, he thought they might as well receive their government, as they had done their religion.

Ver. 29. *And would to God this people were under my hand!*] He wishes they would make him their king, at least their commander-in-chief: which it seems they had not yet resolved upon; some being still for Abimelech, and others not trusting to a stranger.

Then would I remove Abimelech.] That he should trouble them no more; but flee the country, as he was driven out of their city.

And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come out.] Some take this to be only a vapouring speech (as if Abimelech was present), when he knew he might boast and insult without danger, because he did not hear him; but it may as well be thought that he bid Abimelech's friends go and tell him what he said; that he wished him to reinforce his army, and come out (of the intrenchments wherein perhaps he was) and give him battle: for he pretended to scorn to set upon him by surprise, but desired to decide the quarrel in open field.

Ver. 30. *And when Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gael the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled.*] It is likely he had carried fair (as we speak) with Gael hitherto; thinking it in vain to oppose a popular commotion, till their fury was a little calmed; but he could not bear these insolent thrasonical words of Gael, which perhaps were not spoken in his presence, but brought to him by some that heard them.

Ver. 31. *And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily, saying.*] He had some wit in his anger, and did not openly declare his resentments; but gave secret intelligence to

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Abimelech how matters stood, with his advice how to proceed against Gael.

Behold, Gael the son of Ebed, and his brethren, be come to Shechem.] Where, no doubt, he informed him what entertainment he had found, and in what reviling terms he had spoken of him.

And, behold, he fortifieth the city against thee.] This was no sign that Gael desired, as he boasted, to meet Abimelech in a pitched battle; but that he rather provided for his own defence, in case he should be assaulted.

Ver. 32. *Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that are with thee, and lie in wait in the fields.*] His advice is, that, for fear of discovery, he should march with all his forces in the night, towards Shechem; and lurk in the fields till morning light.

Ver. 33. *And it shall be, that in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise up early, and set upon the city.*] Surprise them, before they were better provided.

And, behold, when he and the people that are with him come out against thee.] As Gael had boasted he would do.

Then thou mayest do to them, as thou shalt find occasion.] He could give him no farther advice; but that then he should dispose his forces to the best advantage against him.

Ver. 34. *And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies.*] He divided his army into four battalions (as they now speak), and disposed them in four places, as the Vulgar understands it: perhaps on the east, west, north, and south sides of the city.

Ver. 35. *And Gael the son of Ebed went out.*] Of his house.

And stood in the entering of the gate of the city.] To see, it is likely, if his soldiers were upon their guard.

And Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with him, from lying in wait.] Out of their lurking-places, where they had lain undiscovered all night.

Ver. 36. *And when Gael saw the people, he said to Zebul.*] Who, it seems, accompanied him, or, as governor of the city, was there to see every one do their duty.

Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains.] Which were adjoining to the city, *viz.* Mount Gerizim, and Mount Ebal.

And Zebul said, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men.] It being early in the morning, the trees, and all things else, cast long shadows, which being moved by the breath of air, which commonly accompanies the sun-rising, Zebul persuaded him he took for men marching down from the top of the mountains. Some think he spake this in mockery, that he was afraid of shadows; but delivered it in such a serious tone, that Gael believed he spake in earnest; by which it is plain that Zebul notably dissembled his resentments, and behaved himself as if he was on Gael's side; who was strangely infatuated, to trust one that was servant to Abimelech, and placed by him as governor of the city, whose pretences of friendship were reasonably to be suspected.

Ver. 37. *And Gael spake again, and said, See.*] Observe attentively.

There come down people by the middle of the land.] Now it was visible they were men; for they were come down to the middle of the mountains.

And another company come along by the plain of Meonenim.] It is likely the other two companies of the four, into which his forces were divided, appeared in other places, the more to distract the thoughts of Gael: and it is probable that Abimelech had seized the ambush, which they had laid for him on the top of the mountains, (ver. 25.) that they could carry no tidings of his coming. We read of this place no where else, and so I can give no account of it: but the Vulgar takes *elon* to signify not the *plain*, but *an oak;* and translates these words, *by the way which looks towards the oak;* which, in some copies of the LXX. are rendered, *the oak of those that look towards*, or *that regard times*, as we have it in the margin of our Bibles; as if it were like the oak at Dodona, among the Grecks, where they made divinations.

Ver. 38. *Then said Zebul unto him, Where is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?*] Now Zebul pulls off his mask, and puts him in mind of the brags which he made, (ver. 28.)

Is not this the people that thou hast despised?] But now, he supposes, was afraid to encounter.

Go out, I pray thee, and fight with them.] He upbraids him with cowardice, unless he now shewed himself a man with his sword, as the other day with his tongue.

Ver. 39. *And Gael went out.*] It may seem strange that he did not first leave Zebul dead upon the spot behind him: but he was afraid of him, he having, as appeared afterward, a strong party in the city; and it was dangerous to have two enemies to deal withal, one without, and another within.

Before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.] As unprovided as he was he would not decline the fight, and was followed by the principal persons in Shechem.

Ver. 40. *And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him.*] Towards the city.

And many were overthrown and wounded.] Some were killed, and others wounded.

Even unto the entering of the gate.] Where the rest, and Gael himself, got into the city, and there secured themselves: so the Vulgar, for explication's sake, *He pursued him and drove him into the city.*

Ver. 41. *And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah.*] It appears, by the next verse, this place was not far from Shechem; whither Abimelech thought fit to retreat, and there watch for an opportunity to be revenged of the Shechemites.

And Zebul thrust out Gael and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem.] Because they were not able to defend it against Abimelech. Zebul had the stronger party on his side, otherwise he could not have expelled him; but Gael had so many adherents, that they durst not put him to death, for his ill management, as no doubt they called it, in the late fight.

Ver. 42. *And it came to pass, on the morrow, that the people went out into the field.*] Finding that Abimelech was retreated, as not strong enough, they imagined, to assault their city, they went about their business into the field; which, at that time of the year, after the vintage, was to plough and sow their lands, and dress their vines, and other trees: some will have it, that they went out to fight Abimelech again, which is not probable.

And they told Abimelech.] He wanted not some to carry him intelligence of it.

Ver. 43. *And he took the people.*] His forces, which lay in and about Arumah.

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And divided them into three companies.] One of which (the next verse informs us) he commanded himself, and committed the other two to the conduct of their commanders.

And laid wait in the field.] With that company which he commanded, whom he ordered to lie close, and not discover themselves.

And looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of the city.] He set some to spy when the people were come out, and set about their business.

And he rose up against them, and smote them.] His men came, on a sudden, out of their ambush, and killed many of them.

Ver. 44. *And Abimelech, and the company which was with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city.*] Made all the haste they could to get between them and home: and accordingly they posted themselves at the entering of the gate of the city; whereby they hindered those in the field from getting into it, and likewise those in the city from coming out to their relief: so that they were dispersed about the fields, where the other two companies picked them up, as it here follows.

And the two companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them.] Which was a great disheartening, no doubt, to those in the city, to see so many of their fellow-citizens cut off.

Ver. 45. *And Abimelech fought against the city all that day.*] Having destroyed so many of the citizens in the morning, he made his battery against the city itself, the rest of the day.

And took it.] In the evening, I suppose, either by an assault, or by surrender.

And slew the people that were therein.] It is not said what became of Zebul, who, it is likely, went over to him, and directed him in his attack upon the city; leaving his own party, in whom he put no confidence, to perish with the rest.

And he beat down the city.] Laid the houses and walls level with the ground.

And sowed it with salt.] Salt makes land barren, and therefore Ralbag refers this to the ground about it or in it; that was wont to be employed for sowing any sort of grain, or planting vineyards, &c.: for, as Pliny observes, "Omnis locus in quo reperitur sal, sterilis est et nihil gignit," (lib. xxxi. cap. 7.) *All places in which salt is found are barren, and bring forth nothing.* Therefore Abimelech endeavoured to make this city a perpetual desolation. (See Bochart. Hierozoicon, p. 1. lib. iii. cap. 16.) But unless the soil had been salt of itself, his sowing salt there would not have made it barren; but would have soon recovered its fruitfulness: therefore all he intended was to shew his hatred of them, by wishing their city might lie waste, and be a perpetual desolation.

Ver. 46. *And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that.*] By these last words, it is plain this tower was not in the city, but at some distance from it: for otherwise, it would not have been said that they *heard* of the destruction of Shechem, but that they saw it with their eyes; yet it is likely, that this tower of Shechem was kept by a garrison of the Shechemites.

They entered into a hold of the house of the god Berith.] They durst not trust to the strength of the tower, but took sanctuary rather in a strong fortress of the temple of the god mentioned ver. 4. which was built, in all likelihood (according to the common custom of the world), upon one of the mountains hard by, and had near it this fortified strong hold; wherein they kept their treasure, (ver. 4.) It may be compared to the Roman capitol, and to the temple of Jerusalem, in aftertimes; which Josephus describes as an impregnable place.

Ver. 47. *And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.*] In the forenamed fortress.

Ver. 48. *And Abimelech got him up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him.*] Some think this to be the same mountain which the Psalmist mentions lxviii. 15. and take it to have been near to Shechem, which had many mountains about it, (ver. 36.)

And Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees.] Which grew there in great abundance, for Zalmon seems to have had its name from the shadiness of the place.

And took it and laid it on his shoulders, and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done.] He, in some measure, imitates his father's speech to his three hundred men, before he went to fight, (vii. 17.)

Ver. 49. *And the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put them to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them.*] Which was done with such expedition (as he ordered in the foregoing verse), that they within had no time to provide against it.

So that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women.] Who perished in the fire and smoke, as the Vulgar here adds: but the Hebrew and LXX. say nothing of smoke, but only of fire: yet, it is highly probable, that many were choked by the smoke, which was very great and smothering, the wood being green: here the prediction, or rather imprecation of Jotham, ver. 20. was exactly fulfilled.

Ver. 50. *Then went Abimelech unto Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it.*] This was a city, which, as Kimchi observes, had revolted from Abimelech; but it is uncertain whereabout it lay, though most think it in the territory near Shechem.

Ver. 51. *But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city.*] It was a place so large, that it could contain not only all the men of the city and their wives, but their servants also: who all betook themselves hither, as a place not easy to be taken, though the city could make little resistance.

And shut it to them.] Shut to the gate, and, I suppose, blocked it up so that it could not be opened.

And gat them up to the top of the tower.] Which was flat, as their houses were, with battlements round about it: here the besieged thought fit to stand in great numbers, that they might do what they could to beat him off, if Abimelech attempted to burn them, as he had done others in a neighbouring tower.

Ver. 52. *And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it.*] His rage was insatiable; for, not content to have overthrown the Shechemites, and beat down their city, and burnt their strong hold, and taken Thebez, he beset their tower also; where, if he had not perished, none can tell how far his revenge would have proceeded.

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And went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire.] Being flushed with great success, he was so bold and hardy as himself to make this dangerous attempt.

Ver. 53. *And a certain woman cast a piece of a mill-stone.*] Which they had carried up among other stones and logs, and whatsoever they thought might offend the enemy: the Hebrew word *rechab* properly signifies the upper mill-stone, which moves (and, as it were, *rides*) upon the lower.

Upon Abimelech's head.] Being directed, no doubt, by a special providence of God, as the stone was out of the sling that killed Goliah, and the arrow wherewith Ahab was shot.

And all to break his scull.] Made such a fracture in it, that he concluded it to be mortal. Thus Plutarch relates that Pyrrhus, at the siege of Thebes, was killed by a woman, who threw a tile upon his head: but Abimelech's death by a stone is the more remarkable, because it carried some stamp of his sin upon it; for he slew all his brethren on one stone.

Ver. 54. *Then he called hastily.*] Fearing he should immediately expire.

Unto the young man his armour-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him.] Though he knew she had given him his death's wound, yet he would have posterity think otherwise; for he thought it dishonourable to die by the hand of a woman: a foolish piece of vain-glory, wherewith he concluded his life as he had led it; for she had given him a mortal blow.

And his young man thrust him through, and he died.] Just when he imagined he was upon the point of conquering all opposition to him.

Ver. 55. *And when the men of Israel.*] That is, all that were in his army.

Saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place.] Disbanded themselves, having none to head them.

Ver. 56. *Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren.*] Which was as much as in him lay, to root out the memory of his father, unless it survived in himself, who took a course to make his name infamous.

Ver. 57. *And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads, and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.*] These two verses conclude this story with a Divine admonition, That no man should think such things came to pass by chance, but God, the Judge of all, punished both Abimelech and the men of Shechem according to their deserts, and made them the instruments of each other's destruction: and it is remarkable, that this punishment overtook them speedily, within less than four years after their crime was committed.

It was not the business of this holy writer to tell us what became of Jotham, no more than what became of Gael and Zebul: but only to shew, that *as men have done, so God requites them;* with which he ends this part of his history.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *AND after Abimelech.*] Who was not a judge, much less appointed by God, but an usurper, who took upon him to alter the Divine government, and made himself a king.

There rose up.] It is not said that God stirred him up, as he did the foregoing judges; but it is so understood, because God would not have saved Israel by one that took upon him this high office without his order: and, therefore, as Peter Martyr well observes, in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, that as, after many good judges God had given them, he suffered the cruel tyrant Abimelech to interpose himself, that their virtues might shine more illustriously by his wickedness; so, after he was gone, God was pleased to raise up to them good judges again, who learnt moderation by the punishment of his vain ambition: and, in all likelihood, the dreadful end of Abimelech and his partakers, who made him king, affrighted the Israelites from presuming to make another, of their own heads.

To defend Israel.] Or, *to save*, as it is in the margin: for this was the great office of a judge, to deliver the people from the oppression of their enemies: we do not find indeed from what enemies they were delivered by this judge; but they may be said to *save* and *deliver*, who preserve men's liberties from being invaded, as well as they that vindicate and restore them when they are lost: and therefore we well translate it, *To defend Israel.* He may be thought also to have delivered them from those confusions and disorders they were in, by the disagreement between Abimelech and those that made him king: for both sides had many partakers, which made great divisions, and dangerous combinations among the people; but were all happily ended by the prudent management of this governor. Serrarius also adds, that he might be said to *save* or deliver them, because he restored the purity of their religion, by abolishing the worship of idols: for we read, that after the death of Gideon, "they went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god," (viii. 33.) which they continued in the reign of Abimelech; but were now brought back to the worship of the true God, and remained in it, in the days of this and the following judges; otherwise there would not have been occasion to say, (ver. 6.) that after the death of Jair, "the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord:" but how far this is true, will appear upon ver. 8.

Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo.] So the Chaldee paraphrast understands the word *Dodo*, to be the proper name of his grandfather, as *Puah* was of his father: but there are those that by *Dodo* understand *his uncle, viz.* Abimelech forementioned: which seems to me unreasonable; for he was of another tribe, and his relation to such a man no good qualification, one would think, for this great trust.

A man of Issachar.] A mean tribe; which did not hinder his advancement by God to the highest dignity: and by this expression, *a man of Issachar*, he seems to have been of no great family, in that tribe.

And he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim.] After he was made a judge he settled in this place for the convenience of the people; it being in the midst of the land.

Ver. 2. *And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.*] There are no memorable acts of his recorded; for the principal intention of the holy writer of this book, was to shew what great calamities befel the Israelites when they forsook God's worship, and how graciously he delivered them, in a marvellous manner,

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when they returned to it: as I suppose they did, in the beginning of this man's government, and continued steadfast therein; so that they were not infested by their enemies.

Ver. 3. *And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years.*] This is the first judge that was raised up from among those that lived beyond Jordan.

Ver. 4. *And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty asses' colts.*] For the noblest persons rode on these beasts, (see ver. 10.) and that not only in Judea, but in Arabia, and in other countries, even among the Romans, as Bochartus hath at large observed in his Hierozoicon, p. 1. lib. ii. cap. 13. And it is highly probable, that this is here mentioned, because these persons were ordered by their father to ride circuit up and down the country, to minister justice according to the law; as Samuel did when he judged Israel, 1 Sam. vii. 16. For the courts of judicature appointed by the law (Deut. xvi. 18.) were not yet settled; nor, in all likelihood, settled in every city, till the days of Jehoshaphat, as Mr. Thorndike observes in his Rites of the Church, chap. 4. p. 226.

And they had thirty cities.] Of which they were the governors, as the Vulgar understands it.

Which are called Havoth-Jair unto this day.] This Jair, as our most learned primate of Ireland observes in his Annals, (ad A. M. 3504.) was of the posterity of that Jair who called the cities which he took in Argob by his own name Havoth-Jair, the towns or villages of Jair, (Numb. xxxii. 41. Deut. iii. 14.) After whose example, these thirty sons of this younger Jair, (who, to distinguish him from the elder, seems to be called Bedan, 1 Sam. xii. 11. 1 Chron. vii. 17.) called these cities which they possessed by the very same name.

Which are in the land of Gilead.] In the same country, where the other cities anciently called by this name lay: from which, it is likely, they were distinguished by some such addition as this, *the new Havoth-Jair.*

Ver. 5. *And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.*] Which, it was probable, was the place where he dwelt while he judged Israel.

Ver. 6. *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord.*] Or, as the forenamed primate thinks it must be interpreted, *had done evil again,* &c. as was said viii. 33. and now is repeated, to shew the cause, why God delivered them up into the hands of their enemies: for he supposes this was before the death of Jair, as I shall note on ver. 8.

And served Baalim and Ashtaroth.] As they had frequently done in former times, ii. 13. iii. 7, &c.

And the gods of Syria.] They added to their former idolatries the worship of new gods; particularly those of Syria, which were, as Mr. Selden observes (in his Prolegomena to his book de Diis Syris), beside Bel, or Baal, and Astarte, Dagon, Moloch, and Thammuz.

And the gods of Zidon.] Their supreme gods were Baal and Ashtoreth, as the same great man observes, (in his ii. Syntagma de Diis Syris, cap. 2.) But it is likely they had more, such as Asaroth, Asarim, and Asarah; being the very same with Ashtoreth.

And the gods of Moab.] The principal of which was Chemosh, (1 Kings xi. 7.)

And the gods of the children of Ammon.] The chief of which was Milcom, (1 Kings xi. 5.) where Ashtoreth is mentioned as the goddess of the Zidonians.

And the gods of the Philistines.] They had more, it seems, beside Dagon; whose names are not mentioned in Scripture.

And forsook the Lord, and served not him.] Their hearts were possessed with the love of so many gods, that they quite forgot the Lord, and did not worship him at all; though they were wont formerly only to worship other gods together with him. This was such a strange apostacy, that one cannot but inquire into the reason of it, and (besides what I have noted upon ii. 12.) one reason may possibly have been, that the solemn reading of the law to all the people, once in seven years, was neglected: for we do not read that it was publicly done from the time of Joshua to the reign of Jehoshaphat, which was above five hundred years: it doth not follow, indeed, that it was not done, because it is not recorded; but if we consider how prone they were to return to idolatry, after the death of every judge, and how soon after the death of David (even in the reign of his son Solomon) it began to appear among them, it may incline one to think there was not sufficient care taken about this matter.

Ver. 7. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon.*] Two of those nations, whose gods they chose to serve.

Ver. 8. *And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel.*] That is, the Ammonites vexed them in the east (as we are told in the conclusion of the verse), while the Philistines vexed them in the west: for their idolatry being strangely increased, so was their punishment, by the invasion of their enemies on both sides, as the foregoing verse tells us; which is a preface to the following histories of their oppression by the Philistines and the Ammonites, both at the same time; but, to avoid confusion, he first relates the story of the Ammonites, who are at last named in the foregoing verse.

Eighteen years.] Their invasion began in the same year, but they did not end at the same time, for the Ammonites domineered over them only eighteen years; but the Philistines forty, (xiii. 1.) I must not here omit the construction which our primate Usher makes of these words, which run thus in the Hebrew, and he translates in this manner, *They vexed and oppressed the children of Israel that year,* (viz.) *the eighteenth year.* For the oppression, he thinks, began the fifth year of Jair, and continued till the twenty-second, which was his last. (See his Chronol. Sacra, p. 1. cap. 13.) But this is said only to solve a difficulty, which is, that if we suppose this oppression to have begun after the death of Jair, and to have lasted eighteen years (as our translation imports), it will be impossible to make the years of the government of the judges agree with what we read, 1 Kings vi. 1. that Solomon began to build the temple at Jerusalem, in the four hundred and eightieth year after they came out of Egypt: but there is a more easy way of accounting for this difficulty, by supposing that several of the judges were contemporaries, as will be apparent in this very history; (see upon xi. 25.) and if we do not take these words *eighteen years* to signify the continuance of the Ammonitish oppression, it is no where mentioned any where else; as the duration of all other oppressions is.

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All the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan, in the land of the Amorites.] Which belonged to the Amorites, till Moses dispossessed them, (Numb. xxi.) and gave the land to the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

Which is in Gilead.] The principal part of which was Gilead; out of which Jair sprang, being of the tribe of Manasseh; who, like a good man, used all his endeavours to purge the Israelites from idolatry; as Tola, I suppose, had done before: but they being, after the death of Gideon, fallen from God, and continuing in their idolatry all the reign of Abimelech, our forenamed primate supposes these judges were not able to reform them; but they rather grew worse, as is related ver. 6. And therefore God permitted the Ammonites and Philistines to begin to afflict them, as was said before in the fifth year of Jair; but not so as to make them subject to their power: for Jair held the government eighteen years after they began their inroads, but then their vexations and oppressions grew intolerable, and they not only afflicted his own country Gilead, but endeavoured to make their brethren, on the other side Jordan, to feel the weight of their power, as it follows in the next verse. This is said very plausibly, but cannot be admitted without some violence to the natural sense of the beginning of the verse; and also to the course of this history, which doth not mention their departure from God, and these oppressions of their enemies, on both sides, till after the death of Jair.

Ver. 9. *Moreover, the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim.*] Who were the tribes that lay next to Jordan.

So that Israel was sore distressed.] For while the Ammonites afflicted those countries in the eastern part of Canaan, the Philistines made ravages in the countries of Zebulun, and Asher, and the rest of the tribes that lay on the western coast: for so the LXX. explain those words in the foregoing verse, *In that year,* ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, *in that same year,* the Philistines in the west, and the Ammonites in the east, vexed and oppressed the children of Israel.

Ver. 10. *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.*] All the rest of the gods mentioned ver. 6. are comprehended under the name of Baalim: which were so many and various, that they had quite drawn their affection from their own God; as they now sorrowfully acknowledge.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord said unto the children of Israel.*] By some prophet, I suppose.

Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians.] See Exod. xii.

And from the Amorites.] Who would have hindered their passage to the land of Canaan, (Numb. xxi.)

And from the children of Ammon.] Who were confederate with the Moabites to oppress them, (Judg. iii. 13.)

And from the Philistines?] In the days of Shamgar, (iii. *ult.*)

Ver. 12. *The Zidonians also.*] We never read of any invasion they made upon the Israelites; but only in general, that God left them, among other people, unsubdued, to prove the children of Israel, (iii. 3.) who took their opportunities, in all likelihood, to afflict them.

And the Amalekites.] Who joined both with the Moabites and the Midianites to oppress them, (iii. 13. vi. 3.)

And the Maonites did oppress you.] Maon is the name of a nation; the plural of which, *Meunim,* occurs in many places, particularly in 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7. where they are called in Greek Μιναῖοι· a people in Arabia, both in that which we call Felix, and in that called Deserta. Which latter was not far from the Moabites and the Ammonites; with whom interpreters are apt to confound the Meunites, as if, by a transposition of letters, they were the same with the Ammonites: which hath misled us in our translation of those words, 2 Chron. xx. 1. *And with them from the Ammonites,* which makes no sense; but if we read *with them from Meunim* (as it is in Greek ἐκ Μιναίων), all runs clearly, and makes perfect sense: and thus we ought to translate that place, 1 Chron. iv. 41. where we take *Meunim* to signify dwellings, and render the words thus, *The habitations which were found there;* as if where there were tents (which are mentioned before) there were not habitations, which are the same: therefore *Meunim* is the name of a people (as the LXX. understood it) who dwelt in tents, being Arabians: who being neighbours (as I said) to the Moabites and Ammonites, joined with them in their invasion of the land of Israel, and helped to oppress them: But they are plainly distinguished from the Ammonites, in the first place mentioned, and 2 Chron. xxvi. 6—8.

And ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.] When they were utterly unable to help themselves.

Ver. 13. *Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods.*] But all these deliverances proved ineffectual to keep them steadfast in the worship of God.

Wherefore I will deliver you no more.] He threatens therefore to leave them under the power of their enemies, which now sorely distressed them, as they justly deserved; but it was with an intention to awaken them to a more serious and hearty repentance, otherwise he resolved not to deliver them.

Ver. 14. *Go and cry unto the gods you have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.*] A bitter reflection both upon them and upon their gods, like to that in the song of Moses, (Deut. xxxii. 37, 38.)

Ver. 15. *And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned.*] In worshipping such gods as could not save them.

Do thou unto us as seemeth good unto thee.] They submit to such punishment as he thought fit to inflict, confessing they deserved no favour; which shews their hearts were for the present very sensible of the folly wherewith they were reproached in the foregoing verse.

Deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.] They acknowledged that they deserved the severest punishment, but beseech him to have so much pity on them, as not to punish them this way, by letting these cruel enemies insult over them any longer.

Ver. 16. *And they put away the strange gods from among them.*] Gave open proof of their repentance by renouncing all idolatry.

And served the Lord.] And returned to the worship of the Lord, and of him alone, which is the most remarkable repentance and reformation that we read of hitherto in this history of the Judges; and it seems to have been so serious, that for a long time they did not relapse; for we read nothing of their idolatry in the time of those three judges that followed Jephthah.

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And his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.] Nor do we read before of such an expression of the Divine compassion towards them. Every one knows the Divine nature is not capable of *grief*, properly so called; but the meaning is, he quite altered his former intentions, and in much mercy resolved upon their repentance to deliver them. So Maimonides observes, that the word *nephesh*, which we translate *soul*, signifies *his will*, Jer. xv. 1. *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my soul could not be towards this people;* that is, it could not be his will to save them. And so here, *his soul was grieved;* that is, saith he, his will ceased from afflicting Israel any longer; for it was said before, that God's providence had deserted them, and he refused to relieve them till they called upon him and seriously repented; and then their miseries being very great by the sore oppressions of their enemies, he took pity on them, and willed their cruel afflictions should not continue. (See More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 41.)

Ver. 17. *Then the children of Ammon were gathered together.*] In the Hebrew, *were cried together;* that is, a proclamation went out, requiring all their dispersed troops, which were ravaging the countries of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, to return back to their camp, on the other side of Jordan.

And encamped in Gilead.] Or, *against Gilead;* for both Arius Montanus and Peter Martyr think that they laid siege to Gilead, the chief city in those parts: by taking which, they hoped to be masters of all that country; and then, with greater forces, go over Jordan again, and conquer the other tribes beforementioned.

And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh.] There were two Mizpehs on the other side Jordan, one in the tribe of Gad, the other in the half tribe of Manasseh, as I observed upon Josh. xi. 3. the latter of which may be probably thought to be the place where they now assembled, Jephthah, who was afterward chosen their captain, being one of this tribe. How many of the Israelites here encamped, and whether any of those in the land of Canaan, or only those of the two tribes and a half, cannot now be known; but upon their repentance, they seem to have recovered their ancient courage, and to have taken a resolution to drive the Ammonites out of their country, insomuch that thereupon the Ammonites seem to have left the siege, and to have made a retreat into their own land, either to recruit their army, and raise more forces, or for some other reason; for thither Jephthah sent messengers to them, after he was chosen general of the Israelites; and there he fought them, when they would not yield to his convincing arguments, that they unjustly invaded the Israelites, as appears in the following chapter.

Ver. 18. *And the people and princes of Gilead.*] Who were most nearly concerned in this matter, their country lying nearest to the Ammonites.

Said one to another.] Entered into a consultation, in a grand assembly of all the people, and their rulers. (See ix. 6.)

What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon?] Will be our leader. It seems to me a probable conjecture of Peter Martyr, that they consulted God also about this matter, who directed them, perhaps, to go to Jephthah.

He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.] They resolved, whatsoever the mind of the rest of the tribes should be, that he should command all the Gadites and Manassites that inhabited the land of Gilead.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *NOW Jephthah the Gileadite.*] A man of the same country with Jair, their last judge.

Was a mighty man of valour.] A warlike person, of great courage and conduct.

And he was the son of a harlot.] Or, *but he was*, &c. Some, by the Hebrew word *zonah*, understand a concubine, but it never signifies so in Scripture; but, as we translate it, a *harlot;* and sometimes one that kept a public house; for such people were wont to make their bodies as common as their houses, to all comers. (See Josh. ii. 1.) But several of the Hebrew doctors think that this word may signify either one of another tribe, or a stranger, one of another nation: and so Josephus himself here understands it, that he was ξένος περὶ τὴν μητέρα, *a stranger by his mother's side.* And Saidas Batricides saith, his mother was an Ishmaelite, as Mr. Selden observes, lib. de Successionibus, cap. 3. Now such were called νόθαι by the Greeks, as Grotius observes, who were born of a wife that was not a citizen. But among the Jews, if such persons embraced the law, their children were not stained, but capable to inherit among the rest of their brethren; and therefore Jephthah complains of his expulsion, (ver. 7.) looking upon himself as unjustly dealt withal, which could not have been said, had he been a bastard.

And Gilead begat Jephthah.] One of the posterity of Gilead, the son of Manasseh, was his father, who was called after the name of his great ancestor.

Ver. 2. *And Gilead's wife bare him sons.*] He took a wife also of the Jewish nation, who bare him several sons.

And his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah.] When his father was dead; for till then the inheritance was not to be divided; and, if he had been alive, he would not have suffered them to be so injurious to Jephthah, who was the son of a wife whom he loved extremely, as Josephus relates, lib. v. Antiq. cap. 9.

And said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house.] Have no share of his estate.

For thou art the son of a strange woman.] This explains the word *zonah*, to be the same with a *woman of another country;* for there is no reason to think, that by *another woman* (as the words are in the Hebrew) he means a woman of another tribe, as the Chaldee paraphrast, R. Bechai, and others, expound it. (See Selden, in the place beforenamed, and Buxtorf, de Sponsal. et Divortiis, p. 61.)

Ver. 3. *Then Jephthah fled from his brethren.*] When they were so unkind as to drive him from his father's house, he did not think fit to stay in their country.

And dwelt in the land of Tob.] We read no where else of this country, which, it is likely, was not far from Gilead, upon the borders of the Ammonites, in the entrance of Arabia Deserta; or, perhaps, it is the same with the country called Ish-tob, 2 Sam. x. 6. 8. which was in Syria, and so near the Ammonites, that they hired forces from thence, as well as from other Syrians, to fight with king David. We find some footsteps of this land, it is very probable, in

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the second book of the Maccabees, chap. xii. 17. where we read of Τουβιήνοι Ἰουδαῖοι, i. e. *Jews who dwelt in the land of Tob.*

And there were gathered vain men to Jephthah.] Or empty men; for the word *rekim* signifies poor and needy persons, men of no estates, such as resorted to David when he fled from Saul, (1 Sam. xxii. 2.) So I suppose it to be here understood (not that they were profligate persons), for the word *pochazim, light men,* is not here added, as it is in the story of those who followed Abimelech, ix. 4. Therefore Grotius doth not seem rightly to have represented Jephthah, when he saith, he was one of those who "ex prædonum ducibus justi duces facti sunt," (lib. iii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 3. sect. 3.) For these were not highwaymen, as we call them, that lived by prey; but only men of small or no fortune, who were glad of an occasion to join themselves to so gallant a man as Jephthah was. And so the word we translate *gathered,* imports that they listed themselves under him of their own accord, being invited to it by the great fame of his humanity and valour. But Grotius herein follows the Vulgar, who adds the word *latrocinates,* without any authority, either from the Hebrew, Chaldee, or LXX.

And went out with him.] Made excursions upon the enemies of the Israelites thereabouts, and got what booty they could from them for their subsistence, just as David did when he was forced to flee into the land of the Philistines, (1 Sam. xxvii. 8—11.)

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass in process of time.*] In the Hebrew it is *after days, i. e.* as primate Usher understands it (in the place abovenamed), after those years mentioned x. 8. *viz.* eighteen years, in the conclusion of which, when Jair was dead, the Ammonites took the following resolution; but there is no good ground, as I have shewn there, for this interpretation; therefore by *after days* I understand some time after their retreat into their own country, which I mentioned x. 17.

That the children of Ammon made war against Israel.] They only came in parties before to rob and spoil them; but now, finding the Israelites began to take courage, and had formed a camp in Gilead, (x. 17.) they raised an army, intending to conquer them and possess themselves of their country.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass, when the children of Ammon made war against Israel.*] The Vulgar interprets it, *pressed hard upon them.*

The elders of Gilead.] Who are called princes, x. 18.

Went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob.] Some of the principal persons of the country were sent in the name of all the inhabitants of Gilead, in an embassy to him, to invite him to return to them.

Ver. 6. *And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.*] They did not pretend to make him their king (remembering, perhaps, what had befallen the men of Shechem and Abimelech), but only the leader of their army.

Ver. 7. *And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did ye not hate me, and expel me out of my father's house?*] This signifies, that his brethren ejected him by the assistance of the public authority (unless we suppose that they were of the number of elders that were sent to him); or the elders, who saw the wrong his brethren did him, connived at it, and did not interpose, according to their office, to do him right, whereby they made his expulsion their own act.

And why are ye come unto me now when you are in distress?] As much as to say, What reason have you to expect that I should hearken to you, since I know it is only your distress which moves you to recall me?

Ver. 8. *And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now.*] This may relate either to what immediately goes before, and then the sense is, We confess we are in distress, and therefore implore thy help (which, if thou wilt afford us, thou shalt command us all for ever); or to the beginning of the foregoing verse, and the meaning is, We are sensible of the injury that was done thee, and therefore are come to repair it, by inviting thee to be our head; for that is meant by their *turning again to him:* they had altered their mind, and not only revoked that unjust act, but offered him a recompence.

That thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.] Of the tribes on their side Jordan; for they could promise nothing for the tribes in the land of Canaan, some of which were oppressed now by the Philistines, as they were by the Ammonites.

Ver. 9. *And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head?*] He offers to be the general of their army, if, after he had vanquished their enemies, they would, in good earnest, make him their governor in chief, and not throw him off when they had no further need of him. In which agreement he supposed the consent and appointment of God, by whose aid alone he hoped to be victorious.

Ver. 10. *And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The Lord be witness between us, if we do not according to thy word.*] They solemnly call God to witness their sincerity, confirming what was agreed by an oath, and wishing God to revenge it, if they did not perform what they promised.

Ver. 11. *Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead.*] Unto his own country.

And the people made him head and captain over them.] In a full assembly of the people, with the princes, (ix. 6. x. 18.) he was made general of their army; with an assurance he should be their head, after the war was successfully ended.

And Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord.] The people had done their part, but Jephthah would undertake nothing, without God's approbation, before whom, in a solemn prayer, he laid all that he had said unto them; and it is likely that God answered him by some prophet, and authorized him to undertake the conduct and government of the people; (see x. 11.) for if he had done it without a Divine warrant, the Spirit of the Lord would not have come upon him, as we read it did, ver. 29.

In Mizpeh.] Where the children of Israel had gathered themselves together to oppose the Ammonites, x. 17. and where Jephthah chose to fix his habitation, after the conquest of them, ver. 34. of this chapter; for that Mizpeh, where all the tribes, we often read, met before the Lord, was on this side Jordan, not far from Jerusalem, either in

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the tribe of Judah, or of Benjamin. It is thought probable, by some learned men, that there was some *proseucha*, a *praying-place*, or place of Divine worship, here at Mizpeh, (see Josh. xxiv. 26.) where Jephthah uttered his words; which otherwise, they think, could not be said to be done *before the Lord:* but this is not a sufficient ground for such an opinion; for the Divine presence (as Rasi here observes) was in that place where all the people assembled upon a public concern. (See 1 Sam. xi. 15.) Kimchi observes the same upon the twentieth chapter of this book, ver. 1. where his words are, "In every place, in which Israel, or a great part of it, is assembled, the Divine presence dwells." (See my notes there.)

Ver. 12. *And Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the children of Ammon.*] Now he plainly acts as a chief governor, in appointing an embassy to go from him to the king of the Ammonites; which power he would not have assumed, if it had not been given him by God.

Saying, What hast thou to do with me.] That is, what is the ground of thy quarrel? Or, for what reason is this invasion made?

That thou art come to fight against me in my land?] This is the language of the supreme governor of the country, unto whom all were subject, as their lord; and demonstrates him to have been a most pious prince, that would first debate matters fairly, before he came to blows, according to the sense of a number of great men in future times, mentioned by Grotius at large, lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 23. sect. 7. Unto which he was not bound, having taken arms only in his own defence; yet, to prevent the effusion of blood, he argues the case with the king of the Ammonites, who ought rather, if he thought himself injured by the Israelites, to have sent, before he took arms, to require satisfaction.

Ver. 13. *And the king of the children of Ammon answered to the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land when they came out of Egypt.*] This is a mere colour and pretence, the land being none of theirs, when the Israelites conquered it, but the land of Sihon king of the Amorites: for, as to the country of the Ammonites, God expressly charged the Israelites not to meddle with it, (Deut. i. 19.) for he would give them none of it. It is true, this land, which they now claimed, had formerly belonged to the Moabites, but Sihon had made a conquest of it, and driven them out of it, as we read Numb. xxi. 26. The king of Ammon, therefore, could not call it *his land*, unless he was also king of Moab at this time, which is not improbable: whence it is, that, in the following dispute between him and Jephthah, there is a promiscuous mention of the Moabites, together with the Ammonites, as if they were but one people, (ver. 15. 17, 18.) and Chemosh, which was the god of the Moabites, is called (ver. 24.) the god of the king of Ammon: unto which may be added, that the land which Sihon conquered did not entirely belong to the Moabites, but some of it to the children of Ammon, as is expressly said, Josh. xiii. 25. where we read, that to the Gadites was given *half of the land of the children of Ammon;* therefore some part of Sihon's kingdom (where the Gadites were settled) had formerly belonged to the Ammonites.

From Arnon even unto Jabbok, and to Jordan.] These are the bounds of the country to which they laid a claim; the river Arnon on the south, and the brook Jabbok on the north (which we may call the length of the country), and Jordan on the west; unto which afterward is added the eastern bounds, when it is said, ver. 22. *from the wilderness unto Jordan;* which is the wilderness through which the Israelites entered into the territories of Sihon.

Now therefore restore these lands.] Which belonged to the Moabites and Ammonites.

Again peaceably.] The messengers of Jephthah had declared that he desired not war, but peace; which the king of Ammon tells him he must not expect, unless he resigned these countries to him.

Ver. 14. *And Jephthah sent messengers again to the king of the children of Ammon.*] This is an argument of a very peaceable disposition, and a high commendation of a warlike spirit, that he was still desirous to end this controversy by reason, and not by the sword.

Ver. 15. *And said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah.*] This is his reply; which seems to be delivered as from a man in authority.

Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon.] He denies the matter of fact upon which they grounded the war: for the Israelites found this country in the possession of Sihon.

Ver. 16. *But when Israel came out of Egypt.*] He proves the truth of what he affirmed, by a short history of what passed after they came out of Egypt; when the king of Ammon said (ver. 13.) they took this land from him.

And walked through the wilderness unto the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh.] This is not to be understood of Kadesh-barnea, but of that Kadesh mentioned Numb. xx. 1. 14. which was in the borders of Edom; unto which they came directly from the Red Sea: nor of their coming to the Red Sea, in the first year after they passed through it, mentioned Numb. xxxiii. 10. but of their last coming to it, in that station they made at Ezion-geber (after many stations in other places), which was upon the shore of the Red Sea; from whence they immediately marched to this Kadesh, (Numb. xxxiii. 35, 36.)

Ver. 17. *Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land.*] This shews, they were so far from invading any body's country, that they humbly begged leave to pass through Edom, engaging to do no violence, but to pay for every thing they wanted. (See Numb. xx. 14, &c.)

But the king of Edom would not hearken thereto.] Notwithstanding which, they were not provoked by their inhumanity to quarrel with them.

And in like manner they sent to the king of Moab, but he would not consent.] We do not read of such a message sent to the Moabites: but when they came from Ezion-geber into the wilderness of Moab, we find a command of God to them not to distress the Moabites, nor to contend with them in battle: which intimates there was some occasion for it; which was their refusal to grant them a common civility.

And Israel abode in Kadesh.] Put up all these affronts, and abstained from all violence, continuing quiet in the place where they had pitched their tents.

Ver. 18. *Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab.*] When they were denied a passage the direct way, they

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chose rather to fetch a great compass, and travel many miles with great labour and toil, (see Numb. xxi. 4.) than give others the least disturbance.

And came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched upon the other side of Arnon.] See Numb. chap. xxi. 13.

But came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon was the border of Moab.] This is a demonstration that they did no injury to the Moabites, into whose country they did not enter. For they went no further than Arnon, which divided their country from the Ammonites.

Ver. 19. *And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon.*] Where his royal palace was. (See Numb. xxi. 25, 26.)

And Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land unto my place.] Being denied passage through Edom and Moab, they sent a friendly message unto him, craving the favour of being permitted to go through his country unto Canaan. (Numb. xxi. 21, 22.)

Ver. 20. *But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast.*] Was jealous they would seize on his country.

But Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel.] He contented not himself to refuse (as his neighbours had done) to grant a passage through his country, which they could not demand, but raised all his forces, and proudly marched to drive them away from his borders, (Numb. xxi. 23, 24.)

Ver. 21. *And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them.*] It was plainly an act of God to give the Israelites the victory; for they were unprepared for war, and tired with a long march about the land of Edom and Moab.

So Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country.] They did not dispossess the Moabites, but the Amorites, who then inhabited that country, which became the possession of the Israelites, by the right of a just war, in their own defence.

Ver. 22. *And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan.*] This is a description of the length and breadth of the land, from south to north, and from east to west: (see above, ver. 13.) None of which was then in the possession of the Moabites or Ammonites; who could not therefore charge the Israelites with taking any of their land from them.

Ver. 23. *And so now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel.*] This is a new title to this land; which they not only took in a just war, but was also given them by God, who made them victorious, and then bestowed it upon them.

And shouldest thou possess it?] It was absurd to think that they should take the pains to conquer it, and God should give it to them, that they might put the Moabites again in the possession of it, with whom they had no alliance; but, quite contrary, they had denied them the common right of mankind.

Ver. 24. *Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess?*] He doth not call Chemosh a god; but only argues from the opinion that they had of him, which all nations had of their gods, that they owed their conquests to them, to whom therefore they gave thanks for all their victories. Now he appeals to them, whether they would not keep what their god had given them, and look upon it as rightfully possessed by them.

So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess.] By the very same title whereby the Moabites possessed the country wherein they now lived; from whence they drove out the ancient inhabitants. (Deut. ii. 10, 11.)

Ver. 25. *And now, art thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab?*] This is a third argument, that when this conquest was newly made by the Israelites, the then king of Moab (as potent as the present) laid no claim to this country, nor demanded to have it restored to him; but only was afraid they should invade the land he still possessed.

Did he ever strive against Israel.] Dispute their title with them.

Or did he ever fight against Israel.] Endeavour by force of arms to recover this country, as not belonging to them but to him.

Ver. 26. *While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coast of Arnon, three hundred years,* &c.] In the last place he pleads prescription, and that for *three hundred years;* in which long space of time none of the kings of Moab pretended a right to this country, much less contended it with them; which argument was irrefragable. For if such a long undisputed possession cannot make a right to a country, it is impossible there should be any end of wars between kings and princes. But all mankind look upon those wars as unjust, which are made for recovery of countries wherein people have settled quietly for many ages; though, perhaps, in the first acquisition of them, their title was not good. Therefore it is not necessary to examine, whether Sihon had a just cause of war when he conquered this country; nor is it of importance, with respect to this, to examine whether the Israelites had held this conquest just three hundred years; for if a few be wanting, it is not material: but with respect to something else it is of great consequence, for the explaining of what we read 1 Kings vi. 2. that Solomon began to build the temple in the four hundred and eightieth year after they came out of Egypt. Which space is divided by these words of Jephthah into two intervals: the first of which contained three hundred and forty years; for they had possessed this country three hundred years, and they came out of Egypt forty years before its conquest: during which time they had been slaves to the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Canaanites, and Midianites. Now, if the years wherein they were oppressed by these four nations, and the years of peace and quiet which they enjoyed, be put together, from the first year of Chushan-Rishathaim to the last year of Jair, they produce a little more than three hundred years; so that no time is left for Joshua's conquest of Canaan, and his life after it, and for the generation that outlived him. But, by supposing that some of these things fell out in the very same time (as for example, during the fourscore years' rest in the eastern parts of the land after Eglon's death, they were oppressed twenty years in the north by Jabin), this difficulty is removed, and all comes right; as Sir John Marsham hath demonstrated in his Canon Chronicus: where he shews, that, from the death of Moses to this invasion of the Ammonites, there were three hundred years; allowing five-and-

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twenty years (as Josephus computes) for Joshua's government after they came into Canaan, and thirty-five years to the following generation that survived him. (See Seculum xi. Æra Exodi. And concerning the other interval, see here, xii. 14.)

Why therefore did ye not recover them within that time?] This question could not be answered, that in so long a time they should hear nothing of their claim till now.

Ver. 27. *Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou dost me wrong to war against me.*] Upon all these reasons he concludes, the Ammonites had no cause to make this war; but were injurious in it to the Israelites.

The Lord the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.] The meaning is, that if they were not moved by these reasons, but the controversy must be decided by arms, he committed his cause to God, the righteous judge of the whole world, who, he doubted not, would do him right. By *this day* he doth not mean that God would determine the right, by giving him the victory then, when he spake these words (for he was not yet ready to give them battle), but that God would judge of the justice of his present plea, and accordingly give sentence, when the matter came to be tried in a battle.

Ver. 28. *Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not to the words of Jephthah which he sent him.*] He would not yield to arguments, being obstinately resolved to fight it out.

Ver. 29. *Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah.*] The people had chosen him for their leader, and promised to continue him their chief governor, as they had already made him; and now God publicly declares his approbation of their choice; and made him their judge, as he had done others before, (iii. 10.) by endowing him with an extraordinary measure of courage and wisdom, and all other qualities necessary to render him fit to be the ruler of his people.

And he passed over Gilead and Manasseh.] Went through the whole country of Reuben and Gad (which are comprehended in *Gilead*), and likewise the half tribe of Manassch, and levied what men he could among them.

And passed over Mizpeh of Gilead.] Went to the extreme part of the country northward, where Mizpeh was, towards Mount Lebanon and Hermon.

And from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon.] He marched from thence, with such forces as he had gathered, towards the enemy's country.

Ver. 30. *And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hand.*] He did not make a doubt of it, but thought he might be more assured of victory, if he made a religious vow beforehand, of being very grateful to God for it. Which was the custom of the ancient Romans, as we find in Livy; who frequently tells us, that their generals were wont to vow to Jupiter, or Apollo, or others, part of the spoil they should take in war; or to build temples in their honour. And thus the Israelites, when king Arad came against them, as they were going towards Canaan (a little before the conquest of this country now in controversy), vowed to make his country a *cherem*, if God would deliver it into their hands. (See Numb. xxi. 2.)

Ver. 31. *That it shall be, that whatsoever.*] This comprehends all sorts of creatures, as the Hebrew doctors commonly observe.

Cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me.] The Vulgar adds the word *first*, which must be understood; otherwise he would have been obliged to devote many things to the Lord, which might possibly come out of his house.

When I return in peace from the children of Ammon.] Come back victorious.

Shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.] If it was a thing fit to be offered: for if a dog or a swine should have happened to come out first to meet him, that was not lawful to be offered. But the great question is, Whether it was not as unlawful to offer his daughter, who seems to be comprehended in this vow? And it is said afterward, (ver. 39.) that he did unto her according to it. Josephus, and the Chaldee paraphrast, and several famous rabbins, think that he did offer her, being deceived by a mistake of the sense of that law, Lev. xxvii. 28. And though he might have been absolved from his vow by the high-priest, yet they tell an idle story, that they stood so much upon a punctilio of their dignity, that he would neither go to Phinehas, nor Phinchas vouchsafe to wait upon him. Which is a tale not to be found in the Talmud, but in some lesser writer, as Mr. Selden observes, lib. iv. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 11. where he shews, that the two Kimchis, father and son, with R. Levi ben Gersom, and others, interpret these words quite otherwise; and take the particle (which we translate *and*) to be a disjunctive; that is, as much as *or*. So Kimchi's words are, *It shall be consecrated to the Lord, if it be not fit for a burnt-offering; or it shall be offered for a burnt-offering, if it be fit for it.* And so they think she was devoted to God, and separate from all secular affairs, that she might give herself continually to prayer and holy exercises. Which opinion hath several difficulties in it, as he there observes; and it must be confessed, the stream of interpreters runs the quite contrary way: for though they call this *votum temerarium*, as Tertullian doth, a *rash vow*, or a *foolish incautious vow*, as Theodoret, St. Austin, and others; yet very great numbers (and indeed most of the ancient Christian writers) think that he did really offer her: though it cannot be denied, that there are great difficulties in this interpretation also; no such thing having ever been done in Israel; but such sacrifices declared abominable unto God: which it is a wonder he should not know, nor the people neither; who, one would have expected, should have hindered such a barbarous sacrifice. All that can be said in answer to this is, that they having been long accustomed to idolatrous worship, and he having lived out of his own country, and being a soldier, had forgotten their law, or retained but a very imperfect knowledge of it. But they that would see this matter largely discussed, may consult Ludovicus Capellus, who hath a long dissertation on purpose about it; and I shall say something more of it upon the latter end of this chapter.

Ver. 32. *So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them.*] He was not far from them before, (ver. 29.) but now he drew his army up to them, and engaged them.

And the Lord delivered them into his hand.] And thereby declared the Ammonites were in the wrong, (ver. 27.)

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Ver. 33. *And he smote them from Aroer.*] Which was a city upon the banks of the river Arnon; or rather in the river, being encompassed with it.

Till thou come to Minnith.] Another city up in the country.

Even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards.] They chased them a great way, and destroyed their cities as they went along, till they came to the plain here mentioned. Or, as it is in the margin, unto Abel; a city, perhaps, which was very strong, called Abel-Keramim, as the LXX. understand it.

With a great slaughter.] Both in the field and in the cities.

Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.] So that they infested their country no more.

Ver. 34. *And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house.*] From which he went forth when he began this expedition, (ver. 29.)

And, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and dances.] She was the first person of his family whom he saw at his return, who came, accompanied with some of her neighbours, to welcome him home, and congratulate his victory with music and dancing. So the old manner had been, Exod. xv. 20. and continued afterward, 1 Sam. xviii. 6.

And she was his only child: beside her he had neither son nor daughter.] In the Hebrew the words are, he had not *from himself* either son or daughter; intimating, perhaps, that though his wife had children by another husband, or he had adopted children, yet he had none descended from his own body but this only daughter, which made her the dearer to him.

Ver. 35. *And it came to pass, that when he saw her, he rent his clothes.*] As the manner was when any great calamity befel them. (See Lev. x. 6.)

And said, Alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low.] Quite spoiled my triumph.

And thou art one of them that trouble me.] Which was the more afflictive, because he expected from her the greatest comfort and pleasure.

For I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.] That is, made a vow which he could not retract. It is likely he told her what it was, though that be not here expressed; or by his deep sorrow at the first sight of her, she understood it was upon her account: but in this he was grossly mistaken, which way soever we interpret this vow; whether of separating her from company, or of offering her for a burnt-offering; for he was bound to neither, yea, he was bound not to offer her in sacrifice, which was a thing abominable. As for the other, there was no such power by their law granted to parents, to shut up their children, and separate them from all society with men, as Mr. Selden observes, there being not the least footstep of any such thing in the whole body of their Talmud, or in their lawyers.

Ver. 36. *And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon.*] A rare instance of religion, courage, obedience to her parents, and love to her country.

Ver. 37. *And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me.*] Grant me only one request; which was not inconsistent, she thought, with his vow; for he did not say he would execute it immediately.

Let me alone two months.] Leave me at liberty so long.

That I may go up and down upon the mountains.] Which were fit places for her purpose, being solitary, and far from company.

To bewail my virginity.] For it was accounted a great infelicity in that nation to die without issue.

I and my fellows.] Other virgins, her companions. This some take for an argument, that she was not to be sacrificed; for then she would have bewailed her death, rather than her want of posterity. But this is no concluding argument; for she might possibly look upon it as an honour to be a sacrifice unto God.

Ver. 38. *And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months, and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.*] They that think she knew she was to be offered, infer from hence, that she looked upon it as a greater calamity to die without issue, than merely to die.

Ver. 39. *And it came to pass, at the end of two months, she returned to her father.*] Having had time to bring her mind unto a perfect resignation to her father; or rather, to confirm herself in the resolution she had at first, cheerfully to submit unto whatsoever he had vowed.

Who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed.] That is, saith Kimchi, he made her a house, and brought her into it, and there left her secluded from the company of all men, and from all secular affairs. That is the meaning, he thinks, of the first part of his vow, *It shall surely be the Lord's.* And so Ralbag, a little more fully, She was separated from the company of men; for if she had had a husband, she could not have served the Lord alone, but must have served her husband also, as all wives are bound to do. Selden indeed saith, that he doth not see what law gave him this power to keep her from marriage; there being nothing of it in all their books, as was said before. But there is something like it in 2 Sam. xx. 3. where David shut up his concubines, and made them live in widowhood till their death. And he might take the liberty to do this (though no law gave him such power) rather than take away the life of his daughter, which was against law; for it condemned such sacrifices. But the truth is, there was no necessity of doing either, if he had understood or considered the law; for he might have paid a price for her to the priest, which the law prescribed, when a son or daughter was consecrated to God, (Lev. xxvii. 2, 3, &c.) Nay, they who consecrated themselves, might redeem themselves: and about this very case of Jephthah there was anciently a dispute between two famous doctors, Simeon ben Lakish and R. Johanan; the former of which maintained, that he ought to have paid the price or value of her according to the law; but the other maintained, he was not bound to do so much as that, because the vow was to offer a burnt-offering, in which his daughter could not be comprehended. For other animals only were capable of being offered in sacrifice. As for those words, Lev. xxvii. 28, 29. upon which Lud. Capellus hath founded his opinion that she might be sacrificed, Maimonides hath better restrained them to the sons and daughters of the Canaanites, devoted by God to destruction. But who can think that

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God would have the Hebrew children so devoted as those slaves were, upon whom a curse was denounced before they entered into Canaan? Beside, if Jephthah was bound to offer his daughter, who should be employed in that work? Should the priests? But their business was rather to persuade and deter him from what he had imprudently vowed. Should the magistrates? But they could not be ignorant that God had forbidden such sacrifices. Should Jephthah himself? But this would have argued him as void of common sense, as of natural affection. And who can think (as Theodoricus Hackspan goes on) that since God allowed cities of refuge, whither a manslayer might flee and be safe, when he had unwittingly killed a man, that the same privilege might not have been allowed to a son or a daughter, who was perfectly innocent (as this virgin was), *viz.* to save their lives by flight, or by paying a ransom?

The Jews are very doubtful in this matter; for some say Phinehas lost his priesthood, and it was translated to the family of Ithamar, because he did not absolve Jephthah from this vow: but others of the eastern writers say, he was forbid to release him by the spirit of prophecy; and Jephthah, when he was admonished by his friends to go and advise with him how to save his daughter, was forbid by an angel to go. (See Selden, lib. i. de Succession. ad Pontificatum, cap. 2. fol. 117, &c.) But the Targum upon this verse blames Jephthah for not consulting Phinehas; for if he had, he would have redeemed her for a sum of money.

And she knew no man.] This is looked upon, by those who think she was only consecrated to the Lord, as an argument of it; that after the performance of his vow, it is said, *she knew no man;* that is, as long as she lived, she continued a virgin.

And it was a custom in Israel.] They that think she was sacrificed, take these words as separate from those that follow, and interpret them, upon this a sanction was made, that none should hereafter, by the like error, offer human sacrifices. So the Targum. (See Selden in the place forenamed.) But there was no need of this statute; nor is it likely that the fable among the Greeks, concerning the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Agamemnon, was devised out of this sacred story, as Lud. Capellus conjectures; who fancies also this Jephtigenia, that is, the daughter of Jephthah (from whence might come Iphigenia), was not sacrificed upon the altar, but only slain; though the vow was, he would offer a burnt-offering. But we refer these words to what follows in the next verse.

Ver. 40. *That the daughters of Israel.*] They of that country.

Went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.] Some interpret the Hebrew word *thannoth* to signify they went to *discourse* with her, or to comfort her; though the most ancient interpreters (as Bochartus observes, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. i. cap. 9.) translate it as we do, θρηνεῖν, as the LXX. have it, to *make lamentation.* But quite contrary the learned Lud. de Dieu, different from the rest (except Sixtinus Amama, who hath the same notion), interprets it to *praise her.* Which signification he plainly derives out of the Arabic language; and beside, we ourselves in this very book (ver. 11.) seem to follow it, by translating it *rehearse.* And thus that excellent man explains this whole matter:—"She was not slain; but, as appears sufficiently from the foregoing words, was devoted to perpetual virginity; in which she deserved greater commendation than her father. For he, as soon as he saw her come to meet him, repented of the vow he had rashly made, and tore his clothes, lamenting the miserable condition into which he had brought himself and her: but she most courageously comforted her father, and, congratulating his victory, desired him not to be troubled about her, for she was ready to submit to what he had vowed. Upon the account of which heroic virtue, whereby she obliged the whole country, they could do no less than celebrate her praise every year."

Four days in the year.] One day in every quarter of the year they went to celebrate her fame with verses composed in her praise, as Grotius supposes. But whether they went to the place where she was retired, and there sang them before her, or in some other public place; and whether while she lived, or after her death, is uncertain, as De Dieu observes.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *AND the men of Ephraim gathered themselves.*] In the Hebrew, *were called,* by a public cry, or proclamation, to arm themselves.

And went northward.] To the country of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan. For this sufficiently shews that Mizpeh was in that country, and in the northern part of it, towards Lebanon and Hermon, as I observed before, xi. 29. Pet. Martyr thinks they did not march orderly thither, being not gathered together (as far as appears) by the authority of the magistrate, but in a tumultuous manner, as seditious people are wont to do.

And said unto Jephthah.] By this, and by what follows, it appears they came to Mizpeh, where Jephthah dwelt.

Wherefore passedst thou over.] They do not mean *over Jordan,* for there he was already; but from hence to the coast of the Ammonites. (See xi. 30. 32.)

To fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee?] Their pride made them take it ill, that they had not a share in the glory of the late victory. Just as formerly they quarrelled with Gideon upon the like occasion, (viii. 1.) which shews they were a haughty tribe.

We will burn thine house upon thee with fire.] Their pride put them into such a strange rage, that they seem to threaten to burn him as well as his house.

Ver. 2. *And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon.*] He answers their furious language with great mildness; and first tells them, that he did not undertake this war till he was forced to it by the Ammonites, who sorely distressed them, (x. 9.)

And when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands.] In the second place he denies their charge, and affirms the contrary, that he had begged their assistance, but they refused to give it him: yea (as the word we translate *called* signifies), he had cried aloud to them with earnest importunities to help them in their distress.

Ver. 3. *And when I saw that you delivered me not.*] That there was no hope of your help to preserve us from ruin.

I put my life in my hand.] Exposed myself to the utmost

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hazard; for he had but a small part of the people of Israel with him to fight with their powerful oppressors. This phrase seems peculiar to the Hebrews and the eastern writers; for among all the Greek and Roman writers, Isaac Casaubon saith he never met with it but once in Xenarchus; whom Athenæus alleges, introducing in one of his plays a man full of fear and trembling—ἐν τῇ χειρὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχοντα.

And passed over against the children of Ammon.] With such forces alone as he could get on his side Jordan, (xi. 29, 30.)

And the Lord delivered them into my hand.] God approved his undertaking by giving him a great victory.

Wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day to fight against me?] Who had defended and preserved them. For if the Ammonites had vanquished Jephthah, they would soon have passed over Jordan and fallen upon the Ephraimites, as they had before attempted, (x. 9.)

Ver. 4. *Then Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim.*] When he saw they were not pacified by this fair and peaceable apology, but still continued their menaces, he betook himself to arms, and raised as many men as he could to oppose them.

And the men of Gilead smote them.] Put them to flight, and made a great slaughter of them.

Because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim.] That which provoked them to kill so many of them was their scoffing language (added to their threats), whereby they reproached the men of Gilead, (who were the chief managers of the late war, xi. 29.) as if they were but the scum and dregs of the tribe of Ephraim; *i. e.* of those descended from Joseph, among whom they were the principal.

Among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites.] That is, that dwelt in the land of Canaan: who looked upon the Gileadites, and the rest of the Manassites, on the other side Jordan, and in the most northerly part of it, as the refuse of their nation. But it must be acknowledged, that the words in the Hebrew are capable of another sense, and may be thus translated: *Therefore* (so the particle *ki* is often translated) *they said, Fugitives of Ephraim are ye;* that is, having smote them, the Gileadites called the Ephraimites *run-aways.* And the truth is, thus they (not the Gileadites) are called in the next verse: and then the following words may be thus translated, *Gilead got between the Ephraimites and the Manassites.* It is very probable, that the Manassites in Canaan joined with the Ephraimites in this presumptuous attempt upon the Gileadites; who being well acquainted with their own country, got between them and the river Jordan, to intercept their passage over it, as we read in the following verse.

Ver. 5. *And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites.*] So that none could pass over at these fords, without their leave.

And it was so, that when those Ephraimites who were escaped.] They are the very same words in the Hebrew, which are used in the foregoing verse, *The fugitives of Ephraim.*

Said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead.] Who were set to guard the passages.

Said, Art thou an Ephraimite.] They examined him what countryman he was; whether a Reubenite, Gadite, Manassite, on their side Jordan, or one of the Ephraimites on the other.

If he said, Nay.] For fear would make him deny it.

Ver. 6. *Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth.*] To find the truth, they put him to this test; whether his pronunciation of some words was like that of the Gileadites: for people of the same nation, who speak the same language, differ very much in their pronunciation of it, in several parts of the country: as in Greece, all spake Greek; but the Ionians, Attics, Dorians, and Æolians, spake it very differently. And so they did among the Romans; for at Prænestе, which was not far from Rome (as Pet. Martyr observes out of Plautus), instead of *Ciconia,* they said *Konia.* And so the Ephraimites said *sibboleth,* but could not pronounce *shibboleth.* There were many other words like this which they could not frame their mouths to speak, as the Gileadites did; but this was chosen, it is likely, because it was very fit for the purpose; *shibboleth* signifying not only an *ear of corn,* but also *floods of water,* (Psal. lxix. 2.) so that the test they put them unto was this, to bid them say, *Let me pass over the water.*

And he said Sibboleth; for he could not frame his mouth to pronounce it right.] If he was an Ephraimite, he presently discovered himself; for he could not pronounce the letter *schin;* which proceeded, I suppose, from the long use and custom of that people to pronounce otherwise, so that they could not frame the organs of speech to pronounce as the Gileadites did: which we see at this day among all nations; who, in different provinces, very much differ in their speech, though they use the very same language.

Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan.] Otherwise they let him go; for they used this mark of distinction on purpose, lest they should kill any of another tribe.

And there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.] In the fight, and at the passages of Jordan, this number perished: which was a just punishment to take down their pride and insolence, in despising so great a man as Jephthah, and threatening to destroy his house, after so glorious a victory, whereby he had saved all the people of Israel; and reproaching their brethren also, whom they invaded without any cause, and seem to have intended to drive them out of their country.

Ver. 7. *And Jephthah judged Israel six years.*] After this humiliation of the Ephraimites, all the tribes, whom the Ammonites had oppressed (on the other side Jordan, perhaps, in the land of Canaan, as well as the Gileadites, and the rest on their side), submitted themselves unto him as their judge; and he continued six years in the government.

Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.] The Jews have several foolish conceits concerning his death and burial; because it is said, *he was buried in the cities of Gilead,* as the words are in the Hebrew: which they would have understood, as if he rotted (as a punishment for offering his daughter), and one piece of him, when it dropped off, was buried in one city, and another in the next city, &c.; when the plain meaning is expressed in our translation, that he was buried *in one of the cities,* that is, in Mizpeh, where he lived. (See Gen. xix. 29.) And so Aben Ezra and Ralbag interpret it: though the latter of these rabbins could not forbear to incline to one of the Talmudical fables; that he having no issue to

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propagate his name, ordered his body to be cut into several pieces, and buried in so many cities of Gilead; that every one might preserve his memory. Other fancies there are, in which men indulge themselves; and Peter Martyr hath thought fit to interpose his conjecture, that the word *Iram*, which we translate *cities*, may possibly be the proper name of a city in Gilead, wherein he was buried.

Ver. 8. *And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel.*] It is not said upon what occasion he was made judge; for, perhaps, he was raised up by God immediately after Jephthah's death, only to preserve them in the true religion, which was in some measure restored. Some of the Jews fancy him to have been the same with Boaz, who married Ruth the Moabitess, but without any ground at all that I can find.

Ver. 9. *And he had thirty sons and thirty daughters.*] A numerous issue was accounted a great blessing in those days: and though we read of no memorable act that this judge did, yet this is set down to shew that he was a person eminently favoured by God.

Whom he sent abroad.] The Vulgar refers this to his daughters, for whom he provided husbands, and sent his daughters to their houses, as the manner was, (Gen. xxiv. 67. xxxi. 50.)

And he took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons.] This completed the blessing of God in the gift of so many children; who all lived to the state of men and women, and were all disposed by him in marriage, for that was in the power of parents. (See Gen. xxiv.)

And he judged Israel seven years.] Not all the Israelites, but those that Jephthah had judged; and none disputed his authority, but he ruled over them thus long.

Ver. 10. *Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-lehem.*] There were two Beth-lehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, and the other in the tribe of Judah; the latter of which, it is generally thought, is here meant, where he was born and buried.

Ver. 11. *And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel: and he judged Israel ten years.*] It is observed by many, that Eusebius, in his Chronicon, passes by this judge, because he saith the LXX. do not mention him, though the Hebrew text doth: but, as all our present copies of the LXX. now mention him; so did those whom a very ancient writer used, *viz.* Theophilus Antioch. lib. i. ad Autolicum; and, which is more to be wondered at, those copies also which Eusebius himself followed in his tenth book, de Præpar. Evang. cap. 14. as our primate Usher hath observed in his Chronologia Sacra, par. i. cap. *ult.*

Ver. 12. *And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.*] These last words were added to distinguish this Aijalon here mentioned from another in the tribe of Dan, (i. 35.)

Ver. 13. *And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel.*] The place where he was born shews that he was of the tribe of Ephraim, whom God at last honoured with a judge of their own country, after their pride had been humbled by Jephthah: for Pirathon is expressly said, ver. 15. to be in the land of Ephraim.

Ver. 14. *And he had forty sons, and thirty nephews.*] That is, grandsons.

That rode on threescore and ten asses' colts.] See ver. 10. This is said, to shew that God blessed him not only with a numerous posterity, but let them all grow up to be men. (See x. 4.)

And he judged Israel eight years.] The intention of this book is chiefly to shew how God punished them for their sins, and delivered them upon their repentance: but nothing remarkable of this kind falling out in the time of these three last mentioned judges, he omits to relate their other acts, which was beside his purpose.

Here it may be fit to note, that the other interval of the two mentioned upon xi. 26. consisting of a hundred and forty years, (which, added to three hundred and forty, in the foregoing interval, make up the four hundred and eighty years mentioned 1 Kings vi. 2.) it is evident that the latter part of them, *viz.* eighty-four years, was made up by the reigns of Saul and David, who each reigned forty years, (2 Sam. v. 4. Acts xiii. 21.) and the four first years of Solomon: therefore the remaining fifty-six years are made up of part of the eighteen years wherein the Ammonites oppressed Israel after the death of Jair, and the years wherein these four last named persons and Samuel judged Israel.

Ver. 15. *And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon, in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.*] Some think this mount retained the name of *Mount Amalek* (as the words are in the Hebrew) from ancient times; the Amalekites having possessed it heretofore, when the Canaanites were the inhabitants of this country; but it may as well be thought (since all that is said is but conjecture) that it was so called from some famous overthrow, which the children of Ephraim gave the Amalekites in this place; for in the time of the judges they more than once joined with others against the Israelites. (See iii. 13. vi. 3. but especially see what I have noted upon v. 14.)

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *AND the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord.*] As he complained before, x. 6. when he began to speak of what befel them thereupon.

And the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.] This is the sixth oppression, and the longest that they ever lay under: which is thought, by a great man I have often mentioned, to have ended seven months after the death of Eli, when the ark was brought back out of the land of the Philistines; and, by the same reason, it began so many months after he entered upon the government, after the death of Abdon. (See Usherii Annales, ad A. M. 2848. and his Chronologica Sacra, p. 1. cap. 12, 13.) But, I think, Sir John Marsham hath since that more rightly judged, that this oppression by the Philistines is not different from that mentioned x. 7, 8. but one and the same; they vexing and oppressing the Israelites in the west, when the Ammonites oppressed them in the east: for though the oppression of the Philistines lasted longer, yet it began at the very same time with the other; which made their distress the greater: and therefore that preface (x. 7.) belongs not only to what immediately there follows, concerning the Ammonites and Jephthah, but to what is here related concerning the Philistines and Samson: which the holy writer could not speak of both together without confusion; and therefore first relates the

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issue of the war with the Ammonites, and then relates the other part of the history concerning the Philistines, which he here begins: and by this synchronism all difficulties may be solved, and the years, which seem redundant, brought within their true compass. (See his Canon Chronicus, sect. 11. p. 293.)

Ver. 2. *And there was a certain man of Zorah.*] See Josh. xix. 40, 41.

Of the family of the Danites.] Sometimes the word *family* is used for a *tribe*. (See Josh. vii. 17.) Or, the meaning may be *of a family among the Danites*: from among whom it was very proper to have a deliverer raised up to them, for the Danites were near neighbours to the Philistines, who oppressed them.

Whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not.] Was not likely to have any children.

Ver. 3. *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman.*] As he did to Gideon, (vi. 12.) in human shape; as the relation shews in the following verses, 5. 8, &c.

And said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.] The greatest men of this nation were born of barren women; as Isaac was anciently, and Samuel and John the Baptist in future times.

Ver. 4. *Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink.*] She was to live as the Nazarites did, (Numb. vi. 2, 3.) while she carried him in her womb, and, perhaps, while she nursed him; because, as it follows in the next verse, he was to be a perpetual Nazarite unto God, from his conception to his death, (ver. 7.) which he could not have been if she had drank wine or strong drink; because a child in the womb and its mother live by the same nourishment.

And eat not any unclean thing.] It is likely they were too negligent in those days, in observing the precepts about meats; otherwise there would have been no need to mention this.

Ver. 5. *For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb.*] See upon Numb. vi. 4.

And he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines.] He did not perfectly deliver the Israelites from the yoke of the Philistines, but it was done after his death by Samuel; who put an end to this forty years' tyranny, by his famous victory at Eben-ezer, (1 Sam. vii. 13.) as the same Sir J. Marsham observes: who supposes Eli to have died in the midst of this servitude; that is, twenty years before this victory. Samson therefore only sorely galled the Philistines, but they still continued to oppress the Israelites, as they did when he was born; for it appears by these words, that when the angel spake to them, they were under *the hand*, that is, the power of the Philistines, and so continued all his days: for it is said, xv. 20. that he judged Israel twenty years, *in the days of the Philistines*; that is, while they tyrannized over Israel: from which tyranny he was so far from being a complete deliverer, that he himself was taken and bound by them; nor had he ever any command over the Israelites.

Ver. 6. *And the woman came and told her husband.*] The angel seems to have appeared to her in the field, and she acquainted her husband with it when she came home.

Saying, A man of God came unto me.] So they called prophets.

And his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible.] That is, venerable, or full of majesty; for so the *men of God*, I suppose, sometimes appeared; as may be gathered from the story of St. Stephen, who, being full of the Holy Ghost, when he stood before the council of Jerusalem, his face shone *as if it had been the face of an angel*, (Acts vi. 15.)

And I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name.] The lustre of his countenance struck such an awe into her, that she made no inquiry who he was, nor whence he came, and he was not pleased to tell her. Though the Vulgar (against both the Hebrew text, the Chaldee, and the LXX.) hath it, *She asked him who he was, and whence he came, and what was his name, but he would not tell her.*

Ver. 7. *And he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son; and now drink no wine, nor strong drink,* &c.] She recites the words of the angel unto her husband; who, as Josephus fancies, hearing her highly commend the person who appeared to her for his beauty and majesty, began to suspect her chastity; which is a conceit for which there is no ground, but much against it.

Ver. 8. *Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, Oh, my Lord, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again unto us.*] To make good the forenamed conceit, Josephus makes this to be the prayer of his wife, that he might satisfy the jealousy of her husband; directly contrary to what is here expressly said, that Manoah made this request. (See lib. v. Antiq. cap. 10.)

And teach us what we shall do unto the child which shall be born.] He did not in the least question his wife's chastity; no, nor blame her credulity, but desired himself to see the person (if God pleased) who had brought this good news to them, and to be informed how they should educate the child.

Ver. 9. *And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah.*] Who, it appears by this, desired only further satisfaction in that which he already believed.

And the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field.] Where, I suppose, (ver. 6.) he appeared to her before: and, I think, all interpreters agree, that it was on the very same day.

And Manoah her husband was not with her.] This is no sign of his jealousy, but rather quite contrary, that he had a great opinion of her virtue.

Ver. 10. *And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, saying, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me that came unto me the other day.*] The word *other* is not in the Hebrew, but it may be translated, *to-day*. And, perhaps, he appeared to her at the first in the morning, and now in the evening.

Ver. 11. *And Manoah arose, and went after his wife.*] Who led him the way, to shew him where the man was.

And came to the man.] Whom his wife had desired to stay a while, till she called her husband to him, as Josephus probably enough conjectures: but I cannot imagine how he came to add, that when her husband saw him, οὐ δ' οὕτως ἐπαύετο τῆς ὑπονοίας, *he was not instantly rid of his suspicion;* for there is nothing like it in the following words.

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He said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman?] And told her, she should have a son.

And he said, I am.] The same Jewish writer adds, that Manoah prayed him to tell him what he had said to his wife; but the angel replied, it was enough that he had told it her.

Ver. 12. *And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass.*] These words may be no more than a wish, that what he foretold might prove true; though some look upon them as a prayer to God to make them good.

How shall we order the child? and how shall we do unto him?] The Hebrew word *mischpat*, which we translate *order*, signifies here the rule whereby he should live.

Ver. 13. *And the angel said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.*] This general answer might have been sufficient; but that they might be the more careful, he adds, in the next verse, all the particulars he had mentioned to his wife, ver. 4. and something more largely.

Ver. 14. *She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine.*] *i.e.* Neither grapes nor raisins.

Neither let her drink wine nor strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing.] This seems to lay a charge upon him as well as her, to see this abstinence observed.

All that I commanded her let her observe.] Breed him up a Nazarite all the days of his life.

Ver. 15. *And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee until we have made ready a kid for thee.*] He desired him to stay and accept an entertainment from them, which was anciently given to strangers, especially when they appeared like more than ordinary persons, (Gen. xviii. 3, 4, &c.) and was continued to these days, (Judg. vi. 18.) Some think he intended to offer a sacrifice of peace-offerings, and feast the man of God with that part which belongs to him that brought it to be offered.

Ver. 16. *And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread.*] He was persuaded to stay, but not to taste of his meat; for the word *bread* comprehends all provision of food.

And if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord.] Or, *But* if thou hast a mind to express thy thankfulness, offer a *burnt-offering*, which must be wholly sacrificed unto the Lord. A prophet (as Manoah took this to be) might warrant men to sacrifice, though they were not priests, nor at the tabernacle, as Elijah did at Mount Carmel.

For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord.] As he did shortly after, when he appeared to be more than an angel.

Ver. 17. *And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?*] He desired they might shew themselves grateful to him, by making him some present, which they could not do, unless they knew his name, and where he dwelt. So Josephus interprets *doing him honour*, ἵνα χάριν αὐτῷ καὶ δωρεὰν παράσχωσι, *that they might give him thanks, and bestow some gift upon him.*

Ver. 18. *And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret?*] Or rather (as it is in the margin) *it is wonderful;* so the LXX. θαυμαστὸν, *admirable.* Whose essence (for that is meant by *name* in Scripture) is to be admired, but cannot be comprehended. This shews it was the Lord himself; that is, the Word of the Lord, who was to be the Messiah; unto whom the prophet Isaiah gives the same name of *Pele*, the *wonderful*, (Isa. ix. 6.)

Ver. 19. *And Manoah took a kid with a meat-offering.*] Which usually attended the burnt-offering, as we read in the book of Leviticus.

And offered it upon the rock unto the Lord.] He did not offer it, properly speaking, but laid it upon the rock, as on an altar, to be offered unto the Lord. And so the LXX. προσήνεγκε, *he brought it to be offered;* he laid τοὺς ἄρτους καὶ τὰ κρέα ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας, *he laid the bread and the flesh upon the rock.*

And the angel of the Lord did wondrously.] The word *angel* is not in the Hebrew, and therefore this is to be referred unto Jehovah, immediately foregoing, who appeared in the form of an angel, and now acted suitable to his name *Pele, wonderful;* unto which the word *maphli (did wondrously)* plainly alludes; that is, he brought fire, it is probable, out of the rock, as in the days of Gideon. So Josephus; for we read of no fire that Manoah brought, and yet there was a flame, in which the angel went up into heaven.

And Manoah and his wife looked on.] Which shews that Manoah was only a spectator of what was done, but did not offer the sacrifice.

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, when the flame went up towards heaven from off the altar.*] So that part of the rock is called where the flesh and the bread were laid, being, I suppose, a very great stone, flat at the top like an altar.

That the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar.] In which he went up ὥσπερ ὀχήματος (as Josephus speaks), *as in a chariot.*

And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.] Being astonished when they saw him, whom they took only for a prophet, to be an angel of the Lord; and, perhaps, worshipping the Divine Majesty, who had appeared in such an illustrious manner to them, and praying him to preserve their lives, which they thought in danger by such a sight.

Ver. 21. *But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and his wife.*] There being no further occasion for it.

Then Manoah knew that it was an angel of the Lord.] By the wonderful things that he did, and ascending up to heaven in a flame, which demonstrated his celestial nature, which could not be hurt by fire.

Ver. 22. *And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.*] This has been an old opinion among the Israelites. (See upon vi. 22.)

Ver. 23. *And his wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hand.*] She seems to have had a better consideration of the thing than her husband, and strongly argues him out of his fears, as altogether unreasonable: and, first, she makes God's acceptance of a sacrifice from them a plain demonstration of his favour to them; and his acceptance of it appeared by his kindling a fire himself, whereby it was consumed; and by the ascension of the angel in the flame, as if he went to carry the sacrifice unto God, and present it to him in heaven.

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Neither would he have shewed us all these things.] Concerning the birth of a son, and the manner of his education, and his beginning the deliverance of Israel from their oppressors, of which there was no hope, if God intended to take away their lives from whom this son was to issue.

Nor would he at this time have shewn us such things as these.] Appeared again and again unto them, to acquaint them with these things, at a time when such visions were rare, and when they were in such distress, that God seemed to have abandoned them to the will of their enemies. These were two unanswerable arguments that they had no reason to think God would take away their lives, but continue them, for the fulfilling his promise.

Ver. 24. *And the woman bare a son.*] We have no direction whereby to know the time of his birth, but only this, that the angel said before he was conceived, (ver. 5.) that he should *begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.* Which is a plain indication they were then under their power; that is, the forty years' oppression of the Philistines was begun; and, consequently, since his twenty years' judicature was in *the days of the Philistines,* (xv. *ult.*) that is, during their tyranny, he was born in the beginning of it: for we cannot well suppose that he began to be their deliverer before the eighteenth year of his age, as primate Usher observes in his Annal. ad A. M. 2849.

And called his name Samson.] Which, Josephus saith, signifies ἰσχυρὸν, *strong,* or *robust;* but whence he derived it I cannot imagine. Some think from *Shemesh,* which signifies *the sun,* which is a body of mighty force. So St. Jerome, who thinks Samson is as much as *their sun;* a great *light of Israel,* as David is called.

And the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.] As he grew up there plainly appeared in him extraordinary endowments of body and mind, which the Lord bestowed on him.

Ver. 25. *And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him.*] To do some unusual things, beyond mere human power, which were specimens of an heroical virtue. The Targum translates it, *the spirit of fortitude or courage,* &c.

At times.] Upon certain occasions, when it would be visible to the people, that God intended to work deliverance by him.

In the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.] See chap. xvi. 31. There was no army of the Danites encamped where Samson displayed his valour; but this is the name of a place, called *Machana-Dan (the camp of Dan),* in which, perhaps, Samson lived. The reason of this name is given afterward in the eighteenth chapter, ver. 12. where there is a history of an expedition of the Danites; which, though placed after this, yet was really before the times of Samson. But this camp, it appears by that place, did not lie between Zorah and Eshtaol, but in the tribe of Judah, or in the very borders of it: therefore the word *and* must be here supplied; *in the camp of Dan, and between Zorah and Eshtaol,* towards which that camp lay. If this be not allowed, we must suppose, that the six hundred men mentioned xviii. 11. made their encampment between Zorah and Eshtaol, before they marched out of their own country, and gave that place the same name which the other had near Kirjath-jearim, where they encamped the first night.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *AND Samson went down to Timnath.*] A city in his own tribe, as we read Josh. xix. 47. (see there) but fallen, it is probable, into the possession of the Philistines, near to whose country it lay, who, at this time, oppressed the Israelites, and made them their tributaries, which did not hinder, but rather promote, all manner of commerce between them.

And saw a woman of Timnath, of the daughters of the Philistines.] That is, he fell in love with her; according to the vulgar saying among the Greeks, ἐκ τοῦ ὁρᾶν τὸ ἐρᾶν, *from looking comes loving.*

Ver. 2. *And he came up, and told his father and his mother.*] This was a part of the honour they thought was owing to their parents, to advise with them about their marriage, of which they did not treat, but left it to their parents. So it seems, by this, to have been in ancient times, though their children were of age (as Samson is now supposed to be), and, according to the later doctors among the Jews, fit to contract marriage themselves. (See Selden, lib. ii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 3. and see above, xii. 9.)

And said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore get her for me to wife.] This was when Samson was about twenty-two years old, as primate Usher computes it, who thinks Eli judged Israel at this time in civil affairs; but Sir J. Marsham makes account, as I observed, he died in the middle of this servitude.

Ver. 3. *And his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren.*] That is, in their own family.

Or among all thy people.] In the whole tribe of Dan.

That thou shouldest go to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?] Which was against the law of Moses, in Exod. xxxiv. 16. Deut. vii. 3. For though they were none of the seven nations of Canaan, yet they were under the same condemnation, and their land was given to the Israelites.

And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.] His mother, some think, expressed such dislike to the motion, that he applied himself wholly to his father, and beseeched him to favour his choice, because he was deeply in love with her.

Ver. 4. *But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord.*] He felt some Divine motion in him, which carried him to this place to seek a wife; but his parents knew not of it till he told them (as some think), and then readily consented.

That he sought an occasion against the Philistines.] Which he knew this treaty of marriage would give him, whether it succeeded or miscarried.

For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.] They were still, as they had been several years, under the power of the Philistines, who treated them, it is likely, with such scorn and contempt, as if they had been their slaves.

Ver. 5. *Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath.*] He overcame them by his importunity; or, perhaps, told them, as I said before, what a motion he felt from God to desire this match.

And came to the vineyards of Timnath.] Unto which he turned aside, upon some occasion not here mentioned.

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And, behold, a young lion roared against him.] Came with full mouth (as we speak) to devour him. By this, and many other places, it appears, there were lions in Judea, from whence several places had their names, as Lebaoth, Josh. xv. 32. and Beth-lebaoth, xix. 6. Every one also knows, that a young lion, come to his full strength, was the fiercest of all other. And so *cephir* (Kimchi observes) is used for a lion grown bigger than *gur*, which signifies a lion's whelp.

Ver. 6. *And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.*] The same Spirit mentioned in the last verse of the foregoing chapter; which endued him with extraordinary courage and undauntedness of mind, together with a supernatural strength of body.

And he rent him as he would have rent a kid.] That is, as easily and speedily. The Hebrew word certainly signifies to *tear in pieces*, and therefore, if it be true what Josephus saith, (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 10.) that he throttled him with his hand (ἄγχει ταῖς χερσὶ), the meaning is, that, after he had strangled him, he rent him in pieces.

And he had nothing in his hand.] If he had encountered him being armed with some weapon, it had been a bold action; but when he was naked to receive his assault, was a miraculous resolution: by which he was encouraged to undertake greater things, as David was by the same power given him.

But he told not his father nor his mother what he had done.] Being afraid, perhaps, that this action might come to the ears of the Philistines, which might make them jealous of him.

Ver. 7. *And he went down and talked with the woman.*] Discoursed with her about marriage, which he propounded to her.

And she pleased Samson well.] All things were agreed, and she was espoused to him: but before the espousals she was converted to the Jewish religion, and made an entire proselyte, as R. Levi ben Gersom, and Moses Mikotzi, and other Hebrew doctors say; and then it was not unlawful to marry a stranger, as Joshua, they say, did Rahab. (See Selden, lib. v. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 15. and Buxtorf, de Sponsalibus et Divortiis, sect. 31.)

Ver. 8. *And after a time.*] In the Hebrew it is *after-days;* that is, a year, as that phrase often signifies, and is so translated by us, Exod. xiii. 10. where *mijamim jamim* is rightly translated *from year to year.* (See also Gen. iv. 3. and chap. xi. of this book, ver. 4.)

He returned to take her.] To complete his marriage: which was not wont to be celebrated between a man and a young virgin till twelve months after the espousals (as the Hebrew doctors say), that she might have so much time to adorn herself, and make herself every way fit for marriage. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Uxor. Hebr. cap. 8.) But if in that twelve months' time she lay with any other man, it was accounted adultery, and punished with death, because she was really his wife.

And he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion.] Which was now a mere skeleton, the flesh being all consumed: and so the Syriac interpreter here renders it.

And, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion.] Bees are observed, by Aristotle and others, to abhor stinking smells, and to abstain from flesh; which hath made some think it strange that a swarm of bees should breed in the carcass of a lion: but they did not consider that time had consumed the flesh, or it was eaten up by birds and beasts, and nothing but the bare bones remained; in which the bees did not breed, but settled themselves, when they swarmed, as they have done sometimes in dead men's sculls and in their tombs. (See Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, p. 2. lib. iv. cap. 10. and Vossius de Orig. et Progressu Idolol. lib. iv. cap. 72.)

Ver. 9. *And he took thereof in his hand.*] Or, as the Syriac translates it, *it dropped into his hands*, from the combs, that is, which they had made either in the belly, as St. Ambrose thinks, or in the breast, as Josephus, or (which Vossius rather thinks) in the head, or in the mouth of the lion, as the LXX. and Vulgar understand it: though Bochartus thinks that, instead of ἐν στόματι, *in the mouth*, it should be read in the LXX. ἐν σώματι λέοντος, *in the body of the lion.*

And went on eating.] Which was not unlawful, in case of hunger, though it was found in a carcass; because such ceremonial laws, as forbid such things, were not observed in cases of necessity: as appears by David's eating the shew-bread, and Elijah's eating food brought him by ravens.

And came to his father and mother.] From whom he had turned aside for a while, as he did when they first went to Timnath, (ver. 5.)

And he gave them, and they did eat.] Wild honey being delicious food in that country, as many places shew, (Deut. xxxii. 13. and Psal. lxxxi. 16.)

But he told them not that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.] For then, perhaps, they would not have eaten it.

Ver. 10. *So his father went down unto the woman.*] (Together with his wife and his son) to demand her, who was espoused to Samson, to consummate the marriage.

And Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do.] According to the custom of all countries: which feast was called by the Jews *the nuptial joy*, with which no other was to be intermixed; and all labour ceased, as long as it lasted. (See Selden, lib. ii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 11. p. 172.)

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, when they saw him.*] What a goodly person he was.

That they brought thirty companions to be with him.] Her friends, out of respect to him, brought this great number of bridemen to honour his nuptials: but some of the Jews think they had a further end in it, that they might serve as a guard to him, if he should attempt any disturbance; of which, they fancy, the Philistines were afraid, when they saw he was a man of might.

Ver. 12. *And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you.*] This shews how ancient the custom was (which we find afterward among the Greeks), of proposing questions to be resolved in their compotations and feasts; that they might not be spent merely in dull eating and drinking, but there might be something to exercise and whet the wits of the company: and they called such riddles as these, which were contrived to puzzle men's thoughts, by the name of γρῖφος, which the scholiast upon Aristophanes defines to be παροίνιον ζήτημα, *a question put among their cups.* Athenæus discourses largely of such problems, as they also called them, in his Deipnosophists. (See Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, p. 2. lib. iv. cap. 12.)

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If you can certainly declare it within the seven days of the feast.] So long the nuptial solemnity was wont to continue in ancient times, (Gen. xxix. 27.) They could not shorten the days, as the Jewish doctors tell us, but they might lengthen them; as they did at Tobit's marriage, when the solemnity continued fourteen days, though according to custom they were bound to keep but three, she being a widow, as Selden observes in the forenamed book, p. 185. and Buxtorf in his Synagoga Judaica, cap. 35.

And find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets, and thirty change of garments.] The Greeks followed this example, and gave rewards to him who resolved the question proposed, but set a mulct on those that could not.

Ver. 13. *But if you cannot declare it, then you shall give me thirty sheets, and thirty change of garments.*] Most take *sidinim* (from whence the word *sindon* seems to come) for such linen cloths as the whole body may be wrapped in; and therefore properly translated *sheets:* and *change of garments* signify new robes, which they might change for the old: but of the word *sindon*, see Braunius de Vestitu Sacerd. Hebr. lib. i. cap. 7. n. 7.

And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.] They agreed to the conditions, and bade him propound it.

Ver. 14. *And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.*] The opposition is manifest in the first part of the riddle, but not in the second; for weakness is opposed to strength, not sweetness, whose opposite is bitterness, or sharpness: but Bochartus hath ingeniously observed, that these two words are sometimes confounded; for, in the Arabic language, the word *mirra*, which signifies *strength*, comes from *marra*, which signifies to be *bitter:* and so it is among the Latins, where *acer*, a sharp man, is as much as a valiant man, who eagerly (as we speak) engaged his enemies: and this very word (as he and others have noted) is used of lions, whom Ovid in his Fasti calls

"—— Genus acre leonum."

And therefore the riddle is truly this: *Food came from the devourer, and sweetness from that which is eager and sharp;* i. e. *fierce.*

And they could not in three days expound the riddle.] Whereupon (it appears by what follows) they applied themselves to his wife, and desired her (with good words, it is likely, at first) to try what she could do by her caresses, to persuade him to unriddle it to her.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass, that on the seventh day.*] Which was the last day of the feast; when they were in danger to lose their wager.

They said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare to us the riddle.] By letting her know it; who they expected would tell it them.

Lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire.] From entreaties they now betake themselves to threatenings, and those very terrible; which they concluded would make her as pressing upon them as they were upon her.

Have ye called us.] This signifies that they were invited by her friends to the feast.

To take what we have?] To make us pay very dear for our good cheer.

Is it not so?] Will not your kindness conclude in rudeness, by stripping us of our raiment?

Ver. 16. *And Samson's wife wept before him.*] She added tears to her entreaties.

And said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me.] This was prudent enough, to pretend to doubt of his affection, because he concealed this secret from her; for a new married couple are usually so kind as freely to unbosom themselves one to another.

And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father and my mother.] With whom he had been long acquainted.

And shall I tell it thee?] Whom he did not yet so well know as to be sure she could keep a secret.

Ver. 17. *And she wept before him the seven days, while the feast lasted.*] That is, the rest of the seven days of the feast which remained after the third, she importuned him continually with tears, and upbraided him, I suppose, with want of kindness to her, as the foregoing verse imports.

And it came to pass, on the seventh day, that he told, because she lay sore upon him.] Made him very uneasy by her importunity, which he could not resist, though he had conquered the lion.

And she told the riddle to the children of her people.] For whom she had more affection than for her husband, or feared their displeasure more than his.

Ver. 18. *And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day, before the sun went down.*] Just before the time was expired, which was prefixed for the solution of the riddle.

What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?] This is a compendious answer to the latter part of the question, which sufficiently comprehends the first: and St. Ambrose thinks, that, as soon as this answer was out of their mouth, Samson immediately interposed and said, *What is more perfidious than a woman?* which he had out of Josephus, who saith the same; and something like it follows in the next words.

And he said unto them, If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.] The meaning is, that without the assistance of his wife (whom he compares to a young heifer, which is not yet subdued to the yoke of obedience) they had continued still as ignorant as they had been all the time of the feast. Ralbag, indeed, and some others, take the word *ploughed* in a lascivious sense; as if he meant that they had lain with his wife, or otherwise they had not got the secret out of her. But the words will not bear this interpretation; for he doth not say, *If ye had not ploughed my heifer* (which might have been so interpreted), but, If ye had not ploughed *with my heifer;* which plainly implies using her help to find out what they desired. (See Bochart. par. i. Hierozoicon, lib. ii. cap. 41.)

Ver. 19. *And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.*] Which he had not always; but at special seasons it moved him, and gave him power to do extraordinary things, which otherwise had not been warrantable. (See ver. 6. and xiii. *ult.*)

And he went down to Askelon.] A city of the Philistines.

And slew thirty men of them.] As they were making merry, it is probable, either in the field, or the city, at some public solemnity, when great companies used to be gathered together, and to appear in their best apparel.

And took their spoil.] Whatsoever they had about them;

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and perhaps they that fled left a great many things behind them.

And gave change of garments unto them that expounded the riddle.] Together with the *sheets* he promised; which he purchased, perhaps, with the spoil.

And his anger was kindled.] Against his wife for betraying him, and against his companions for their underhand dealing.

And he went up to his father's house.] Left his wife with her own relations, and went to live at home with his father. It is plain by the whole story, that Timnath lay low, there being a descent from his father's house to it, unto which they went up from thence, (ver. 1, 2. 5. 7. 10.)

Ver. 20. *And Samson's wife was given to his companion.*] She it seems was as angry as he; and looking upon herself as forsaken, was easily persuaded to marry one of his bridemen.

Whom he used as his friend.] With whom he was more familiar, and treated him with greater kindness than he did the rest that honoured him with their company. For he, I suppose, was the principal brideman, who was called by the name of *the friend of the bridegroom*, as we read in the gospel of St. John, iii. 29. (See Selden, lib. ii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 16. p. 200, &c.) This usage, no doubt, incensed Samson the more afterward against them; for he saw there was no faith in any of them.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass within a while after.*] In the Hebrew the word is *mijamim;* which in other places signifies *after a year,* (see xiv. 8.) when his anger was appeased.

In the time of wheat-harvest.] Which was about the feast of Pentecost; a time of great joy.

That Samson visited his wife with a kid.] Which was no contemptible present, as appears by the story of Judah and Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 17. For it was a delicious food, not only in Judea, but in other countries, as Bochartus hath shewn in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2.

And he said, I will go in unto my wife into the chamber.] He attempted, with the usual freedom which husbands have with their wives, to go into her apartment, and enjoy her company.

But her father would not suffer him to go in.] For the reason following in the next verse.

Ver. 2. *And her father said, I verily thought thou hadst utterly hated her.*] He thought he had good grounds to conclude he would never come near her more, having not heard from him a whole twelvemonth.

Therefore I gave her to thy companion.] Whom it is likely she loved, having contracted an acquaintance with him by the friendship he had with her husband, (xiv. *ult.*) For though she was (as the Hebrew doctors suppose) a proselyte to the Jewish religion, yet she was not so well instructed as to know that it was not lawful, by their law, to marry another, till Samson had given her a bill of divorce; which he had not done, intending to return again to her.

Is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her.] He had no mind to quarrel with Samson; and therefore endeavoured to assuage his anger with the offer of his other daughter, who was more beautiful than her who had forsaken him. This, indeed, was contrary to the law of Moses; but the Philistines, it seems, continued their old abominable customs, which God intended, by giving his law, to abolish, (Lev. xviii. 24. 27. 30.)

Ver. 3. *And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.*] He seems to have turned away in scorn and indignation, without making a reply to his father-in-law; but told the next persons he met, that he would be revenged of the Philistines for the wrong that had been done him; and that they might blame themselves for the mischief he intended them. By which it appears, that the people of that place approved of this marriage, and perhaps honoured it by their presence; whom Samson resolved therefore to chastise, not as a private person, but as appointed by God to vindicate the oppression of the Israelites. Which Grotius thinks he did *ex naturali jure,* as a piece of natural justice. (See lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 20. sect. 8. n. 3.)

Ver. 4. *And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes.*] Some make a difficulty to believe this, because foxes are subtle creatures, and not easily caught: but they should consider such things as these, which Bochartus hath represented, that this country abounded with foxes, from whence several places had their names, particularly one in the tribe of Dan, (see chap. i. 35. and Josh. xix. 42.) and that under this name of foxes may be comprehended a creature very like a fox, called *thoes,* which go together in herds; so that two hundred (as good authors report) have been seen in a company together. And next, it is not said he caught these at one time, or in a day and a night; but there might be a week or a month's time allowed for the accomplishment of his design; in which his servants, and neighbours, and friends, no doubt, assisted him, if he desired it; so that such a number might be caught in a short time: for they were not caught, as some imagine, only by hunting, but in snares and nets, as he demonstrates in his Hierozoicon, lib. iii. cap. 13. where, in answer to such as ask why he chose foxes rather than dogs, or some other creatures, he thinks it is sufficient to say, that he brought about two ends; by the same means freeing the country from a great many noxious animals, by which he did much hurt unto their enemies.

And took firebrands, and turned tail to tail.] Which he tied together with a cord; yet not close, but at a distance, that they might run the better.

And put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.] Which he so fastened, that it should not fall off by their motion.

Ver. 5. *And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines.*] Near unto which he let them loose; and they naturally ran into it to hide themselves from the fire; of which they are observed to be afraid. Beside, being coupled, they could not run into their holes.

And burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn.] By this it appears, that it was in the midst of wheat-harvest when this was done; some corn being cut, and other still standing; but all consumed. For the fire

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being once begun, the foxes were the more affrighted, and desiring to run from it, this still carried it to another place, where there was corn left, till they had burnt it quite up: beside, it is observed by the same author, that foxes do not run straight forward, but they make many turnings, by which means they destroyed the more.

With the vineyards and olives.] Foxes are observed to love grapes, and Solomon speaks of them as noxious to vineyards, (Cant. ii. 15.) whither they ran to satiate their hunger, after they had been long kept up by Samson. Some think, that as part of the three hundred foxes were sent among the corn, so the other part among the vines and olives: or, perhaps, being all let into the corn, and finding the flame increasing there, they went to seek shelter in the vineyards, whither they carried the fire.

Bochartus observes a very famous monument of this fact of Samson's, in Ovid's fourth book of his Fasti; where he saith, the Romans were wont every year, in the middle of April, to let loose some foxes in the Circus, with burning torches fastened unto their backs. The original of which custom, he justly thinks, could not be from so small an occasion as Ovid mentions, from the report of an old man he met withal. But that it was derived from hence, may well be questioned; because, though it fell out at the same time of the year that Samson did this thing, yet one can give no reason why the Phœnicians (from whom the Romans must be supposed to borrow it) should celebrate the memory of this mischief which Samson did them, in such a representation of it. (See him, in the place beforementioned, p. 856, 857, &c.)

Ver. 6. *Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this?*] The owners of the corn, or perhaps the country in general, made an inquiry after the author of this mischief.

And they answered, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion.] Some of those who heard Samson's threatening words, (ver. 3.) it is likely, gave this information.

And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.] I suppose they burnt their house, and them in it. Whereby that very calamity came upon her, which she sought to avoid by betraying her husband, (xiv. 15.)

Ver. 7. *And Samson said, Though you have done this.*] The words in the Hebrew are a concise form of speech, *If ye had done after this manner;* that is, punished them sooner for the injury done him, it might have seemed love of justice; but now they did it only out of love to themselves.

Yet will I be avenged of you.] Or, *but I will surely* take a farther revenge of you. Unto which, no doubt, he was moved not by his own private spirit, but by that Spirit which raised him up to deliver God's people from their oppressors.

And then I will cease.] That is, unless they gave him further occasion, there should be an end of this quarrel.

Ver. 8. *And he smote them hip and thigh.*] It is hard to understand the meaning of this; of which Josephus only saith, that he slew many of them, ἐν πεδίῳ τῶν Παλαιστινῶν, *in a field of the Philistines;* but saith not a word concerning the import of *hip and thigh.* But the Chaldee paraphrast interprets it, He smote both *footmen and horsemen,* the one resting on their legs (as the Hebrew word *schock* signifies), and the other on their thighs, as they sat close to their horses. They that think this to be forced, take the meaning to be, that he smote them both on their legs and their thighs, as they fled away, so as to disable them from any service, though he did not kill them. I omit other interpretations.

With a great slaughter.] The word is *with a great stroke,* and so the LXX. translate it, which agrees well with the last interpretation, that he sorely wounded them.

And he went down.] With respect to the country of the Philistines he went up (as appears by the next verse), but from the mountainous part of Judea, where he was, he first went down.

And dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.] A strong place in the tribe of Judah (as Josephus relates), to the top of which no more than one man could come abreast, as we speak. By all this, and by what follows in the rest of his history, it is plain that Samson had no commission from God, nor was moved by him to raise an army, and make open war (as Gideon, and Jephthah, and others did), for the deliverance of Israel from the yoke of the Philistines, but only to weaken them, and to keep them in awe, that, out of dread of him, they might be less cruel in their oppression. And this, no doubt, he understood to be all that God intended to do by him, from the words of the angel, (xiii. 5.) "He shall begin to deliver Israel."

Ver. 9. *Then the Philistines went up and pitched in Judah.*] With a great number of men, as if they intended an absolute conquest of their country.

And spread themselves in Lehi.] A place so called afterward, from the jaw-bone wherewith Samson smote them.

Ver. 10. *And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us?*] Since they paid their tribute (as Josephus observes) and had committed no offence against them, not having taken part with Samson in any thing he had done, they might well expostulate with them about this invasion.

And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up.] They soon satisfied them that they had no quarrel with them, but only with Samson, whom, if they would deliver up bound to them, they would withdraw their army.

To do to him as he hath done to us.] Punish him for the injuries he had done them; or rather, put him to death, as he had killed many of them.

Ver. 11. *Then three thousand of the men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam.*] In the Hebrew it is *went down; i. e.* into the cave where he was in the top of the rock: for it is said, ver. 13. that they brought him *up* to the Philistines, whereas from the top of the rock it was *down.*

And said unto Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us?] And therefore not to be offended by us.

What is it that thou hast done unto us?] To provoke them to come against Judah.

And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so I have done unto them.] He saith nothing of any motion he had from God to do what he had done, but only tells them, that he had merely requited the wrong he had received from the Philistines.

Ver. 12. *And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hands of the Philistines.*] They came with a little army, to shew they could by force take him; but they rather desired he would

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quietly resign himself to them, that they might deliver him bound to the Philistines.

And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.] He doth not upbraid them with their base cowardice, in coming so many against one man, and that to give up their deliverer into their enemies' hands, but consents to their desire, on condition that they would solemnly engage to do him no hurt themselves; for he was unwilling to shed the blood of his brethren, as he might have done, if they had attempted any thing against him.

Ver. 13. *And they spake unto him, saying, No, but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hands; but surely we will not kill thee.*] They promised to do as he desired, if he would submit to be bound and delivered unto the Philistines, who would not be otherwise satisfied.

And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.] To put him absolutely into the power of the Philistines: for two cords, and those fresh and new, wherewith they bound him, were sufficient to shew their real desire to comply with their demands.

Ver. 14. *And when they came unto Lehi.*] Where the Philistines had spread themselves, (ver. 9.)

The Philistines shouted against him.] As soldiers used to do, when they had gotten a great victory, their mischievous enemy being fallen into their hand.

And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.] Or, *But the Spirit of the Lord*, &c. Their joy was instantly quashed; for, by the mighty power of God, the cords immediately snapped in sunder.

The cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire.] Which is consumed in a moment.

And his bands loosed from his hands.] The Hebrew, to express how speedily and easily they were loosed, saith, *they melted*, or were dissolved, as wax is by the fire.

Ver. 15. *And he found a new jaw-bone of an ass.*] Of an ass that had not been long dead. So the word *terijah* signifies, which Kimchi here saith is an Arabic word, signifying moist and fresh, and, therefore, not so brittle as one that is dry, and hath laid long in the air and the sun. (See Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 15.)

And put forth his hand and took it.] The providence of God laid it in his way, that he might not be wholly unarmed, when he had a numerous company of enemies to deal withal.

And slew a thousand men therewith.] The Philistines, no doubt, were strangely amazed to see the cords fall so easily, and suddenly, from his hands, and to see him come boldly, or rather furiously, towards them, which put them in a confusion, and gave him such advantage against them, that he made this great slaughter among them; wherein was fulfilled the promise of Moses, Lev. xxvi. 8. where he saith expressly, "One man of you shall chase a thousand." It is not unlikely, also, that the Philistines might fear the men of Judah, on this occasion, would join with him, which made them turn their backs and expose themselves to slaughter. But it was by a wonderful strength which God infused into him, that he was able to pursue them so long, till he had done such execution, which is incredible only to those who do not consider the power of God, who can raise our powers to what degree he pleases, and enfeeble the spirits of those who oppose his designs: so that they shall have no power to help themselves. It may not be amiss also here to note, that there are instances of men, who, by their natural courage, have made great havoc among their enemies: for Flavius Vopiscus reports, that Aurelian, in the Sarmatic war, slew forty-eight men with his own hands in one day; and in divers days, nine hundred and fifty: upon which the boys made a song, and shouted in their dances, after a military manner, *Mille, Mille, Mille, Mille, Mille, Mille, decollavimus. Unus homo, Mille, Mille,* &c. *Mille, Mille, vivat, qui Mille, Mille occidit.* And, upon another occasion, another little song was made of him, which Salmasius found thus disposed in ancient MS.

Mille Sarmatas, Mille Francos
Semel et Semel occidimus
Mille Persas quærimus.

Ver. 16. *And Samson said.*] Then he composed a triumphant song.

With the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps; with the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men.] This seems to have been the beginning, and, perhaps, the end of the song. In which words, *Belehi hachamor chamorcha morathaim*, every one may observe a graceful allusion; *chamor* signifying both an *ass*, and also a *heap*.

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass, that when he had made an end of speaking.*] Of reciting the song beforementioned, which contained more than these few words, as this phrase seems to import.

That he cast the jaw-bone out of his hand.] Which he held there while he was speaking.

And called that place Ramath-lehi.] That is, the projection, or casting away, of the jaw-bone, as the Chaldee and Kimchi interpret it, for so the word *rama* signifies, to throw any thing from one. It is called, ver. 9. and 14. simply *Lehi;* it being usual to leave out the beginning of names, as I have often observed, Salem being put for Jerusalem, and Shittim for Abel-Shittim, &c.

Ver. 18. *And he was sore athirst.*] By his great toil in the fight, and by his speaking so long, and so earnestly, as it is likely he did afterward.

And he called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant.] This is an express confutation of the fancy of Josephus, that God sent this thirst upon him, as a punishment for not giving him the glory of his victory, but ascribing it to his own strength; for which I can see no colour: for though God be not mentioned in his song, but only the jaw-bone, yet that was in itself so weak an instrument, that his acknowledging twice it was the only thing wherewith he slew so many, was a sufficient signification, that he ascribed not the victory to human power, but to the power of God, whose Spirit he felt come mightily upon him, when he set upon them: but what is there tacitly insinuated, is here in so many words expressed.

And now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?] It seems he was very faint, for want of some refreshment, which made him so earnestly implore relief from God, who, he knew, would not fail to supply him in so great a necessity: for the remembrance of former benefits, when we thankfully acknowledge them, is a mighty support to faith, in the expectance of future; beside, he

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represents himself to God as a *servant* of his, who had taken all this pains, not to satisfy his own revenge, but by his instigation, and for the deliverance of his people.

Ver. 19. *And God clave a hollow place that was in the jaw.*] The Hebrew word *mactes* properly signifies the socket in which the great teeth in the jaw are fastened, (as Bochartus evidently proves, par. i. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 16.) one of which teeth he made drop out, and then caused water to come forth out of that hollow place: but our great primate follows those who think God made a cleft in some part of the earth, in that place called Lehi, from whence he made a fountain of water to spring up. And so Josephus saith, he brought it, κατά τινος πέτρας, *out of a certain rock.*

And there came water thereout.] From this cavity he caused water to issue (whereas blood is wont to flow when a tooth is plucked out), just as he brought water out of a rock in the wilderness, and made the meal and the oil to multiply in the widow of Sarepta's vessels.

And when he had drunk.] It is probable he took up the jaw, when he saw the water bubble out of it, and let it run into his mouth till he had quenched his thirst.

His spirit came again, and he revived.] He was so spent, it seems, that he was ready to die, till God sent him this water, unto which his power gave such a spirit, that it was as reviving as a draught of wine.

Wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which is in Lehi.] Or, as Bochart, I think, more truly renders it, *Enhakkore-asher Belehi;* that is, the fountain of him that called, which is in the jaw. (See him in the abovementioned place, p. 205.)

Unto this day.] Some have imagined, that the fountain continued in Lehi unto the time that this book was written: but Bochart there observes, that these words, *unto this day,* are not to be joined with those next before; for they are separated by an accent which divides them; and therefore the meaning is, that it is called to this day by the name forementioned.

Ver. 20. *And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.*] All his time they remained under the power of the Philistines, who, they confess, (ver. 11.) were *their rulers,* as they continued to be for forty years together, (xiii. 1.) of which these twenty were a part. In which he was not able to perfect their deliverance, but only began it by several small defeats he gave the Philistines, and several damages he did them: but, after all, he left the Israelites under their dominion; nor was there any deliverer arose till Samuel, who, I observed before, completed what Samson began, (1 Sam. vii. 13.)

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *THEN went Samson to Gaza.*] His late victory made him despise the Philistines, as Josephus thinks (καταφρονῶν τῶν Παλαιστινῶν), and adventure to go, in a bravery, into one of their principal cities, which lay in the south part of their country, towards Egypt. But it seems to me more likely, that he went thither secretly and unobservedly, in the dusk of the evening, or in a disguise, that he might the better spy in what posture they were, and what advantage he might possibly have of them.

And saw there a harlot.] Who kept, it is likely, a public-house to entertain strangers; but was as public herself; which had been the condition of Rahab. So Josephus ἐν τινὶ τῶν καταγωγῶν διέτριβε, *he took up his lodging in one of the public inns of the city.*

And went in unto her.] Was ensnared by her beauty to lie with her.

Ver. 2. *And it was told the Gazites.*] The magistrates of the city.

Saying, Samson is come hither.] By this it appears his coming thither was not publicly known; but by some means or other discovered: perhaps by the woman herself, into whose house he went, who gave private information of his being there.

And they compassed him in.] The meaning is not that they beset the house; for the next words shew the contrary; that they intended to seize him as he went out of the city.

And laid wait for him all night at the gate of the city.] Especially in that gate which led to his own country.

And were quiet all night.] Made no noise, for fear he should be alarmed, and contrive some way of escape; or desperately set upon them, and break through the guards.

Saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him.] He would fall into their hands they imagined, having no apprehension of danger.

Ver. 3. *And Samson lay till midnight.*] When he was admonished, perhaps by a dream, to be gone; or had some intelligence from his servants (whom he set to watch) that they lay in wait for him.

And arose at midnight.] In the dead time of the night, when nobody was stirring; and the soldiers themselves, perhaps, asleep: imagining he would lie till morning.

And took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all.] He did not stay to break them open, but plucked up the posts out of the ground, with the doors hanging upon them fast barred; which so astonished the guards, that they had no heart to follow him.

And put them upon his shoulders.] He seems to have carried them a little way in his hands, and then lifted them up to his shoulders, and carried them before their faces in triumph. Which argued a mighty strength, and no less confidence in God.

And carried them up to the top of a hill that is before Hebron.] Some take this hill to have been near Hebron; which was twenty miles from this place. But it is more probable (as Peter Martyr conjectures) it lay between Gaza and Hebron; within the view of both: that inhabitants of the one city might behold them to their confusion; and they of the other to their encouragement to hope for deliverance.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass afterward.*] How long after is not known.

That he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.] It is certain that Sorek was a place in the land of Judea; famous for choice vines, (as Bochart observes, from Gen. xlix. 11. Isa. v. 2. Jer. ii. 21.) and not above a mile and a half from Eschol; whence the spies brought a bunch of grapes, for a sample of the fruitfulness of the country. Unto this place Samson retired to refresh himself, perhaps, after his labours, with the delights of it; and there saw a woman, with whom he fell in love. But whether she was a woman of Israel, or one of the daughters

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of the Philistines, (who now were rulers of the country of Judah, xv. 11.) and whether he loved her as his wife, or kept company with her as a harlot, is not here signified. St. Chrysostom and others are of opinion, that he was married to her. But then, one would think, there should have been some brief mention of their wedding solemnities; or of his bringing her home to his own house. And the Philistines would not have been so bold as to attempt to draw her into their party, and bribe her to betray him into their hands. Which argues she had not the affection of a wife to him; but was a mercenary woman, that would do any thing to get money. And so Josephus understands it, Παρέβαινε δὲ ἤθη τὰ πάτρια, &c. *He forsook the institutions of his country*, and followed the degenerate manners of strange people, ἐρασθεὶς γυναικὸς ἑταιριζομένης, *being enamoured with a harlot among the Philistines:* which was the beginning of all the evils that befel him. For he did not keep her company for a night; but dwelt with her, and gave up himself so entirely to her, that he doated on her.

Ver. 5. *And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her.*] There were five of them in all, (as we read, iii. 3.) who, it is likely, all joined together to make a purse (as we speak) wherewith to corrupt her; and sent their agents to make large offers to her, if she would come into their interests.

And said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him.] It is probable, that he had often declared that the source of his strength was a secret, known only to himself; which they hoped he might, with her blandishments, entice him to reveal unto her.

That we may bind him, and afflict him.] That she might not startle at the proposal, they tell her, they had no intention to kill him; but only to keep him fast in chains, and afflict him; so as to make him humble, and bring him low, that he might not be able to do them more mischief.

And we will give thee, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver.] By which is commonly understood so many shekels; which made in all five thousand five hundred, which make almost two Hebrew talents. For the Jews make it a rule, that where *pieces of silver* are mentioned, the meaning is shekels. (See Gen. xxiii. 15.)

Ver. 6. *And Delilah said unto Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, where thy great strength lieth.*] She did not bluntly ask him this question, but, as Josephus very probably tells the story, the next time they were eating and drinking together, and he was caressing her, she fell into an admiration of all his wonderful deeds, and highly extolled them; desiring him to tell her how he came so much to excel all other men in strength.

And wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.] So that he should not be able to help himself.

Ver. 7. *And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withes that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.*] Her last words, perhaps, made him suspect something. However, ἔτι φρονεῖν ἰσχυρὸς ἦν (as Josephus speaks), *he was yet strong in his understanding*, and not perfectly besotted on her; and therefore did not trust her with this important secret, but answered her deceitfully. Which cannot be excused from being a downright lie; unless we suppose he only jested with her, not believing she would take such an improbable thing for a truth.

Ver. 8. *Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withes which had not been dried.*] It seems they lurked somewhere thereabout, that they might be informed speedily of what passed. And they took care to provide the withes themselves, that there might be no defect in them.

And she bound him with them.] Καθεύδοντα μεθύοντα, &c. She bound him hard with the withes, when he was asleep, and full of drink, as Josephus speaks.

Ver. 9. *Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber.*] In another room of the house, near to that where Samson slept, she had placed a band of soldiers (as Josephus also interprets it), who were ready, upon notice, to seize him. This is an argument that Delilah was not his wife; for in his own house, where he had his servants about him, it had not been possible for her to have placed soldiers secretly in any room without their knowledge.

And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson.] One would think they might have set upon him when he was in a deep sleep. But the plot was otherwise laid between them and Delilah; and they thought it not safe to come near a sleeping lion, for fear he should chance to awake, and tear them in pieces.

And he brake the withes as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire: so his strength was not known.] They found he was as subtle as he was strong; having deluded both her and them.

Ver. 10. *And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound.*] The Hebrew writers rightly observe, that she did not say this to him immediately after the other; but at the next opportunity she took occasion to complain of his want of kindness in not acquainting her with what she desired to know; as if she was not able to keep the secret of a friend, which it was not fit for any body else to understand, as Josephus expresses it.

Ver. 11. *If they bind me fast with new ropes that were never occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.*] He persists in his resolution to delude her.

Ver. 12. *Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith.*] This looked more like truth than the former, and she took care, no doubt, to have the strongest ropes that they could get. And then made him a new entertainment, where he ate and drank till he was heavy with sleep; and then she took the opportunity to bind him as she had done before.

And said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson (and there were liers in wait in the chamber).] In the inner room, where they were formerly disposed so secretly, that Samson knew not of it; for if he had, he would have discovered her treachery.

And he broke them from off his arms like a thread.] Which deterred them from breaking out upon him.

Ver. 13. *And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked, and told me lies; tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound.*] She prays him now to deal sincerely with her; for she persisted as resolutely in her attempts to draw the secret from him as he did in concealing it; which he still continued to do.

And he said unto her, If thou weavest the locks of my head.] The Nazarites being bound never to cut their hari, did not, I suppose, let it hang loose, but curled it up in

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locks, or plaited and broidered it after the manner of a chain: and Samson's hair was distributed into seven of these plaited locks. (See Dr. Spencer concerning this, lib. iii. cap. 6. dissert. 1. p. 585.)

With the web.] He seems to direct her to wrap these seven locks about a weaver's beam (as the Chaldee understands it), or to weave them one within another, so that they should be but one lock, and then he should be like another man, which is here to be understood. And in this he comes a little nearer to the truth, but still deceives.

Ver. 14. *And she fastened it with a pin.*] That they might keep tight and not be unloosed.

And said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep.] This shews that she had taken the former advantages of him in his sleep.

And he went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web.] And thereby appeared as strong as ever he was. For, as the Vulgar understands it, she fixed this pin in the earth; or, as the LXX. in the wall. But there is nothing like it in the Hebrew text.

Ver. 15. *And she said, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me? Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth.*] She now uses her utmost art to overcome him; by telling him, I suppose, she would cast him off, because he did but pretend to love her; as appeared by his not trusting her: but, notwithstanding her importunate desire to be gratified in a small request, he had no less than three times put a cheat upon her.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him.*] Repeated this often, from day to day, most earnestly pressing him to give her a proof of his real affection, by disclosing this secret.

So that his soul was vexed unto death.] He was upon such a rack by two contrary passions struggling in him, love to her, and care not to lose his strength, that he was weary of life. That is, very melancholy, and unconcerned what became of him.

Ver. 17. *That he told her all his heart.*] God having forsaken him, because he had abandoned himself to sensual pleasure, his love of the harlot prevailed over his care of himself.

And said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon my head; but I have been a Nazarite from my mother's womb.] These words were spoken with a greater seriousness than any of the former; which made her conclude he had given her a true account. For thus Josephus paraphrases, *I am under the care of God; by whose providence being born, I nourish my hair; for God forbade that I should ever have it cut off. All my strength lying in the increase and continuance of this hair,* (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 10.)

If I be shaven, then will my strength go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.] There have been men of wonderful strength, whose memory is preserved in history; particularly by Pliny, lib. xii. Natural. Histor. cap. 20. and more are collected by Caspar Schottus, in his Mirabilia Naturæ et Artis, lib. iii. cap. 36. And now, at my present writing of this, there is more than one person in this city of extraordinary strength. But there is a demonstration that Samson's strength wholly depended upon the power of God, and was not inherent in himself; but came upon him when there was need, as long as he preserved himself consecrated unto God, by not shaving his head, and observing all other things belonging to the vow of a Nazarite. Which was a thing so notorious, that the heathens were not ignorant of it; but from hence devised (as learned men have observed), the fable of Nisus, the king of Megara; upon whose hair the fortune of his kingdom depended. (See Huetius, in his Quæstiones Alnetanæ, lib. ii. cap. 12. sect. 28. and our Dr. Jackson, in his first book on the Creed, chap. 15. parag. 3.)

Ver. 18. *And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart.*] Which she perceived, as I said, by the manner of his speaking.

She sent and called the lords of the Philistines.] Who still, it seems, waited thereabouts, to see what would be the success of their design; which she gave them hopes she should at last accomplish. This could not but have been discovered by some of Samson's servants, if he had had a family there, as he would if he had been married. I look upon this, therefore, as a proof that this woman was not his wife.

Saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewn me all his heart.] She was afraid they would not have hearkened to her any more, having been so often deluded; which made her give them this full assurance.

Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hands.] Which they never did before; but now shewed her the reward was ready, if she performed her work.

Ver. 19. *And she made him sleep.*] Having given him, as Delrio thinks, a sleeping potion. Others think she had drawn him in to drink wine (which Josephus supposes she had done in former entertainments), unto which he not being accustomed, he was intoxicated with it. And having broken the law of the Nazarites in this point, was justly delivered up by God to suffer all that followed.

Upon her knees.] Resting his head, I suppose, upon her knees. Or, perhaps, she set him upon her knees, and with her arms about his neck, expressed the greatest affection to him, and care of him.

And she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head.] Which he did so gently, being a man of art, as not to awake him.

And she began to afflict him.] Not by any sensible pain; but by weakening him, and bringing him low (as the Hebrew word is often interpreted). For as soon as the razor touched his head, his strength began to be diminished.

And his strength went from him.] When all the locks were shaved off, his strength quite failed him.

Ver. 20. *And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep.*] She cried so loud, and also shook him so much (out of pretended kindness to him, that he might escape the danger), that she roused him out of his sleep.

And he said, I will go as at other times before, and shake myself.] She had so often said those words, that he was in no fear; but thought to do as he had done before, that is, prepare himself to fall upon them.

And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.] Being newly awakened out of a profound sleep, and scarce come to himself, he did not miss his hair; and so had no apprehension that God had deserted him.

Ver. 21. *But the Philistines took him.*] But he soon

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found he had no power at all left to resist his enemies; who laid hold on him, and took him prisoner.

And put out his eyes.] By a just judgment of God, as the Mischna observes in the title Sota, cap. 8. where they say he followed the delight of his eyes, and so he was punished with the loss of them. Which the Jews are wont to call *measure for measure.* They did not put him to death, much less cut him in pieces, as their hatred and fury might have provoked them to do; for they had promised Delilah they would only bind him, and afflict or humble him, (ver. 5.) and in those days all men made some conscience of keeping their word.

And brought him down to Gaza.] To be exposed there to scorn, where he had exposed them to shame, by carrying away the gates of their city. It was a place also of great strength, where he would be kept secure; and it was remote also from his own country.

And bound him with fetters of brass.] Put very strong and heavy fetters upon his legs.

And he did grind in the prison-house.] As slaves were wont to do. See upon Exod. xi. 5. and St. Jerome, Isa. xlvii. 2. where this is turned to another sense, according to the conceit of many of the Jewish doctors; but without any ground, for it is threatened there as a punishment to Babylon, and so it was inflicted here as a piece of drudgery, unto which Samson, as other prisoners, was condemned.

Ver. 22. *Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again, after he was shaven.*] Or (according to the marginal translation), *As when he was shaven.* That is, grew in time to the same length it was of before Delilah cut it off: so that though his Nazariteship was interrupted by the shaving of his head, yet it was renewed, by letting his hair grow, and observing all other rules belonging to it. He could not offer sacrifice indeed for his expiation (as the law was in case of an interruption), but repented, no doubt, of his folly, and began his Nazariteship again, with prayer to God for a pardon of his former violation of it: and in this state of penitence he continued some time; for his hair would be a good while in growing again to its former length: when, being restored to the condition wherein he was before he lost the favour of God, together with his hair, the Divine Majesty was reconciled to him, and restored his former strength; which grew and increased, as his hair did.

Ver. 23. *Then the lords of the Philistines gathered themselves together.*] Not immediately after the taking of Samson, but after he had been some time in prison, as appears by the verse foregoing: for it is likely they made great preparation for the solemnity mentioned in the next words,

For to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice.] To give thanks to their god at a festival, which they appointed, I suppose, on purpose to express their joy for their taking Samson prisoner: or, as Josephus thinks, ἑορτῆς οὔσης τοῖς Παλαιστινοῖς δημοτελοῦς, *there being a public festival kept among the Philistines* (which all nations had at certain seasons), they made it more famous, by greater sacrifices than ordinary, and by greater feasting and rejoicing, which were expressions of their thankfulness to their god; who is called Dagon, because, as R. Solomon, and many others think, he was in the form of a fish (for *dag* signifies a fish) from the navel downward, and upward in a human shape. Certain it is, this god had a human shape in the upper parts, for we read 1 Sam. v. 4. of his head, and the palms of his hands; though nothing is there said of his feet. It is certain, also, that the Syrians abstained from fish, as Porphyry notes; at least from the fish of that lake hard by which the temple of the famous goddess Derceto stood, not far from Askelon: in which, as Lucian saith, in his Dea Syria, ἰχθύες ἱεροὶ τρέφονται, *sacred fishes were bred.* This Derceto was the same with Venus, as many learned men think, whom the Sidonians called Atarge, and others Artage; but most commonly Astarte, which, in the Scripture, is Ashtaroth, the goddess of the Sidonians, (1 Kings xi. 5. 33. 2 Kings xxiii. 13.) and of the Philistines also, (1 Sam. xxxi. 10.) whom the Israelites imitated, (1 Sam. vii. 3, 4.) And, worshipping the gods of those who ruled over them, no wonder they followed their wicked manners, and gave themselves over to fornication: which is the best account that can be given of Samson's living in this sin, without reprehension; the nation being depraved, and having lost their ancient discipline, which corrected this vice; for their law permitted no harlot to be in Israel.

For they said, Our god hath delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands.] All nations had this sense, that they owed all they enjoyed unto God: and especially made their acknowledgments to such gods as they worshipped, for the victories they got over their enemies.

Ver. 24. *And when the people saw him.*] For he was publicly exposed to all men's view, in his fetters, I suppose, and grinding in the prison.

They praised their god.] Some hymns, perhaps, were composed on this occasion; which they sang in praise of Dagon.

And said, Our god hath delivered into our hands the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.] This was part of their song, which the Greeks call *Pæan:* and they give the very same epithet to Samson, that Homer doth to Hector, whom he frequently calls ἀνδροφόνον, *the slayer of men.*

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry.*] As they used to be with good cheer, music, and such-like entertainments, at their festivals.

That they said, Call for Samson.] The lords of the Philistines ordered him to be sent for.

That he may make us sport.] It is uncertain whether they meant, that they would make themselves sport with him, by flouts and jeers; or that they would have him make them sport, by ridiculous gestures and speeches: Josephus takes it in the first sense.

And they called for Samson out of the prison-house, and he made them sport.] Perhaps they made him dance in his chains, or played with him at some such sport as we call blind-man's buff: but it is hard to believe that such a generous spirit as his would submit to do any thing that should make them laugh; therefore they made themselves all the sport they could, by their abuses of him, which he was forced to suffer.

And they set him between the pillars.] That he might be the more visible to every one in the place.

Ver. 26. *And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand.*] And led him about, as he was directed.

Suffer me that I may feel the pillars upon which the house standeth.] Which supported the roof of it, as appears from ver. 29.

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That I may lean upon them.] To rest himself, pretending he was weary, as Josephus expounds it.

Ver. 27. *Now the house was full of men and women, and the lords of the Philistines were there.*] Some think this house was one of their temples, wherein they met to praise their god, and then to feast, as the manner was, upon the sacrifices which were offered on such occasions. (See ix. 27.) And, indeed, no private house can be thought to have had a room wide enough to contain such a number of people: but their temples were, in many places, large enough, and made so on purpose that a vast number might assemble in them; particularly that of Diana at Ephesus is celebrated for its greatness, as well as for its beauty and riches; (see Pliny, lib. xxxv. Nat. Hist. cap. 14.) all the people round about, from all parts, running thither at several solemnities, as many have noted: but others think it was some theatre, like those in aftertimes, built by the Romans, some of which were of a prodigious bigness: see Pliny, in the same book, cap. 15. where he mentions two theatres built by C. Curio, who was killed in the civil wars, on Cæsar's side. They were made of wood, so ample as to contain all the Roman people (as he speaks), and contrived with such art, that each of them depended upon one hinge: which moved Pliny to admire at the madness of the people of Rome, who would venture into a place, for their pleasure, where they sat "tam infida instabilique sede," *in such an uncertain and unstable seat;* for if that hinge had slipped, there had been a greater slaughter, than at the battle of Cannæ. This I mention, to silence the cavils of those who fancy no such capacious building could be made, as relied only on two pillars; which is not so strange as this admirable fabric of Curio.

And there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.] Every one knows that the roof of their houses and temples were flat, so that men might stand or walk there: but how they should see Samson from thence, we cannot conceive, unless we suppose there were windows to open upon occasion, whereby to look into the house; or perhaps there were battlements at the top, in the inside (as in our cathedrals), where this great company of men and women stood: by whom we are to understand the vulgar sort; for the lords of the Philistines, and persons of quality, were in the body of the house.

Ver. 28. *And Samson called upon the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God.*] A most ardent prayer, proceeding from the anguish of his soul, as Josephus observes; nothing being more grievous than to be mocked, and exposed to public scorn, which he calls δεινότερον τῶν κακῶν, *the sorest of all evils:* but whether he spake these words within himself, or, as some think, with an audible voice, cannot be determined.

That I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes.] If this had proceeded from a spirit of private revenge, God would not have heard his prayer (for he doth not love to gratify men's passions); but that is a proof that this desire proceeded from God, (as St. Austin understands it, lib. i. de Civ. Dei, cap. 21.) who intended to punish the Philistines for oppressing Israel, as well as abusing Samson, and depriving him of his eyes.

Ver. 29. *And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up,* &c.] On which the weight of the roof relied.

Ver. 30. *And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines.*] He is not to be thought properly a self-murderer; for he was moved by an heroical spirit from God himself, to make himself a sacrifice (as I may call it) for the good of his country: and it is no more than great soldiers do, who are content to lose their lives, in defence of a post where they are placed, for the preservation of the army to which they belong. (See Grotius, in his book de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 19. sect. 5. n. 4.)

And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and all the people that were therein.] But it was not by his might, but by a miraculous power of God, that this house was subverted, whereby all their mirth and jollity was extinguished in a moment.

So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.] This last act was the greatest of his whole life: for he not only slew more, but persons of greater note (their principal rulers and governors), and destroyed one of their temples (as most authors take this house to have been), together with their god: which must needs put those that survived into the greatest consternation and confusion.

This was a thing known to the heathen; for it is a very probable conjecture of some great men, that hence the Greeks framed the fable of their Hercules, who lived about his time, and whose name is the same with Samson's, if it be derived from *Schemesh, the sun:* for Hercules is as much as *Or-chol,* that which enlightens all, *i. e. the sun.* Of him it is reported, by Herodotus, That being bound in Egypt, he was brought in a pompous manner to be sacrificed to Jupiter; and resting awhile, till he could be placed on the altar, he broke out and slew all that were present.

Ver. 31. *Then his brethren, and all the house of his father.*] By *brethren* are commonly meant in Scripture the nearest kindred; and by *the house of his father* is meant, all the rest of his relations: or, perhaps, after the birth of this child, God bestowed the blessing of other children upon Manoah and his wife; as he did upon Hannah, after the birth of Samuel.

Came down, and took him.] By the permission of the Philistines, who had so much humanity (as all nations anciently had) as not to prohibit enemies from burying their dead: but the Israelites were now in subjection to the Philistines, and did not join with Samson in any of his enterprises; which he performed solely by himself: and beside, the Philistines were much humbled and mollified, no doubt, by this late disaster.

And brought him up.] With some pomp, or solemnity, it is likely; he being a very great man, and famous for his wonderful exploits.

And buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol.] These were two cities in the tribe of Dan, (Josh. xv. 33.) but on the frontiers of the tribe of Judah, as some gather from Nehem. xi. 29.

In the burying-place of Manoah his father.] To be buried in the sepulchres of their ancestors was accounted a great blessing by all nations, as Ezekiel Spanhemius notes upon Callimachus's hymn to Diana, ver. 131, 132. And we have examples of it in Scripture, Gen. xlvii. 29, 30. Nehem. ii. 3. 5. as the contrary was accounted a curse, 1 Kings xiii. 22.

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And he judged Israel twenty years.] This was said before, xv. 20. and here mentioned again to shew that he continued to judge Israel (that is, to vindicate them from their oppressors, for we read of no other act of a judge) till he died. When he did as great an act as any he had done all the time of his judicature (or rather greater) for the humbling of the Philistines, who domineered over the Israelites, and restoring them to their liberty: which, though he could not effect, yet he did so much towards it, by the many mischiefs he did them, that not many years after his death they had the courage to betake themselves to their arms, and fight the Philistines, whom they overthrew, and subdued; so that they came no more to molest the Israelites all the days of Samuel, under whose government, as I observed before, they recovered their liberty from the long oppression of this people, (1 Sam. vii. 10. 13.)

CHAP. XVII.

HERE begins the second part of this book, which gives an account of several memorable transactions in or about the time of the Judges; whose history the author would not interrupt by intermixing these matters with it, but reserved them to be related apart by themselves, in the five following chapters: wherein he first gives an account how idolatry crept into the tribe of Ephraim; which he doth in this chapter: and then, secondly, how it was propagated among the Danites, in an expedition they made, wherein they sacked Laish: (chap. xviii.) and then, thirdly, he relates a most foul adultery committed in the tribe of Benjamin: (chap. xix.) after which follows the destruction of that tribe for countenancing that fact: (chap. xx.) and, lastly, the restoration of it, (chap. xxi.)

Ver. 1. *AND there was a man of Mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah.*] When this man lived, and did what follows, we may with some certainty gather from ver. 6. which tells us, there was no king in Israel at this time; that is, no supreme governor, with a power to keep the people to their duty. Which anarchy happened (as primate Usher and other great men observe) between the death of those elders who survived Joshua, and the first oppression of Israel by Chushan: in which space of time, it is manifest, the Israelites first fell from the worship of God, and polluted themselves with idolatry, see ii. 13. iii. 7. where we read the "children of Israel forsook the Lord, and did evil in his sight," *i. e.* committed idolatry: the beginning of which defection from God is described briefly in this chapter.

Ver. 2. *And he said unto his mother.*] Who seems to have been a rich widow, that lived with her son Micah.

The eleven hundred shekels of silver.] There is no mention of shekels in the Hebrew; but our interpreters followed the rule I mentioned, that where *pieces of silver*, or *silverings*, are spoken of, the meaning is *shekels*.

That were taken from thee.] Of which she was robbed: or, as the Vulgar understands it, which she had separated, or set apart; that is, devoted and consecrated to a holy use, but somebody had stolen and perverted to their own use.

About which thou cursedst.] Adjured all her family to discover the money; with some sort of curse upon them, if they knew where it was, and concealed it. (See Dr. Hammond upon St. Matt. xxvi. annot. 1.)

And spakest of also in my ears.] He was present, when she made this solemn adjuration.

Behold, the silver is with me; I took it.] He confessed the truth, for fear the curse should light upon him.

And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son.] She prayed the curse might be turned into a blessing upon him for his ingenuous confession.

Ver. 3. *And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord.*] This, some think, is the meaning of her *cursing* beforementioned. She confirmed, with an oath, the consecration of the money to God, after the manner of those who vowed any thing unto him, (Lev. xxvii. 28.)

From my hand.] Resolving not to keep it for my own use: or, thou shalt have it as a gift from me.

For my son, to make a graven image, and a molten image.] For the convenience of Micah and his family; that he might make some resemblance of God, whereby to worship him at home, without the trouble of going, upon all occasions, to the tabernacle at Shiloh. For it appears by the name Jehovah, to whom she consecrated the silver, that she did not intend to forsake the Lord God of Israel, but only to worship him by an image; unto which the Israelites had very early inclined, (Exod. xxxii.) and afterward generally relapsed into it in the days of Jeroboam.

Some are of opinion that her meaning was, her son might make either a graven or a molten image, which he pleased; but it is manifest he made both, from xviii. 18. where they are evidently mentioned as distinct. But that these were a representation of the two cherubims which covered the ark, I dare not affirm; for they being of different kinds, one a graven, the other a molten image, seems to import the contrary; for the cherubims were both alike. But see our most learned Dr. Spencer, lib. iii. cap. 3. dissert. 7. sect. 4.

Now therefore I will restore it unto thee.] She resolved to return it into his hands, for the use beforenamed.

Ver. 4. *Yet he restored the money to his mother.*] These words seem to signify, that at the first he only brought the money to her, offering to restore it; but she bid him keep it: which he refused to do; but would have her take it again into her hands, which she did.

And his mother took two hundred shekels of silver.] Some think she reserved the rest for her own private use, contrary to her vow: but it is more probable, that she gave them to her son, to make the ephod and teraphim, and other things belonging to that Divine service, which they intended to set up in their house.

And gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image, and a molten image.] It is not certain whether this silver was melted, and then the images made of it; or that for this sum of money the founder sold these images to him, made perhaps of brass, silvered over. And this is most probable, because they would have been very small, if they had been made only of two hundred shekels of silver.

And they were in the house of Micah.] Placed in some

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room of his house, where he intended to worship, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 5. *And the man Micah.*] This seems to import, that hereupon he looked upon himself, and was accounted, a very considerable person.

Had a house of gods.] The Hebrew words *beth Elohim* may well be translated *a house of God;* as Peter Martyr here understands it. And so the phrase is used in other places, Gen. xxviii. 22. and in the next chapter of this book, ver. 31. For his intention was to make an imitation of the house of God at Shiloh at his own home; which may also be truly called *a house of gods* (as we translate it), because, whatsoever his intention was, to worship God by images, was accounted by him the worshipping of other gods.

And made an ephod.] That the Divine service in his house might be performed with a greater resemblance of what was done at the tabernacle in Shiloh, he made priestly garments, as Peter Martyr understands it: who takes the *ephod* to comprehend not only the breast-plate adjoining to it, but the rest of the vestments used by the high-priest; for he intended, it appears by the next words, to set up an oracle in his own house. But whatsoever resemblance this *ephod* had in its shape and form to the *ephod* of the high-priest, it had none of that rich work in it which the high-priest's *ephod* had, nor no girdle or breast-plate belonging to it; being no more such a garment as that golden ephod, than his Levite was a priest; or his teraphim, an urim and thummim.

And teraphim.] Of this word I have said enough, upon Gen. xxxi. 19. where I have shewn, they were images whereby the eastern people consulted God, and hoped to receive answers from him. And therefore I take Micah's meaning to have been, to set up a holy oracle in his house, where the priest wearing an *ephod,* and other sacred habiliments, should consult God by these *teraphim.* But, as Mr. Selden well observes, (in his Syntagma i. de Diis Syris, cap. 2.) the worship of the true God, and of idols, were here blended together by him. For the *ephod* and the Levite (whom he afterward provided) were intended, no doubt, for the service of the true God; but the graven and molten image, and the *teraphim,* belonged unto demons (as he speaks), by which the children of Dan, in the next chapter, desire the Levite to inquire of God for them; for they neither trusted to the *ephod* alone, which related to God, nor to their *teraphim* alone, which were an invention of their own; but thought it necessary to join both together in Divine worship. And thus began idolatry in Israel, by the superstition of an old woman, who put this into her son's head. Many of the Jews fancy she was Delilah; who having got so much money of every one of the lords of the Philistines, thought it was fit to employ some of it to express her devotion. But this is an idle conceit, which hath no ground, but only her being named in the foregoing chapter; which relates a history of things long after Micah's time.

And consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.] In the Hebrew it is, *filled the hand* of one of his sons; that is, as many think, the eldest son of his family, into whose hands he put sacrifices to be offered unto God. For that was the rite of initiating priests, as we find Exod. xxxi. 24. Lev. viii. 27

Ver. 6. *In those days there was no king in Israel.*] That is, this was before the time of the judges, when these things fell out; in whom there was a sovereign power to correct abuses, and especially to suppress idolatry; which power being now wanting, it was the reason Micah took upon him to make himself a private temple in his own house; because the ways (as Grotius conjectures) were dangerous when there was no supreme governor, being infested with thieves, or not kept in good repair, which made travelling uneasy. This last is more probable than that robbers infested the country; for it was now a time of peace, when the Levite travelled from one part of the land to the other securely enough; and the Danites sent spies a long way to search out the country of Laish without danger; and afterward marched with a great body to seek a new settlement; which, one would think, should rather have been employed in clearing their country where they were from such pestilent cut-throats, as some suppose to have infested it.

As for the name of king, it was given to the judges; just as it was to Moses, who was their supreme governor; but was not properly a king, as Hermannus Conringius observes, in his book de Rep. Hebr. sect. 49, &c.

But every man did that which was right in his own eyes.] And there can be no worse state of things (as Pet. Martyr here observes) than for every one to be left unto his own will and pleasure; as they were now, when they left the Lord their God: for being *without the true God,* they were also *without a teaching priest, and without law,* as the prophet Azariah's words are, 2 Chron. xv. 3. where he seems, in that and the following verses, to describe the lamentable state of things in these times, after the death of Joshua, and the elders that outlived him, to the days of Samuel.

Ver. 7. *And there was a young man came out of Bethlehem-Judah.*] There was another Beth-lehem in the tribe of Zebulun, (Josh. xix. 15.) and therefore this is called Beth-lehem-Judah, to distinguish it from that.

Of the family of Judah, who was a Levite.] By his mother's side he was of the tribe of Judah. Which is the most easy explication, notwithstanding what Kimchi saith to shew that genealogies are not derived from the mother. For here is no account of his genealogy, which is mentioned afterward, xviii. 30. from his father; but it is noted that his mother was of the tribe of Judah, to shew how he came to live at Beth-lehem, which was no Levitical city.

And he sojourned there.] Lived there as a stranger (for so the word *gour* signifies in the next verse), not as a citizen, and inhabitant of the place.

Ver. 8. *And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-Judah, to sojourn where he could find a place.*] By this it appears he was a kind of vagabond, who rambled about from place to place to find a subsistence; for though there was sufficient provision made for the Levites, by the tithes of the land, yet we may well think they were not duly paid in a time of such confusion, that every man did what he list; there being no judge to see them do their duty.

And he came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he sojourned.] As he travelled about the country, he came hither, to beg an alms, perhaps, or, at best, to seek for some employment.

Ver. 9. *And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou?*] He examined him, as the manner was, unto what country he belonged, and what was his business.

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And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Beth-lehem-Judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place.] He was looking out for a maintenance somewhere or other, to support him in his necessitous condition.

Ver. 10. *And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me.*] He desires him to seek no further, but stay there, and settle with him in his house.

And be unto me a father and a priest.] The prophets, and other great men, were called anciently by the name of *father*, as Elisha calls Elijah, 2 Kings ii. 12. and the king of Israel calls Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 21. and the king of Syria is represented as speaking to him in the same language, 2 Kings viii. 9. and king Joash, xiii. 14. Therefore Micah's meaning is, he would make him the director and governor of his family, and reverence him accordingly, if he would undertake to perform all sacred offices among them.

And I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year.] Next to honour, he promises him money, and all things needful for his support.

And a suit of apparel.] Or, as it is in the margin, a *double suit*. For so the LXX. and the Vulgar, ζεῦγος ἱματίων, *a couple of garments*. And there being something of order signified in the word *herech*, which we translate *suit*, many understand hereby a winter and a summer suit of clothes: and De Dieu hath justified this interpretation of a double garment out of the Ethiopic language, where this word signifies a companion; whence it may be probably concluded, that here is intended not one suit only, but two at least. With whom agrees Hottinger in his Smegma Orientale, cap. 5. p. 88. where he observes, that all, in a manner, are of opinion, that more suits of apparel than one are signified by this word; but whence to fetch that signification is not to be found but in the Ethiopic language, where it signifies a companion, a friend, another self, as his words are.

And thy victuals.] His constant diet at his table.

And the Levite went in.] Accepted of his offer, so far as to go into his house, and see how he liked every thing.

Ver. 11. *And the Levite was content to dwell with the man.*] After some time he resolved to settle in his house.

And the young man was unto him as one of his sons.] He treated him with such affection, that he was the more willing to stay there.

Ver. 12. *And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest.*] A wonderful presumption in them both; Micah having no authority to consecrate, nor the Levite (who was not of Aaron's family) being capable of the priestly office. But such was the confusion of those times, for want of a judge, that Micah's superstition had no check upon it; and the Levite's poverty and ambition tempted him to accept of the preferment proffered to him: his youth also made him the more ignorant.

And was in the house of Micah.] Continued with him to execute the priest's office.

Ver. 13. *Then said Micah, Now I know that the Lord will do me good, because I have a Levite for my priest.*] Who he thought had more right to the office, and would be more acceptable to God, than his own son, whom he had consecrated before, ver. 5.

By this it is evident, that he did not intend to forsake the Lord; but his mind was so blinded, that he took one small benefit for a sufficient sign of his favour, when he was guilty of so many heinous offences against the Divine Majesty: first, in making idols, and then in making one of his sons a priest; and after that, in drawing a poor young man into the same crime with him; and in taking upon him to consecrate a base Levite to be a priest; of which office he was not capable, if he had had power to consecrate one, which he had not. But both of them were intruders into that which belonged not to them; and thereby drew upon themselves a curse, rather than a blessing.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *IN those days there was no king in Israel.*] These words seem to be repeated, to suggest the reason of such enormous practices as are before mentioned, and here follow in this chapter.

And in those days.] When there was no judge in Israel. That is, saith the author of Tzemach David, in the interval between the government of Jair and Jephthah. Which is an idle opinion; and yet he saith he should be of it, did he not reverence his masters, who are of another mind; which is the truer: that these days were before there was a judge in Israel, between the death of Joshua and the elders that survived him, and the time of Othniel, who was the first judge that God raised up unto them. So Josephus, lib. v. Antiq. cap. 2.

The tribe of the Danites.] Or rather, *a tribe*, &c. For so the word *schebet* is sometimes used for a *family* in a tribe; as in the twentieth chapter of this book, ver. 12. it is said, "the tribes of Israel sent messengers to all the tribes of Benjamin," *i. e.* to all the families of the tribe of Benjamin; and in Isa. xix. 13. De Dieu observes the same: who also truly notes, that when the whole tribe is spoken of, it is not said *Schebet hadani*, as it is here, but *Schebet Dan*. Therefore *hadani* here, and in other places, signifies a family derived from that tribe.

Sought them an inheritance to dwell in.] Some of that tribe, which was very much straitened by the old inhabitants of the land (who pent them up in a narrow compass, which was not sufficient for them), inquired where they might find a commodious settlement in some other place.

For unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.] They had an inheritance allotted them, as well as the rest of the tribes, (Josh. xix. 40, &c.) but by their sloth, and for want of that brotherly assistance which other tribes should have afforded them, they could not get possession of a considerable part of it; but were forced by the Amorites to content themselves with the mountainous part of their country, leaving them none of the champaigne (as Josephus observes), nor all the mountains neither. (See the first chapter of this book, ver. 34, 35.) Wanting room therefore for all their people and cattle, and being unable to deal with the Amorites, they sent some, as it here follows, to seek for a dwelling somewhere else.

Ver. 2. *And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts.*] It is no improbable conjecture of Arius Montanus, that there were five families of the Danites; out of each of which one man was chosen to make the following discovery.

Men of valour.] Who could not be daunted if they were

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taken for spies. Some think also men of quality; such as those whom Moses sent to spy out the land of Canaan.

From Zorah, and from Eshtaol.] Which places are the first named in the account of the lot of their inheritance, (Josh. xix. 41.)

To spy out the land.] They were sent εἰς μεσόγειον (as Josephus speaks) *into the midland country* (for the Danites were seated near the Philistines towards the sea-coast), to see if they could find out a convenient place for them.

And to search it.] To inquire into the condition of it, and of the inhabitants.

And they said unto them, Go, search the land.] They had a commission from their elders to go whither they directed them, in the plain country wherein Laish stood, (ver. 14.)

And when they came to Mount Ephraim.] These two tribes joined, as I observed upon i. 35.

To the house of Micah.] To the place where his house stood.

They lodged there.] Not in Micah's house, but in some place of Mount Ephraim, not far from it; as we may guess by the next verse.

Ver. 3. *And when they were by the house of Micah.*] Near to which, it is probable, there was a public inn, for the entertainment of such as came from the neighbouring parts to worship, or to ask counsel of the oracle at Micah's house.

They knew the voice of the young man the Levite.] Having been acquainted with him heretofore, when, it is probable, he was in their country; for he had led a wandering life.

And they turned in thither.] Went into Micah's house, at his invitation, or to salute him, and inquire of his welfare.

And said unto him, Who brought thee hither?] Far from that city of the Levites, I suppose, to which he belonged.

And what makest thou here?] What business hast thou in this place?

And what hast thou here?] How dost thou live and maintain thyself? For they knew he had been poor.

Ver. 4. *And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.*] He told them the agreement between Micah and him, mentioned in the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 5. *And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way we go shall be prosperous.*] They were as ignorant, it seems, as he; and thought God would give an answer there, as well as at his own house.

Ver. 6. *And the priest said unto them, Go in peace.*] Whether he had any answer from the teraphim, or feigned it out of his own head, is not certain; but he encouraged them to proceed in their design.

Before the Lord is your way, wherein you go.] He pretended to have this answer from the Lord, who, he assures them, would direct, guide, and protect them in their proceedings; for that is the meaning of their way *before the Lord:* under his eye; that is, his care and providence, who would dispose all things for their good success. Now, if the Levite did not devise this answer, which he thought would please them, but heard a real voice from the teraphim, which promised them prosperity, then it was permitted by God, to serve the ends of his providence, just as Nebuchadnezzar was encouraged by his diviners, to undertake the siege of Jerusalem, (Ezek. xxi. 21, 22.)

Ver. 7. *Then the five men departed, and came to Laish.*] Called Leshem in Josh. xix. 47. where this story is briefly told, by way of anticipation: see my notes there. It was a city which lay at the foot of Libanus, near the fountain of Jordan, as Josephus saith in the place abovenamed.

And saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians.] Had no fear of any enemy, no more than the Zidonians, who were a powerful people, in a strong city; whose customs, I suppose, they imitated.

Quiet and secure.] Because they knew nobody of whom they had any fear.

And there was no magistrate in the land, that put them to shame in any thing.] To punish them for any thing they did, which made them live as they pleased. There are very various interpretations of these words, of which De Dieu hath given the best account.

And they were far from the Zidonians.] Who might have otherwise come to their assistance, upon any sudden invasion, they following the manners and customs of that people; but they were a day's journey from them, as Josephus there saith.

And had no business with any man.] No traffic or commerce with any of their neighbours, nor they with them. This disposition laid them open to be a prey to any resolute invader.

Ver. 8. *And they came unto their brethren in Zorah and Eshtaol.*] From whence they were sent, ver. 2.

And their brethren said unto them, What say ye?] They asked them what account they brought of their journey.

Ver. 9. *And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them.*] This shews, that they were particularly directed to make a discovery of Laish.

For we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good.] Γῆν ἀγαθὴν καὶ πάμφορον, as Josephus expresses it, *a goodly country, and very fertile.*

And are ye still?] Their brethren did not seem at first to believe them, which makes them stir them up by this question, and the following exhortation.

Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.] They speak as if they had no more to do, but to march thither, and take possession of the country.

Ver. 10. *When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land.*] They use two arguments to excite them to the enterprise; that it was easy, and would be very advantageous.

And God hath given it into your hand.] They add the encouragement the priest had given them, (ver. 6.) which was the greatest of all.

A place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.] This magnifies the goodness of God to them, in discovering a country to them abounding with all manner of good things, which they very much wanted in the mountains wherein they were pent up. (See ver. 1.)

Ver. 11. *And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and Eshtaol.*] Either family is here put for a tribe, or the singular number for the plural; there going out of some of the families of the Danites, the following number.

Six hundred men, appointed with weapons of war.] Carrying their wives, and children, and household-stuff with them; for they nothing doubted of making a settlement there. (See ver. 21.)

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Ver. 12. *And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim, in Judah.*] Not in the city itself, but in the fields belonging to it, as appears from the last words of this verse. See concerning this place Josh. xv. 9. 60. which lay in the north part of the tribe of Judah, and so lay in the road to Laish.

Wherefore they called the place Mahaneh-Dan, unto this day.] See xiii. *ult.*

Behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim.] On the west of it, towards the Mediterranean Sea, which is called the hinder most sea, Deut. xi. 24. as, on the contrary, the east is called Kedem, which imports as much as *before*. Here the Danites encamped the first night, after they came from Zorah and Eshtaol.

Ver. 13. *And they passed thence unto Mount Ephraim.*] The second day's march was to this place, still more northward.

And they came to the house of Micah.] Unto the town or village where Micah lived; for they did not yet come to his house, but afterward, (ver. 15.)

Ver. 14. *Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish.*] In the Hebrew language he is said oft-times to answer who speaks first, as in 1 Kings i. 28. and many other places.

And said unto their brethren.] Who knew, perhaps, that they called at this place by the way, and asked them, who dwelt there?

Do ye know that there is in these houses.] *i. e.* In that town or village, *viz.* in Micah's house, which was the chief in the town. (See ver. 12.)

An ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image?] Which the Levite had shewn them, or told them were in the house.

Now therefore consider what ye have to do.] Whether it might not be expedient to carry those sacred things along with them, which they fancied would be an assurance of the Divine presence with them: for from thence they had received an answer of peace, when they went to spy the country whither they were now going, (ver. 6.)

Ver. 15. *And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah.*] To that part of the house where the Levite had his apartment, not to the sacred place where the forenamed idols were.

And saluted him.] Or, asked him of his health and welfare, as the Hebrew phrase signifies, *Asked him of peace.*

Ver. 16. *And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate.*] Whither the five men brought the Levite out to them, or he, hearing there was such a company there, came out to view them, after the salutation was over.

Ver. 17. *And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither.*] Having brought him out, they returned back to the place where they knew the images, &c. were.

And took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate, with the six hundred men, &c.] That is, while the Levite was discoursing with them, and wishing them, perhaps, good success, they robbed the chapel, and took away all the furniture of it. Some think Micah, also, was with him at the gate, entertaining them with meat and drink. But that is confuted by what follows.

Ver. 18. *And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image.*] They not only took them, as is said before, but brought them out openly before the Levite's eyes, who saw them in their hands, and thereupon expostulated with them.

Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?] Will you be guilty of such a sacrilege; or, will you thus requite me, who have been very kind to you?

Ver. 19. *And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.*] Keep silence, and make no noise. So this phrase is used thrice in the book of Job, xxi. 5. xxix. 9. xxxix. 37. and in the book of Proverbs, xxx. 32. and the prophet Micah, vii. 16.

And go with us, and be unto us a father and a priest.] They invite him to serve them in the same quality as he did Micah, promising him the same authority, reverence, and affection that he had from him: and, moreover, they represent to him, in the next words, how much more advantageous it would be to minister unto so great a part of a tribe than to one private person.

Is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?] They were not a tribe, but only a part of it; yet so considerable a part being a great family, they are called a *tribe and a family;* that is, a whole family in that tribe.

Ver. 20. *And the priest's heart was glad.*] To think he should so very much mend his condition; for the same arguments which prevailed with him to dwell with Micah, were far stronger now (*viz.* covetousness and ambition) to move him to go along them.

And he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image.] Under which is comprehended also the molten image, which the five men brought out of the house with the other, (ver. 17, 18.)

And went in the midst of the people.] Who undertook to guard him from any assault that might be made on any side to bring him back: or he went, perhaps, with those sacred things (as they accounted them) in the midst of the people, in imitation of the ark, which was so placed when the camp of Israel marched, (Numb. x. 21.)

Ver. 21. *And so they turned and departed.*] From his house.

And put the little ones, and the cattle, and the carriage before them.] Both for safety, if any should pursue them, and that they might march no faster than they were able to bear it.

Ver. 22. *And when they were a good way from the house of Micah.*] Who did not immediately miss the Levite and his idols, and spent some time in assembling his neighbours.

The men that were in the houses near to Micah's house.] If there was not a town there before, it is likely the place of worship which Micah set up made many resort thither, and settle their habitation there.

Gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan.] Hoping to recover what they had taken away.

Ver. 23. *And they cried to the children of Dan.*] Desiring them to stop their march till they had spoken with them.

And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What

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aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?] Accordingly they made a stand, and faced about, asking him what he would have, and what he meant to bring a little army with him, as if he intended an assault.

Ver. 24. *And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away.*] By *gods* he means the symbols of the Divine presence; for he was not so sottish as to believe that he could make his god, he being a worshipper of Jehovah, (xvii. 3. 13.)

And what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?] He thought it a strange question to ask what he ailed, when they had taken away that which he valued above all things in the world.

Ver. 25. *And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us.*] They that were next to him advised him not to say a word more, lest, if the whole army should hear his reproaches, mischief might follow.

Lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, and the life of thy household.] There are always such fierce and furious men among soldiers, who are incensed to bloody executions upon the least provocation; and these being men going to make their fortune (as we speak) it is likely were generally of such a violent temper.

Ver. 26. *And the children of Dan went their way.*] Turned about again, and pursued their march, with neglect and scorn of Micah.

And when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.] His zeal was not so great for his gods, but he loved his life better.

Ver. 27. *And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had.*] *i. e.* They kept them and carried them along with them.

And came unto Laish.] They seem to have made three days' march in this expedition, encamping first at Kirjath-jearim, and the next night at Micah's house, and coming the next day to Laish.

Unto a people that were at quiet, and secure.] Whom they found in the posture the spies had described them, ver. 10. having no scouts abroad to bring them notice of any approaching danger, nor any guards of the passes to their city, or at its gates; so that they were easily surprised.

And they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.] Killed the people of the country and city, unto which they set fire, when they had taken, I suppose, the spoil of it. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Moses concerning this tribe, Deut. xxxiii. 22. (See there.)

Ver. 28. *And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon.*] See ver. 7.

And they had no business with any man.] Which deprived them of all intelligence.

And it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob.] A city near to Hamath, in the most northerly part of the country. (See Numb. xiii. 21.)

And they built a city, and dwelt therein.] Larger, perhaps, than the former; which being not big enough to contain them, they thought fit to burn it and build a better.

Ver. 29. *And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of their father Dan, who was born unto Israel.*] They gave it this name, that it might be remembered they belonged to the people of Israel, though they lived at a great distance from their own tribe, in the very extremity of the north of Judea (whereas the tribe of Dan had their lot in the south-west); from whence came the common saying afterward, when they would express the whole length of the country, *from Dan to Beer-sheba.*

Howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.] This seems to signify, that they did not burn the whole city, but so much as might strike a terror into the inhabitants, and make their conquest more easy; for he speaks of it as still the same city, though it lost its old name.

Ver. 30. *And the children of Dan set up the graven image.*] Together with the molten, no doubt, and made use of the ephod and teraphim here, as Micah had done in his house; fancying, I suppose, it was by a Divine direction from this oracle, that the five men had such good success, when they went to spy out this land, (ver. 5, 6.)

And Jonathan.] This was the name of the Levite who came along with them.

The son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh.] So not only the Hebrew, but the Chaldee, and the LXX. (both in the Roman edition, and in that of Basil, and in the Palatine MS. as Hottinger observes), which will not let us doubt it is the true reading: though the Vulgar hath put Moses instead of Manasseh, according to an idle conceit of some of the rabbins, who say, the letter *nun*, in the middle of the word, is not written even with the rest, but suspended above the rest of the letters, to shew, that though he was indeed the son of Moses, yet he should rather be called the son of Manasseh, because he did the works of Manasseh, and not of Moses; that is, was an idolater. So Kimchi (as the same Hottinger observes), who therein follows the Talmudists, in Bava Bathra. (See his Thesaurus Philologicus, lib. i. cap. 2. quæst. 4. and Bartoloccius, in his Kirjath-sepher, tom. i. p. 114.) And thus they made this Jonathan to be the grandchild of Moses, for Gershom was his son: but it is not likely he would have been left in so poor a condition, if he had been so nearly related to their great lawgiver; nor would he have had so ill an education. And, being now but a youth, it is not probable that he was the son of that Gershom, but of some other, who had the name of his famous ancestor given him, though his father's name was Manasseh: but it is wholly uncertain from what family of the Levites this man was derived; and these names, no doubt, were common to more than those who first bare them.

He, and his sons, were priests of the tribe of Dan.] Of that part of the tribe who settled here at Laish.

Until the day of the captivity of the land.] Some cavillers have endeavoured to frame an argument from hence, that this book was written in later times, after the ten tribes were carried away by Salmanassar; or, as some of the Jews in Seder Olam interpret the *captivity of the land*, to signify that by Nebuchadnezzar: but Kimchi and Ralbag very well object against this, that it is altogether unlikely these images should have been suffered to continue in the days of David; who was a man after God's own heart, and set himself to advance true religion to the utmost of his power, all the country over, from Dan to Beersheba: therefore Kimchi, with great reason, concludes, that by the *captivity of the land* is meant the taking of the ark by the Philistines, and carrying it captive into the temple of Dagon: which is confirmed, as our famous Selden observes (Syntag. i. de Diis Syris, cap. 2.) by the next verse, which saith, that, till Shiloh was destroyed,

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these images remained. And this taking of the ark, the Psalmist expressly calls a *captivity*, when he saith, Psal. lxxviii. 60, 61. "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, &c. and delivered his strength into captivity, his glory into the enemy's hand." As for the interpretation of Ralbag, who takes this captivity to have been in the days of Jabin, king of Canaan, it is not worth confuting.

Ver. 31. *And they set up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.*] Which was all the time of the judges mentioned in this book; who, though zealous reformers, could not, it seems, extend their authority to the very skirts of the country, where idolatry still lurked in this corner of the land: for scarce any one of the judges ruled over the whole country of Israel; but only over such tribes as they delivered from imminent danger. This appears by the armies which Barak and Gideon raised; and in the double oppression they lay under, at the same time, in the west and in the east, by the Philistines and the Ammonites; when Jephthah was raised up against the latter, and Samson against the former: no wonder therefore that none of them could make a general reformation, nor abolish the idolatry in this place: but God used the Philistines as instruments to put an end to it; for when they destroyed Shiloh, where the true house of God was, they destroyed *this house of gods*, (as they esteemed it, see xvii. 5.) being a resemblance of it: and perhaps, as they brought the ark into the field against the Philistines, so the Danites brought these images, with the ephod and teraphim, and the priest, who was slain with Hophni and Phinehas; or, as Huetius thinks, carried captive into the land of the Philistines, with a great many other Israelites. But this place remained still so famous for the resort of people thither to worship, that when Jeroboam set up his golden calves, he erected one of them here in Dan, as another in Beth-el: where, there having been a real appearance of God, in ancient time, to Jacob, the people were easily made to believe there had been the like in Dan, in the time here mentioned.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel.*] In the time beforementioned, xvii. 6. xviii. 1. (See there.)

That there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of Mount Ephraim.] He seems to have been a stranger in this country, as the other Levite was, who sojourned in the land of Judah, (xvii. 7.)

And he took him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-Judah.] That is, a wife of the secondary sort, without such solemn espousals, or a dowry, as those called *wives* had. So the Talmudists generally think. But Abarbinel, following Rasi, thinks, that a *concubine* was taken with espousals, and only wanted a dowry, or a jointure (as we speak). Certain it is, such persons were really wives; and it was adultery in any other person that lay with them, but he who had married them. As this man had this woman, for he is expressly called her husband in the next chapter, (xx. 4.) and her father is called his father-in-law in this chapter, (ver. 47.) See Selden, lib. v. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 7. and Buxtorf, de Sponsal. et Divortiis, p. 11, &c. where the opinion of Abarbinel is largely represented.

Ver. 2. *And his concubine played the whore against him.*] Was false to his bed, into which she admitted some other person.

And went away from him unto her father's house in Beth-lehem-Judah.] To escape the punishment unto which she was liable as an adulteress: but there are those who, by the word *tizneh*, which we translate *played the whore*, will have no more to be meant, but that she was froward and contumaciously disobedient; so that she could not endure his company, but forsook him: the Chaldee plainly inclines this way; and the LXX. translate it ὠργίσθη αὐτῷ, *She carried herself like a fury to him*; and Josephus ἀλλοτρίως εἶχε, *She behaved herself untowardly.*

And was there four whole months.] Or, as others take it, *A year and four months.* For *days* in Scripture frequently signify a year: but the LXX. and Josephus take it for so many days as made four months.

Ver. 3. *And her husband arose, and went after her.*] His anger was over by this time, and his affection to her revived: perhaps also he heard she repented, and was become a better woman.

To speak friendly to her.] In the Hebrew, *To speak to her heart*; that is, to make her sensible of his kindness to her, notwithstanding her offence, and to assure her of his pardon.

And to bring her again.] To his own habitation, from whence she went away.

Having a servant with him, and a couple of asses.] And for that end came attended with a servant, to carry her and her baggage (as we now speak), with necessary provisions.

And she brought him into her father's house.] She seems to have been as ready as he for a reconciliation.

And when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to see him.] Embraced him with great affection and joy.

Ver. 4. *And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him.*] Would not let him go away, as soon as he desired.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he arose up to depart.*] With an intention to leave him, and return to his own house.

And the damsel's father said unto his son-in-law, Comfort thy heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way.] Her father had no mind to part with him so soon, hoping, by keeping him longer in his house, their conjugal love and affection would be more confirmed: and devising this way to detain him, by desiring him to take a short repast with him, before he began his journey; for this is meant by *a morsel of bread*, under which all sort of provisions are comprehended: wherewith he desired him *to comfort*, or, as the word literally signifies in the Hebrew, *support his heart*; which in English we express exactly by *stay his stomach with a morsel*, &c. For, in many authors, the *heart* signifies the stomach, as several have observed, particularly Gataker, in his Cinnus, lib. ii. cap. 16.

Ver. 6. *And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together.*] He made him a great feast, at which they sat a long time.

For the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thy heart be merry.] For he was earnest with him not to think of going away that day, but to spend it joyfully with him and with his daughter.

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Ver. 7. *And when the man rose up to depart, his father-in-law urged him; therefore he lodged there again.*] He pressed his stay so hard, that when he offered to be gone, he prevailed with him to lodge there another night.

Ver. 8. *And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said unto him, Comfort thy heart, I pray thee.*] Stay till after dinner.

And they tarried till afternoon, and they did eat both of them.] He prolonged the entertainment, so that the sun began to decline before they had done.

Ver. 9. *And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant.*] Who had made all ready for their journey.

His father-in-law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth towards evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day draweth to an end.] In the Hebrew the words are, *It is the pitching time of the day;* that is, when men pitch their tents, to take their rest.

Lodge here, that thine heart may be merry.] He prays him that they may rejoice together one night more.

And to-morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home.] He promises not to detain them longer than this night, but to let them go away as early as they pleased next morning, without any entertainment.

Ver. 10. *But the man would not tarry that night.*] Suspecting his father would use still the same kind artifice, or some other, to keep him longer with him.

But he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus (which is Jerusalem), and there were with him two asses saddled, and his concubine also was with him.] He carried away all that he brought, (ver. 3.) and his wife also, whom he went to invite again to dwell with him.

Ver. 11. *And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in unto this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it.*] The famous city of Jerusalem (anciently called Jebus) had been taken by the children of Judah, (i. 8.) but the Jebusites still kept the strong fort of Sion, till the time of David, and thereby so commanded the lower town, that they forced the children of Judah and Benjamin to let them dwell with them there; (i. 21. Josh. xv. *ult.*) and it appears by this place, that they were the ruling party, and therefore it is called *this city of the Jebusites.* (See Josh. x. 1.)

Ver. 12. *And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that is not of the children of Israel.*] This is an argument that he was not like the other Levite, mentioned in the seventeenth chapter; for he would not take up his lodging among idolaters: and it also shews, that the greater part of the inhabitants were Jebusites, and the children of Israel had little or no power there; yea, it is possible that this happened so long before the days of the judges, that Jerusalem was not yet taken by the children of Judah.

We will pass over to Gibeah.] Which was possessed by the children of Israel, *viz.* the Benjamites.

Ver. 13. *And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah.*] The servant, I suppose, made some objection against Gibeah, and therefore he put him to his choice, either to go thither, or to Ramah; which was also a city belonging unto Benjamin, both of them lying northward of Jerusalem, and not far from it.

Ver. 14. *And they passed on, and went their way; and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin.*] This is noted, to distinguish it from another Gibeah which belonged to Judah, (Josh. xv. 57.)

Ver. 15. *And they turned aside thither, to go in and to lodge in Gibeah.*] Being unable to reach Ramah, unless they would have travelled in the night, which had not been safe.

And when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city.] There being, I suppose, no public inn in the town, unto which strangers might resort.

For there was no man that took them into his house to lodging.] They were grown so lewd in this place, that there was no humanity left among them; but the ancient custom of hospitality, in entertaining strangers, was quite abolished: or, if any had so much goodness remaining as to be inclined to it, they durst not make any invitation of a stranger to their houses, for fear of drawing mischief upon themselves, from their debauched neighbours.

Ver. 16. *And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at evening.*] Before it was quite dark, *which was also of Mount Ephraim,* where this Levite dwelt, *and he sojourned in Gibeah.* Being but a sojourner himself, he had the more compassion on a stranger.

But the men of the place were Benjamites.] This was one of the cities given to the priests, Josh. xxi. 17. But the priests did not inhabit them alone, especially now when they were but few, and therefore let other persons, who were not priests, dwell there together with them.

Ver. 17. *And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a way-faring man in the street of the city.*] Who looked as if he was at a loss for a lodging.

And the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou?] These were the usual questions made to travellers.

Ver. 18. *And he said unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem-Judah towards the side of Mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Beth-lehem-Judah.*] This is a full answer to one part of his question, giving him an account where he commonly lived; though his occasions carrying him to Beth-lehem-Judah, he now immediately came from thence.

But I am now going to the house of the Lord.] This is an answer to the other part of his question: for Shiloh, where the house of God was settled, was in the tribe of Ephraim; (Josh. xviii. 1.) and thither, like a good man, he intended first to go, and give thanks to God, for restoring his wife to him; and, perhaps, to offer an expiation for her sin; and then to return to his own home, on the side of Mount Ephraim.

And there is no man that receiveth me to house.] Whereby he was in danger to lie in the street all night.

Ver. 19. *Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servant.*] He uses very civil and humble language, and also signifies he did not desire to be chargeable to any body; being so well provided with all things necessary, that he need not be a burden to him that would entertain him.

There is no want of any thing.] But only of a lodging.

Ver. 20. *And the old man said, Peace be with thee.*] He

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saluted him kindly, after the usual manner that friends and neighbours greeted each other.

Howsoever.] Do not speak of that.

Let all thy wants be upon me; only lodge not in the street.] I had rather entertain thee at my charge, than suffer thee to lie in the street.

Ver. 21. *So he brought him into his house, and gave provender for their asses.*] Took care both of them and of their beasts, at his own costs, as the words seem to import.

And he washed their feet.] As the custom was in those countries after travelling.

And did eat and drink.] Sat down to supper.

Ver. 22. *And, as they were making their hearts merry.*] Eating and drinking very freely.

Behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial.] See Deut. xiii. 13.

Beset the house round about.] That none might go out; *and beat at the door;* as if they would force their entrance: which made the master of the house come to ask them what they would have.

And they spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring hither the man that came into thy house, that we may know him.] These last words are capable of a good meaning, as if they designed only to examine him, and know who he was, and whence he came, &c. but the old man being acquainted with their wicked manners, understood their lewd intentions, and accordingly gave them the following answer. (See Gen. xix. 5.)

Ver. 23. *And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing this man is come into my house, do not this folly.*] He endeavours to divert them from their purpose with kind words and humble entreaties; urging withal, the title the man had to his protection by the laws of hospitality, and the greatness of the sin they were about to commit.

Ver. 24. *Behold, here is my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine, them will I bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them as seems good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing.*] His earnest desire to preserve the laws of hospitality from violation (which was a thing very sacred in those days), made him forget the care he ought to have had to preserve his daughter's purity. He hoped also, perhaps, that they were not grown yet so wicked as to offer this injury to a neighbour, though they regarded not what they did to strangers, which made him offer them the man's concubine also, supposing it better than to let them do violence to her husband. He must be considered as in a confusion of thoughts, (like Lot, see Gen. xix. 8.) and so not to have minded so much what was right, as what was least wrong.

Ver. 25. *But the men would not hearken to him.*] And the Levite also, I suppose, absolutely refused to have the old man's daughter or his concubine exposed to their lust: whence arose a quarrel, insomuch that they threatened and designed to kill him, (as he himself tells the story, xx. 5.) which, it is likely, moved the old man to persuade him not to be so obstinate; but for the preservation of his life, which was in great danger, to yield a little to them: and persuading the men of the city not to be so furious, they came at last to compound the matter; and finding the Levite so resolutely bent to defend himself, were content only to have his concubine (whose beauty they admired, as Josephus saith, when they saw her come into their city), and to let him and the old man's daughter alone. Unto this they agreed, of two evils choosing the least.

So the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them.] With her own consent, it is probable; for she thought her husband would lose his life, and she not preserve herself.

And they knew her, and abused her all night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go.] Lest the light should discover who they were that had been so villanously wicked.

Ver. 26. *Then came the woman, at the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was, till it was light.*] She fell down dead, ὑπὸ λύπης καὶ αἰσχύνης (as Josephus speaks), with *grief* at what she had suffered, and *shame* to look upon her husband; and, it may be added, with the excessive abuse of her body.

Ver. 27. *And her lord rose up in the morning.*] So the women in these old times called their husbands, out of reverence to them, as the head of the wife. (See 1 Pet. iii. 5.)

And opened the door of his house, and went out to go his way.] Imagining, perhaps, that they intended to keep her, and he did not know where to find her, but must seek somewhere else by what means to recover her.

And, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold.] She being stretched out at length; as people are sometimes, when they fall down with weariness upon their faces into a profound sleep.

Ver. 28. *And he said, Up, and let us be going.*] Supposing her to be only in a deep sleep, he began to rouse her up, and to speak comfortably to her (as Josephus takes it), knowing she was under a force, and did not willingly submit to their filthiness.

But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him into his place.] When he saw she was dead he made no outcry; but (as Josephus observes) prudently carried her away, as fast as he could, to his own home.

Ver. 29. *And when he was come to his house, he took a knife, and laid hold upon his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *according to her bones;* that is, some of the pieces were bigger, some lesser, according as the joints would suffer her body to be divided.

Into twelve pieces.] That every tribe might have a limb of her, Benjamin not excepted. Among whom it was to be hoped there were some who would resent so foul a fact, though committed by their own brethren.

And sent her into all the coasts of Israel.] Giving the messengers a charge (as Josephus observes) to relate how she had been abused, which was the cause of her death. He knew not what other course to take to have justice done; for, as Josephus there observes, (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 2.) there was no settled court of judicature established according to the law. Which is the reason he gives (chapter the fifth of that book) why Eglon attempted to subdue the Israelites, because they were all in disorder, the laws being not put in execution.

Ver. 30. *And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen, from the day that the chil-*

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dren of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt.] They not only condemned the fact, but were highly incensed at it, as a crime beyond all that had been heard of since they were a people: for it was a mixture of adultery and murder, with an attempt of sodomy, and that upon a Levite; a person consecrated to the Divine service, in some lower ministries.

Consider of it, take advice, and speak your mind.] These are either the words of the messenger, or rather of the people themselves, who exhorted one another not to pass over this deed, only with expressing their abhorrence of it; but to consider, and consult one with another what was to be done, and to declare their opinion freely, how so heinous a crime was to be punished. And accordingly we find, in the beginning of the next chapter, that, by common consent, the whole body of the people met together to advise about this matter.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *AND all the children of Israel went out of their cities.*] The principal persons, who were appointed to represent the rest.

And the congregation was gathered together.] This *congregation* consisted of the captains of thousands and hundreds, &c. which had been established by Jethro's advice, together with the principal citizens, as Corn. Bertram probably thinks, whom they called to this assembly.

As one man.] Except the people of Jabesh-Gilead, (xxi. 5. 8.) and they of the tribe of Benjamin, who had no sense of this wickedness. For there was a general summons, no doubt, issued out by command of their rulers, to require every one to meet at a certain place, mentioned in the following words, or otherwise to forfeit their lives.

From Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead.] That is, all Israel on this side Jordan, and on the other, were of the same mind in this matter.

Unto the Lord to Mizpeh.] There was a place of this name in the land of Gilead, as we read, xi. 11. but this Mizpeh here mentioned was in the confines of Judah and Benjamin, for which reason it is sometimes ascribed to the former, Josh. xv. 38. and sometimes to the latter, Josh. xviii. 26. being a place very conveniently situated for a general meeting of all the people, who often assembled there in future times, (1 Sam. vii. 5—7. 16. x. 17.) And it was not far from Shiloh, which made it the more convenient; because from hence they might, upon any occasion, immediately go to consult the Divine Majesty; which they intended to do now, when they had dispatched the business for which they met here, which was to examine the crime of which the Benjamites were accused; and if there were good proof made of it, to consider how to punish it as it deserved. Whence it is that Josephus saith, this congregation met in Shiloh, Εἰς τὴν Σιλοῦν συλλεγέντες καὶ πρὸ τῆς σκηνῆς ἀθροισθέντες, as if it were the same with Mizpeh. And, indeed, in this history, there is a little difference made, because they were so near one to another. (See ver. 26. xxi. 2.) But Mr. Mede thinks that here was a famous place of prayer, which is the *house of God* mentioned in those two verses. For so the author of the first book of Maccabees saith, (iii. 46.) That when the holy city and sanctuary lay desolate, by the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, the people assembled together at Maspah, to make their supplications unto God, Ὅτι τόπος προσευχῆς εἰς Μάσφα τὸ πρότερον τῷ Ἰσραὴλ, *because at Maspah had been, in former times, a place of prayer, for Israel;* and therefore some of the Jewish doctors say, the first synagogue was built here, and make this the original of all those which were so frequent in aftertimes: for here, say Kimchi and Abarbinel, all the remaining kings of Canaan assembled (after the battle at Gibeon) to fight with Israel, (Josh. xi. 3.) And here Joshua finished his victories over the Canaanites, (ver. 8.) and therefore here, it is probable, he built an altar unto the Lord, in memory of so great a deliverance. But this conjecture is founded upon a plain mistake; for the land of Mizpeh, where Joshua completed his victories, was far from this, in the most northern parts of Canaan, near Lebanon, beyond the fountains of Jordan.

Mr. Mede, also, and Corn. Bertram think, that hither they brought the ark upon this great occasion, and so might properly be said to be gathered *unto the Lord.* But this seems to me improbable, that they should remove the ark hither, when it was so near them in Shiloh, to which they might as well go, as bring it to them. And as for that phrase, *unto the Lord,* it is no argument that either the ark was here, or so much as a place of prayer; for where all the people of God were assembled in any place, there God was in a special manner present; as when they all assembled to make David their king, it is said he made a league with them *in Hebron before the Lord,* though there was no ark nor altar there, (2 Sam. v. 3.)

I see no reason therefore to believe, that the Israelites were now gathered to Mizpeh as *a place of prayer* (for Shiloh was appointed for that purpose, which was very near it), but as a fitting place for such a great assembly to meet, and consult what was to be done in the present case. That was their business here; and when they had occasion to inquire of God, and to fast (and pray, no doubt), they went to Shiloh, to the house of God. (See ver. 26. and 28.)

Ver. 2. *And the chief of all the people, even of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God.*] The word we translate *chief,* is in the Hebrew the *corners,* who were the strength and support of the people, as the corner-stones are of a building; *viz.* the heads of their tribes, rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, fifties, and tens; who kept the people in some kind of order (now that they wanted a supreme governor, and the courts of justice were unsettled), and, it is likely, brought them along with them to this general assembly; which, in all probability, met in the open air, as they anciently did among the Romans, Athenians, and other people, as many learned men have observed. And Lycurgus, as Plutarch tells us, gave this reason for it, that noble rooms, adorned with pictures and statues, and such-like ornaments, did not contribute εἰς εὐβουλίαν, *to right counsels,* but rather did hurt, by distracting their minds, and turning them from their business: but the true reason was, because vast multitudes met together, which no house would contain, and therefore they assembled in the field; as Livy tells us, when the cause of Appius Claudius was heard, the people were cited to come into the *campus Martius.* (Lib. vi. cap. 20.)

Four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword.] That

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is, together with so many of the people (for there could not be so many chieftains), that came ready armed, to do as they should be directed. I have often observed, that the armies of the Jews were all infantry, there being no horses bred in their country. There are those, who, by the *corners of the people*, understand, not their chiefs, but *all the tribes of Israel* (making the next words the explication of these), who made up this great number of four hundred thousand; because, saith Cocceius, all the people, gathered together, is like a house that hath corners. But I shall not trouble the reader with various interpretations.

Ver. 3. *Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.*] They could not be ignorant of such an universal concourse of the whole nation, except themselves, nor of the cause of their meeting; but when they were told of it, would take no notice of it, being stupidly insensible of the crime that had been committed among them, or foolishly confident of their own strength; or rather, imagining their brethren would attempt nothing by war against them.

Then said the children of Israel, Tell us, how was this wickedness?] The Hebrew word *dabru (tell)* being in the plural number, denotes, that they spake to more than one; and therefore, in all probability, not only the Levite, but the good old man (his host) and his servant were there, to give an account of the fact.

Ver. 4. *And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that belongeth to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge.*] He relates from the beginning how it was; and they confirmed it, by their testimony to the truth of it. He being called her husband, it proves she was his legal wife.

Ver. 5. *And the men of Gibeah rose up against me.*] A great number of them, who were not restrained by the rest; and therefore he imputes the crime to them all.

And beset the house round about me by night, and thought to have slain me.] For he resolved to lose his life, as Ralbag here observes, rather than submit to their abominable desires.

And my concubine have they forced, that she is dead.] But though he preserved himself, he could not deliver her from them; but they abused her to death.

Ver. 6. *And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel.*] Such a very heinous crime, as he thought the whole nation was bound to censure.

Ver. 7. *Behold, ye are all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel.*] They all detested, he presumed, such foul wickedness, and therefore desires them to consider and resolve how to punish it. This could not be debated by all the multitude; therefore some of the principal persons, I suppose, were deputed to sit in council, and hear the cause, and then report their opinion to the several tribes.

Ver. 8. *And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into his house.*] The report being made from the great council, and their opinion declared, the people all agreed to keep in a body till they saw justice done, according to their resolution.

Ver. 9. *And now, this shall be the thing we will do to Gibeah; we will go up by lot against it.*] This seems to be a popular motion, who are in love with equality, and therefore desire, by their officers, that it may be determined by lots who shall go to war, and who shall stay at home to make provision for the army; for they did not know how long they should continue abroad, and it was not easy to provide for such a multitude.

Ver. 10. *And we will take ten men of a hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred out of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victuals for the people.*] So one man took care that nine of his brethren wanted nothing; and ten took care of ninety, &c. In the whole, there were forty thousand of the four hundred thousand who went out to forage for the army.

That they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have done in Israel.] That the rest might be wholly intent upon punishing the inhabitants of Gibeah according to their deserts.

Ver. 11. *So all the men of Israel were gathered together against the city, knit together as one man.*] Nothing could contribute more to their good success, than this unity and concord among the officers and soldiers, who all agreed to put this resolution in execution.

Ver. 12. *And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin.*] But first it was thought prudent and just, by the rulers of the people, to send an embassy to their brethren, to desire them to hearken unto reason; and therefore there was a select number chosen out of every tribe, who went to every city of Benjamin (it is probable), to offer such terms of peace as might prevent the war upon Gibeah. Or, they sent this message to every family in Benjamin, which were originally ten, for Benjamin had so many sons; from whom sprang such a number of people, that it made R. Solomon say, From Rachel were descended twelve tribes: for there were two sons of Joseph which made two tribes, besides these ten families of Benjamin, who were so powerful and valiant, that it puffed them up with pride, and was the cause of their ruin.

Saying, What wickedness is this that is done among you?] In the first place, they were ordered to represent the greatness of the crime that had been committed among them.

Ver. 13. *Now therefore deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah.*] This was agreeable to the law of nations, by which the Philistines had thus demanded Samson of the Israelites, who had done them mischief, (xv. 10.) See Grotius, who gives a great many other examples of it out of Pausanias, Strabo, and other authors. (Lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 21. sect. 4.)

That we may put them to death.] If the Benjamites themselves would not do justice upon them.

And put away evil from Israel.] According to the direction Moses had given in his law, (Deut. xiii. 5.) For the sin is taken away when it is duly punished.

But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel.] They seem to have been as unanimous in the defence of this wickedness, as the rest of the tribes were in their endeavours to have it punished. For, quite contrary to all their brethren, who, upon the hearing of this crime, met together, examined into it, sent messengers to desire the malefactors might be delivered to be punished, before they would enter upon a

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war, they most perversely refused to come to their assembly, or deliver up the malefactors, or so much as excuse the fact, much less deny it, but prepare themselves to protect such lewd criminals with all their power. One can scarce think that there were no good men left among them, but they were so few, that they had no authority; and the generality were so depraved, that they took part with the evil-doers. Perhaps they took it ill that the other tribes should meddle with the concerns of theirs; but if they had had any goodness in them, they would have saved them this labour, by calling the offenders to an account themselves: which they not doing, made the whole tribe guilty of the crime of a few, and provoked God justly to give them up to pursue their own destruction.

Ver. 14. *But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel.*] Instead of hearkening to their brethren, or giving any reason of their refusal to satisfy their desires, they prepare themselves to fight with them.

Ver. 15. *And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time, out of the cities, twenty and six thousand men that drew sword.*] So the Chaldee expressly mentions twenty-six thousand, but the Vulgar saith only twenty-five thousand, and the LXX. of the Roman edition twenty-three thousand; but other copies have twenty-five thousand, as Josephus also hath: who imagined, I suppose, that the number of twenty-six thousand would not agree with the account which follows, of twenty-five thousand and one hundred slain in the last battle and in the pursuit of them, (ver. 35. 45.) and six hundred only escaped, (ver. 47.) which make the number of twenty-five thousand seven hundred. But they should have considered, that the two former battles could not be fought without loss on the Benjamites' side, when so many fell of the Israelites, (ver. 21. 25.) And the other thousand men may well be supposed to have then perished, or some of them to have been left to defend their cities, where they were afterward slain, (ver. 48.)

Beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men.] Who were left, it is likely (or at least part of them), to defend that city, while the rest beforementioned went out to battle.

Ver. 16. *Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men left-handed.*] Who could use their left hand as well as their right in any exercise. (See iii. 13.)

Every one could sling stones at a hair's breadth, and not miss.] Such excellent marksmen there have been in other countries; particularly in the islands called Baleares, where they were bred from children to hit a mark with a stone slung out of a sling, or else to lose their breakfast, as Strabo relates. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 10.) This extraordinary skill in their arms (for it is likely they handled other weapons with the like dexterity) and their natural courage emboldened them, with such a small number, to undertake a war against such a vast multitude of their brethren. Which warlike disposition of theirs was prophesied of by Jacob, when he saith, "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf;" which is an undaunted fearless creature, (Gen. xlix. 27.)

Ver. 17. *And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand that drew sword: all these were men of war.*] This is mentioned again, to shew that they all persisted steadfast in their resolution, (ver. 2. 8.) to see justice done upon the men of Belial before they would return to their own home.

Ver. 18. *And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God.*] In Shiloh, which was not far from Mizpeh, *and asked counsel of God,* by *urim* and *thummim,* as they did, i. 1. The Targum hath it, They asked counsel *by the Word of the Lord.* Some of their principal persons, that is, were sent to desire God to direct them, as he was wont to do in all great affairs concerning the safety of their commonwealth. For so God himself ordained, that the high-priest should appear before him with the breast-plate of judgment, to ask counsel of him for them in all their weighty concerns. (See Exod. xxviii. 30. Numb. xxvii. 21.)

And said, Which of us shall go up first against the children of Benjamin? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up first.] The same question and answer which we read in the beginning of this book; there being a pre-eminence, we may observe all along, given to the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 19. *And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah.*] These words seem to tell us, that Judah was only to lead the van (as we now speak), and stand in the front of the battle, to make the first assault; but that all the rest went up with them.

Ver. 20. *And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin.*] When the Benjamites heard that Israel were encamped against Gibeah, they came to the relief of it; and the Israelites marched out of their camp to engage them.

And the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah.] The battle was near that city.

Ver. 21. *And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah.*] Those forces which were left in Gibeah for its defence issued out upon the Israelites in their rear, as their brethren fought them in the front.

And destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand.] Since God bade them go up, it may seem strange that they should receive such a defeat. But it is to be observed, that he did not promise them success; of which the Jews give these reasons: some of them say, that they sought him imperfectly, and therefore he gave them an imperfect answer. So D. Kimchi—they did not ask him if he would favour their enterprise, as they did at the last, when they said, *Shall we go up, or shall we desist?* That is, if we shall not succeed, we will cease the war. And then a clear and full answer is returned, *Go up, for to-morrow I will deliver them into thy hand,* (ver. 28.) But Abarbinel thinks they did not ask counsel in a due place, nor by the proper person; but by some other than Phinehas the high-priest, of whom there is no mention till the third time they went to consult the oracle, (ver. 28.) But a better reason is given in Pirke Eliezer, where they say, God was angry with the Israelites for their neglect of him, in suffering spiritual adultery among them, while they were very earnest to punish carnal. So they make God's answer to have been, when they inquired of him the reason of the miscarriage, *Ye are zealous against the adultery of the tribe of Benjamin, but not against the idol of Micah,* (cap. 38.) And, indeed, they fell early into idolatry after the death of Joshua, and the elders that survived him (as we read in the second chapter of this book), with which, though the Benjamites were defiled as well as others, yet he used them as

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scourges to punish the rest; intending, in due time, to take a terrible vengeance on them, both for that and all their other sins.

Ver. 22. *And the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves.*] Exhorted one another, not to be disheartened by their loss, but to renew the fight; for they knew they had a good cause, which made them the bolder to hope for victory.

And set their battle again in array, in the place where they put themselves in array the first day.] They were not so superstitious as to imagine the place wherein they fought was unlucky, and that with the change of it they should change their fortune (as they now speak), but confidently resolved to encounter them in the same spot of ground where they were overthrown before. Though there are those that think the ground was not well chosen, and that they were the more easily defeated, because they fought so near Gibeah; whose name imports, that it was situated on high, which gave them greater advantages to annoy the Israelites.

Ver. 23. *And the children of Israel went up, and wept before the Lord until even.*] They seem to have been sensible that this was one cause of their loss, that they had not more solemnly sought the Lord, as they now do; but with greater grief for their loss than for their sin.

And asked counsel of the Lord.] The Targum here uses again the same phrase; Asked counsel *by the Word of the Lord, saying, Shall I again go up to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother?* They seem to imagine that God did not approve of their going to war among themselves, who were all brethren.

And the Lord said, Go up against him.] Here is a leave to go up, but without any promise of success; which they should have desired.

Ver. 24. *And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day.*] Near to Gibeah.

Ver. 25. *And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel eighteen thousand men; all these drew sword.*] They had now destroyed forty thousand, which was a much greater number than the Benjamites had in their whole army.

Ver. 26. *Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up.*] Not only all the warriors, but other people.

And came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the Lord.] Upon the bare ground, as they used to do in very great sorrow.

And fasted that day before the Lord until even.] Afflicted their souls for their sins, which they had not done before; at least, not with such seriousness as now they did.

And offered burnt-offerings.] This had not been done before. That is, they had not made such solemn supplications to God, as now they did by these offerings. (See upon Lev. i. 3.) And in particular, it is evident, that, in ancient time, burnt-offerings were offered as prayers for forgiveness of sins, that so they might obtain God's blessing, (Job i. 5.) And Balaam (who, no doubt, understood the ancient rites of religion) offered these offerings to obtain power from God to help Balak, and destroy the Israelites, (Numb. xxiii. 3. 15, &c.)

And peace-offerings before the Lord.] These were offered to acknowledge benefits received (which ought to accompany our prayers), and some of them also were a kind of prayer to God for the benefits they hoped still to receive. (See upon Lev. vii. 16.)

Ver. 27. *And the children of Israel inquired of the Lord.*] The same expression is again in the Targum; *by the Word of the Lord.*

For the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days.] They had inquired of the Lord before, but not as they ought to have done; and therefore no mention is made till now of the presence of God continuing among them. For, confiding in the justice of their cause, and their vast forces, they seem to have made but slight and perfunctory addresses to God before they undertook the war.

Ver. 28. *And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days.*] To *stand before it,* is as much as to minister unto God before the ark, where he resided. (See upon Deut. x. 8. xviii. 7.) Some think this is here set down to direct us to the time when this war was made, which was not long after the death of Joshua, (as I said before, xix. 1.) otherwise Phinehas must have been now (if this were after the time of the judges) above three hundred years old, which is far beyond the age to which men then lived; for it was above so many years since he did that noble fact mentioned in Numb. xxv. Saidus Batricides, therefore, more justly makes him to have been high-priest only twenty-five years; and the Chron. Alexandr. mentions three other priests between him and Eli, as Mr. Selden observes, lib. i. de Succession. in Pontif. cap. 2.

Saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease?] This is a plainer query than either of the former (as Pet. Martyr here observes); for at first they only asked what tribe should first go up, presuming the war was fit to be made, (ver. 18.) and the second time only, whether God would have them renew the fight, (ver. 23.) But now they ask, whether they should proceed in the war, or desist from any further attempt? that is, saith he, they leave it wholly to God's pleasure; desiring to do no more, if he did not think good to accompany them with his blessing.

And the Lord said, Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver them into thy hand.] Accordingly he condescended to give them a gracious answer, assuring them of a speedy victory.

Ver. 29. *And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah.*] This seems to intimate, that, in the former onsets, they had relied too much upon their numbers: but now, though they were encouraged by God himself, they grew more humble and less audacious in their enterprise, laying ambushes secretly in several places on several sides of the city.

Ver. 30. *And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times.*] I suppose they appeared in the same place mentioned ver. 22. as if they intended to renew the fight there. And this was, perhaps, the third day after the last battle; one having been spent in going to Shiloh, and another in fasting and prayer there. Or, by *the third day* may be meant the third day of battle.

Ver. 31. *And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city.*] The children of Israel pretending to avoid fighting, and to flee from them; as we read in the next verse they had agreed.

And they began to smite of the people, and to kill, as at other times.] In the two former battles.

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In the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God.] That is, to Shiloh.

And the other to Gibeah in the fields.] So called, to distinguish it from this Gibeah; which, as I said, stood upon a hill, as the other did in lower ground.

About thirty men of Israel.] Whom they killed in the rear of their army, as they retreated.

Ver. 32. *And the children of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us, as at the first.*] From this flight they presumed they should get a new victory over such cowards.

But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city into the highways.] But this was only a stratagem of the Israelites, to draw them away from Gibeah into a more advantageous place of setting upon them.

Ver. 33. *And all the men of Israel.*] All that were posted in a certain place, whither they designed to draw the Benjamites.

Rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array at Baal-Tamar.] The sight of such a body of men appearing unexpectedly ready to encounter them, must needs be a great surprise to the Benjamites, who thought of nothing but pursuing those that run away from them.

And the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places.] At the same time, they that were placed in ambush behind them, rose up to assault the city.

Even out of the meadows of Gibeah.] Whether it be translated the *meadows*, or the *plains*, or the *flat ground*, that lay before the city, it is not material; for the sense is the same. (See Lud. de Dieu.)

Ver. 34. *And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel.*] Some look upon these as a detachment (as they now speak) from the main body at Baal-Tamar, who marched to assault the city on one side, while the liers in wait assaulted it on the other.

And the battle was sore; but they knew not that evil was near them.] The Benjamites fought stoutly; but were not sensible of the danger they were in to be destroyed.

Ver. 35. *And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and a hundred men: all these drew the sword.*] This is a general account of the fight, and of the Benjamites' loss; the particulars of both are related in the following verses.

Ver. 36. *So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten.*] There was an apparent overthrow given them by the Israelites: the manner of which is described from the beginning of the action of this day, to the conclusion, in the following part of this chapter.

For the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites.] Seemed to flee before them; as was before related.

Because they trusted to the liers in wait, which they had set beside Gibeah.] Resolving not to fight till they saw their ambush had executed what was commanded against the city.

Ver. 37. *And the liers in wait hasted, and rushed upon Gibeah.*] Which they did with all speed, as soon as they saw the Benjamites withdrawn a good way from the city; and fell upon the inhabitants on a sudden.

And the liers in wait drew themselves along, and smote all the city with the edge of the sword.] Having entered the city, they spread themselves into the several parts of it, and killed all they found therein.

Ver. 38. *Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait, that they should make a great flame with smoke to rise up out of the city.*] They had agreed beforehand, that when the city was taken by the liers in wait, they should set it on fire; whereby the Israelites might know when it was time to face about, and fight with the Benjamites.

Ver. 39. *And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons; for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us, as in the first battle.*] Till that sign was given, they retreated as if they were beaten, and lost some men; whereby the Benjamites were deceived into secure hopes of a new victory.

Ver. 40. *But when the flame began to arise out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven.*] It is likely the Israelites shouted when they turned about to fall upon the Benjamites; which made them look back to see what unexpected supplies they had received.

Ver. 41. *And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed.*] At this sudden change from flight to fighting.

For they saw that evil was come upon them.] They being beset by the Israelites both behind and before.

Ver. 42. *Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel.*] Whom they had pursued; but now ran away from them.

Unto the way of the wilderness.] For they were beset on all other sides.

But the battle overtook them.] That is, the men of war pursued them so closely that they could not escape.

And them which came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them.] Or, *they that came out of the cities, viz.* of Israel, helped to cut them off.

Ver. 43. *Thus they inclosed the Benjamites round about, and chased them, and trode them down with ease.*] For they made no resistance, but only sought where they might flee for safety.

Over against Gibeah towards the sun-rising.] There is another translation of the latter part of this verse, in the margin of our Bibles, with which I shall not trouble the reader, because it makes no alteration in the sense, which is to shew where the greatest slaughter of them was made.

Ver. 44. *And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men.*] In the wilderness, eastward of Gibeah.

All these were men of valour.] Stout soldiers, as appears by the two defeats they had given to the numerous army of the Israelites.

Ver. 45. *And they turned, and fled towards the wilderness, unto the rock of Rimmon.*] The remainder of the army of Benjamin endeavoured to save themselves, by flying to a strong inaccessible place which was in that wilderness.

And they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men.] They could not flee thither in a body, but scattered up and down in the highway; where they picked up five thousand more, and slew them.

And pursued hard after them to Gidom, and slew two thousand of them.] And following them very close, as far as to a place called Gidom, they killed two thousand more.

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Ver. 46. *So all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew sword.*] For they slew in the first conflict eighteen thousand; and in several parties, as they fled towards the rock Rimmon, seven thousand more, which make up this sum. (See ver. 15.)

All these were men of valour.] Who would not surrender themselves, but chose rather to be killed.

Ver. 47. *But six hundred men turned, and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon.*] These seem to have turned into some nearer way unto the strong hold than the rest: or, being with the foremost, and more nimble than others (for it was accounted a rare quality in a soldier to be swift of foot), got thither before the Israelites could overtake them.

And abode in the rock Rimmon four months.] From whence they durst not adventure to stir, unless it were to fetch provisions; which they might easily do, the rage of the Israelites being in a little time slaked by so great a destruction, and turned into compassion.

Ver. 48. *And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin.*] Left their pursuit of them in the wilderness, and turned towards the country of Benjamin.

And smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city as the beast.] Those beforementioned were *men that drew the sword;* that is, soldiers. But there were a great many husbandmen, and shepherds, and others; whom, in their fury, they also slew.

And all that came to hand.] Even women and children. For they had devoted to destruction all that came not up to Mizpeh, when they were summoned, (xxi. 5.) which none of the Benjamites did; for which reason they slew the men, women, and children, of Jabesh-Gilead, (xxi. 10.)

Also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.] This was as terrible an execution, as if they had been gross idolaters, whom they were commanded thus to punish. (See Deut. xiii. 15, 16.)

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *NOW the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh.*] When they first assembled there, before they began the war against Benjamin, (xx. 1, &c.)

Saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife.] They did not think of destroying the whole tribe when they took this oath; but only obliged themselves not to marry with them, no more than with the seven wicked nations of Canaan, because they refused to punish that villanous fact which had been committed among them, and resolved to defend the malefactors. This made the Israelites to abominate them, as people with whom it was not fit to contract an affinity.

Ver. 2. *And the people came to the house of God.*] Went up to Shiloh.

And abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore.] Some days after their fury was over, and they coolly considered what they had done in the heat of war, their joy and triumph for their victory was turned into mourning and lamentation for the loss of so many of their brethren; for instead of a feast, they seem to have kept a fast; as they did before the last battle, (xx. 26.)

Ver. 3. *And said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be this day one tribe lacking in Israel?*] This is an usual way of expressing great grief, wherewith they bewail the loss of a whole tribe, which they saw no means how to repair, because there were no women left in the tribe of Benjamin, with whom they in the rock of Rimmon might marry; and they had sworn that none of the other tribes should give their daughters to them; so that they must either marry with strange people, which was against the law, or remain unmarried, whereby the tribe would be extinct. They seem also to lament their own excessive wrath; for why should the women be destroyed with the men, who had no share in the management of public affairs; nor could be supposed guilty of refusing to make satisfaction for the injury done to the Levite's concubine?

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar.*] There seems to have been no need of this, there being one settled altar at the house of God, according to the law of Moses; and then it was unlawful to build another. But some think it was gone to decay in those bad times; which is very improbable, for they lately offered sacrifices there, (xx. 26.) And the daily sacrifice, no doubt, was continued in Israel, either to the Lord, or the other gods they joined with him. It is more likely, therefore, that they erected a new altar upon this present occasion, when such a multitude of sacrifices were to be offered by all the people of Israel, that the ordinary altar was not sufficient to contain them. Thus Solomon did when he dedicated the temple, 1 Kings viii. 64. And by the direction of God, it was frequently done in other places; and not only at the house of God, as by Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. xi. xiv. and David, 2 Sam. xxiv. and Elijah, 1 Kings xviii.

And offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.] As they had done before the last battle. For God having made them victorious, they thanked him for it, and prayed him to continue his mercy to them; particularly begging his direction, it is probable, in the present strait wherein they were, about restoring the tribe of Benjamin.

Ver. 5. *And the children of Israel said, Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the Lord?*] When summons went out to call them together, under a great penalty upon those who absented themselves. (See xx. 1.)

For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the Lord to Mizpeh, saying, Surely he shall be put to death.] This great oath was in the nature of a *cherem*, as the Hebrews call it; whereby it was lawful for the *whole congregation* to devote those to destruction, who did not obey public orders in time of war, or great distress. (See upon Lev. xxvii. 29.)

This oath, I take it, was made by the great assembly of their rulers (called *the whole congregation*) before they summoned the people to Mizpeh; as the other oath (mentioned ver. 1.) was made after the people were come thither, upon the Benjamites' refusal to do justice.

Ver. 6. *And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day.*] They still continued to lament their too great severity against Benjamin, and begin to consult how to repair the breach they had made.

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Ver. 7. *How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the Lord.*] The Targum continues its usual style, *by the Word of the Lord.*

That we will not give them of our daughters to wives?] This was the question debated in their common council, (see ver. 16.) how to bring themselves out of this difficulty, into which they were brought by their oath, which, being rashly made, it might be thought ought not to be kept. But they had such a reverence to a solemn oath, that they resolved to do all that was possible to find a way to keep their oath, and yet not to let the Benjamites be without wives.

Ver. 8. *And they said, What one is there of the tribes of Israel that came not up to the Lord to Mizpeh?*] Some in the council proposed to make an inquiry into all their tribes, whether they could find any that had not regarded the other oath they had made, (ver. 5.) And it appeared (as the next words tell us) that, *Behold, there came none to the camp from Jabesh-Gilead to the assembly.*

Ver. 9. *For the people were numbered, and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead there.*] A rare instance of piety, that none of the whole congregation of Israel (who were now numbered) departed home, till they had been at the house of God, to give thanks for the victory he had given them.

Ver. 10. *And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying.*] This was the first result of their consultations.

Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead with the edge of the sword.] This was a city on the other side of Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh; who were ordered to be slain, as public enemies, because they had not obeyed the order of the whole congregation; and, by refusing to join with them against the Benjamites, had made themselves partakers of their crimes.

With the women and the children.] In this, their anger transported them again beyond reason; for these had not offended. And if it be said they were all under the *cherem*, I do not see how they could justify their sparing all virgins, as we find they did by a public decree; unless we suppose, that God (before whom they now were) dispensed in this case, because of the public necessity.

Ver. 11. *And this is the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man.*] The Hebrew doctors here raise a difficult question, as they account it, how they could know those who had lain with man, from those that had not. D. Kimchi fancies, that all the women were ordered to pass before the ark, and they who were stopped there, and could go no further, were taken for virgins. Others, that they passed before the crown of the high-priest, and they who had known a man, turned yellow or pale. But these are idle conceits, and I will mention no more of them, which are still more extravagant; when the plain account is, That they slew such as were not commonly reputed to be virgins, and saved those that were. (See Wagenseil, in his Confutation of Lipman's Carmen Memoriale, p. 400.)

Ver. 12. *And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead four hundred young virgins, that had not known man by lying with any male; and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh.*] Which shews, that the making them pass before the ark is a foolish conceit; for they were looked upon as virgins before they came to Shiloh, where the ark was.

Which is in the land of Canaan.] Which the city of Jabesh-Gilead was not; but in the land taken from the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og.

Ver. 13. *And the whole congregation sent some to speak to the children of Benjamin that were in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably to them.*] To give them the public faith, that they might safely return, and be received kindly by the Israelites.

Ver. 14. *And Benjamin came again at that time.*] All the six hundred men, who had saved themselves in that fortress.

And they gave them wives, which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-Gilead.] Which they thought they might lawfully do, notwithstanding their oath, because it obliged those only who were present in the assembly where it was made, not the absent, as they of Jabesh-Gilead were.

And yet so they sufficed them not.] For still two hundred wanted wives.

Ver. 15. *And the people repented themselves for Benjamin.*] This gave occasion to a new lamentation, whereby they testified to the Benjamites how sorry they were for what had been done.

Because that the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.] For the punishment of their crime was approved by God, though they executed it with too much severity.

Ver. 16. *Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin?*] This made them enter into a new deliberation in the council of the elders, how to get wives for the two hundred men remaining, since there were none in the tribe of Benjamin, and no more to be found among themselves, without breaking their oath.

Ver. 17. *And they said, There must be an inheritance for them that are escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel.*] These words, *there must be*, are not in the Hebrew, where the words run thus, *The inheritance of them that are escaped, is for Benjamin*, &c. That is, the children of Benjamin must have that part of the country which was given them by the Divine lot for their inheritance, and we must not give it to any other persons; for then a tribe would be lost in Israel. This was all that some in the council said, who proposed no means whereby this tribe should be restored, but only asserted it must be done, leaving others to consider how.

Ver. 18. *Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin.*] These persons, who spake next in the council, only increased the difficulty, by putting them in mind not to think to help their brethren by breaking their oath.

Ver. 19. *Then they said.*] Then some rose up in the council, after a long debate, and gave the following advice.

Behold, there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly.] All the three great festivals were to be observed in the place where God settled his habitation, which was now at Shiloh, where all the people assembled to praise God, and to feast one with another. And though some think the feast of the Passover to be here meant, yet it is more commonly, and with more reason, concluded, to be the feast of tabernacles, which was a time of exceeding great joy, because they had

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newly gathered their vintage; and then they dwelt in booths, behind which the Benjamites might conveniently lurk, and watch their opportunity to carry away the virgins. This feast of tabernacles, also, was the only season wherein the Jewish virgins were allowed to dance.

In a place which is on the north side of Beth-el.] This is not a description of Shiloh, whose situation was better known than any other (being the place where all Israel went to worship), but of the place where they met to dance, which was not in the city, but in the fields, where they had more liberty, and a freer air.

On the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.] This place is thus particularly described, that the Benjamites might know exactly where they might most advantageously lie concealed, to obtain their purpose.

Ver. 20. *Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin.*] They had some authority who made this order; and Josephus calls them the γερουσία, the *senate of the elders*, whom Bertram makes bold to call the Seventy, as if the great Sanhedrin (as the Jews call them) was now settled: but I have shewn elsewhere that is not probable, though it be certain, from ver. 16. that there were some chief persons in every tribe, whom the people obeyed when there was no judge in Israel, who all seem to have been assembled on this occasion.

Saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards.] Which were nigh to the place beforementioned, and, it is likely, encompassed the place where they danced.

Ver. 21. *And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances.*] As they supposed they would, because it was the custom to express their joy in this manner: and though the women were not bound to come up to these solemn feasts, but only the men, yet some devout women did voluntarily frequent them, as we learn from the story of Hannah. And they that lived at Shiloh, and the places adjacent, no doubt, observed such times, as the men did, being near to the house of God; though it must be confessed, that parents were not wont to bring young virgins unto these feasts.

Then come ye out of the vineyards.] When they saw them so engaged.

And catch ye every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh.] By *the daughters of Shiloh*, perhaps, are not meant only such as lived in that city, but thereabouts, who all met on this occasion.

And go ye to the land of Benjamin.] Carry them away to your own country; which they might the more easily do, because men and women did not, in those days, dance together, but women by themselves. Thus they thought they kept their oath, because they did not give them wives, but only suffered them to take them, and to keep them when they had them. The great Grotius endeavours to acquit them of violating their oath by this rule, That the signification of an oath is not to be extended, "ultra receptum loquendi morem," *beyond the received manner of speaking;* therefore they were not perjured, who, when they had sworn not to give wives to the Benjamites, permitted those who were stolen to live with those that carried them away. "Aliud enim est dare; aliud amissum non repetere:" *For it is one thing to give, another not to demand that which is taken away to be restored.* (See lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 13. sect. 5.) But this seems to me to be far from justifying them in this matter; for they did not merely permit them to take these virgins, but advise and direct, nay, order and *command* (as the word is in the foregoing verse), to take and carry them away. And, therefore, what Josephus saith to salve this business is not true, that it was done, οὔτε προτρεπομένων οὔτε κωλυόντων, *the Israelites neither exhorting to it, nor prohibiting it.*

Ver. 22. *And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren.*] Any of their nearest kindred.

Come unto us to complain.] Desiring them to do them right; which shews they were men of authority.

That we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sake.] Do not prosecute them for what they have done, because it was by our advice, who did not know otherwise how to provide them with wives.

Because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war.] If there be any fault it is ours, whose rage carried the slaughter too far, and left no women to preserve their tribe. They advise them therefore to let their anger cease now (as Josephus speaks), because they had let it break out ἀμέτρως, *beyond all bounds* already.

For ye did not give unto them at this time, that ye should be guilty.] They put them in mind, that if there was any guilt, it was not in them that had kept their oath, and did not give wives to the Benjamites, nor could help their taking them. How Josephus came here to add to this speech, that they said they would tell them, they should have taken care to set a better guard upon their daughters, I cannot imagine; for, at such time of mirth, they always thought themselves secure from danger.

Ver. 23. *And the children of Benjamin did so, and took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught.*] That is, they carried away two hundred, for so many they wanted. With this is commonly compared, by interpreters, the rape of the Sabine virgins by Romulus: but there was a great deal of difference; for those were strangers, over whom Romulus had no power, and therefore was the cause of a war; but these were Israelites, subject to the authority of the elders, and was done to make peace and quiet. Though the truth is, the elders, in advising this, did wrong to those parents, whose children were taken away without their consent; but this they thought better than directly breaking their oath, or letting the title perish; for the preservation of which they were constrained to do some hard things: but in one thing they did very well, that they permitted them to take wives only *according to their number;* that is, every man a wife, and no more. So that though polygamy was tolerated, yet they did not advise or countenance it; no, not for the more speedy restitution of a tribe. It might happen, some of these young virgins were heiresses, and so their estates would be translated into another tribe: but the Jews say, that law against marrying into another tribe, and inheriting land in another tribe, did not belong to future ages, but only to that wherein the division of the land was made. (See our great Selden, de Success. ad Leges Hebr. cap. 18. where he alleges this very example of it, fol. 59.)

And they went and returned unto their inheritance.] In the land of Benjamin.

And repaired their cities, and dwelt in them.] And tilled the land, as Josephus adds; so that in time this tribe was

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restored, εἰς προτέραν εὐδαιμονίαν, *to its former flourishing condition.*

Ver. 24. *And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe, and to his family; and they went out from thence, every man to his inheritance.*] To look after his own private affairs, the public concerns being now at an end.

Ver. 25. *In those days there was no king in Israel.*] There were elders, (ver. 16.) who had some authority, and there was a high-priest; (xx. 28.) yet for want of a king (as our great primate Usher observes, in his book of the Power of the Prince) all things went to wreck, and were in great confusion: and by a king, as Corn. Bertram observes, (de Rep. Jud. cap. 9.) is meant a supreme governor, such as Moses and Joshua were, and after them the judges: so this word is used Deut. xxxiii. 5. The meaning of these words therefore is, That in those days there was none who had so much power over all the Israelites as to keep them in order, and not only admonish them of their duty, but make all their tribes observe it, by punishing all public wrongs, and all whoredoms, and idolatries: and, consequently, there was no great Sanhedrin, as the Jews speak of in future times, which they would fain find in all ages foregoing.

Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.] For want of such a supreme authority, every tribe, and every city; nay, which is more, every private man (as Bertram there glosses) committed many horrid things, which were not publicly punished. This was the cause of Micah's idolatry, as was noted before, (xvii. 6.) and of the Benjamites' filthiness, (xix. 1.) and now of these enormous things done by all the Israelites, in killing all the Benjamites without distinction, when the law required the children should not suffer for their parents' offence; in binding themselves by such a rash oath, to give them none of their daughters to be their wives; in killing all the women of Jabesh-Gilead, who were not virgins; and now in permitting, nay, ordering this rape, rather than break a rash oath; which should teach men to be thankful for that authority which is over them, to preserve them from such-like enormities: for which end (as the same primate there observes) the custom was, among the ancient Persians, to let the people loose to do what they list, for five days after their king died, that, by the disorders which were then committed, they might see the necessity of having a king to govern them, and when they had one, to be more obedient to him.

THE

BOOK OF RUTH.

THIS book is a kind of appendix to the book of Judges, and a manuduction to the book of Samuel; and therefore fitly placed between them. It hath its title from the person whose story is here principally related; which, indeed, is wonderful. For she left her own country, kindred, and relations, which the Jews say (though I confess without any good proof of it) were not only honourable, but royal, out of her great affection to her mother-in-law, and her religion; to live with her in the land of Israel, in a poor and mean condition. It is very probable, the same person who wrote the book of Judges was the author of this also, *viz.* Samuel; who, by adding this to the end of that book, brought down the history unto his own times; and gave us withal, the genealogy of David, from Pharez the son of Judah, that it might evidently appear Christ sprang out of that tribe, according to Jacob's prophecy, Gen. xlix. 10. but by a gentile woman (that all nations might hope in his mercy), full of faith, and of earnest desire to enter into that family; which made her despise the pride of her own nation, and choose to live despicably among the people of God.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled.*] These words direct us to the time when the things contained in this book fell out, though we cannot certainly tell what judge then ruled. David Ganz will have it to have been in the days of Ibzan, mentioned Judges xii. 8. because he was the only judge born at Beth-lehem; from whence he concludes him to have been the same with Boaz. But that is so weak a reason, that Guil. Vorstius, in his annotations upon him, thinks rather it was in the days of Deborah and Barak. I shall not mention his arguments, there being a great man of our own (the most learned Usher) who places this history in the times preceding; either in the days of Ehud, when the Moabites oppressed Israel, or rather of Shamgar, who succeeded him. Which is the opinion likewise of Du Pin, who takes these things to have been done about twenty-eight years after the death of Joshua. (See Usserii Chronol. Sacra, par. i. cap. 12.)

That there was a famine in the land.] This inclines me to think these things came to pass in the days of Gideon, for that is the only time that we read of a famine in the days of the judges; when the Midianites, Amalekites, and the children of the east, "came and destroyed the increase of the earth, and left no sustenance for Israel, nor for their cattle." (Judg. vi. 3, 4.)

And a certain man of Beth-lehem-Judah.] There were two Beth-lehems, as I have often noted: one in the land of Judah, the other in the tribe of Zebulun; (Josh. xix.

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15.) They had their name from the great fruitfulness of the place where they were situated; which argues this famine to have been very sore, that even in these places there was a scarcity of provision.

Went to sojourn in the land of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.] He carried his whole family with him into the neighbouring country of Moab, which was near to the land of Judah, at the end of the salt sea; and it seems had now plenty in it, when the land of Israel was famished.

Ver. 2. *And the name of the man was Elimelech.*] Who, if we may believe many of the Jewish doctors, was a noble and potent person in his country.

And the name of his wife Naomi.] They make her also of a noble extraction, she being (as the Talmudists say in Baba Bathen) the niece of Naasson, prince of the tribe of Judah, and daughter of his brother Salmon.

And the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-Judah.] The name of Ephrathites is given them, because they were not only born, but, I suppose, bred up, and lived in the same place with their father; which, from its great fruitfulness, was called Ephrata, as well as Beth-lehem.

And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.] Settled their habitation in that country, which had not been lawful, unless it had been in a public calamity, or some great private necessity, as Maimonides observes. (See Guil. Schickard, in his Mischpat Hammelech, cap. 3. Theor. 10.)

Ver. 3. *And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons.*] She a widow, and they fatherless. This, Josephus thinks, was after he had been there ten years; but the most, if not all others, think he died a little after he came into this country.

Ver. 4. *And they took them wives of the women of Moab.*] Which was not lawful, unless they had first become proselytes to the Jewish religion; as Aben Ezra concludes they were, from those very words from whence others prove the contrary, ver. 15. where it is said, *Orpah returned unto her people, and unto her gods.* This is a testimony, saith he, that she had been converted to Judaism. But the Chaldee paraphrast is quite of another opinion, and saith they transgressed the commandment of the Lord, by taking to them strange wives. And so the Midrasch upon Ruth, as Buxtorf observes in his book De Sponsalibus et Divortiis, sect. 31.

The name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth.] Who do not seem to have been of such great quality, as the Talmudists fancy, but of the common rank; otherwise they would not have been bestowed upon strangers.

And they dwelt there about ten years.] After their marriage.

Ver. 5. *And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them.*] For their days were cut short, saith the Chaldee paraphrast, because they married strange women; and for the same reason (if it be true) they may be thought to have died without issue, for there is not the least intimation that either of them had any.

And the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.] In a very melancholy condition, being in a country of strangers.

Ver. 6. *Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab.*] She packed up her goods, and made herself ready to leave the country of Moab, and her daughters accompanied her, it being the custom to conduct those whom they loved, some part of their way when they went a long journey.

For she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people, in giving them bread.] They were such near neighbours, that they soon had intelligence in Moab what was done in the land of Israel.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was.*] The necessity which forced her thither no longer remaining.

And her two daughters-in-law with her.] Who loved her as their own mother.

And they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.] This relates unto Naomi, for her daughters had never been there.

Ver. 8. *And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law.*] When they were come to the borders of the country of Moab, she said the following words.

Go, return each to her mother's house.] She desires them to accompany her no further, but go back to their own home. And it seems it was usual in Moab, as well as in Israel, for widows to dwell with their parents. And the women here also had apartments distinct from the men, where the daughters lived with their mothers, as the sons with their father.

The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead, and with me.] She dismissed them with her blessing, praying God would be as good to them, as they had been good wives to their husbands, and good daughters to her.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord grant that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband.*] And that they might be happily settled in houses of their own, with good husbands; whom she wishes they might long enjoy in peace and quietness.

Then she kissed them.] As was usual, when friends took their leave one of another, or when they met together.

And they lifted up their voice, and wept.] Were all extremely grieved to think of parting.

Ver. 10. *And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.*] They resolved to accompany her to Beth-lehem.

Ver. 11. *And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?*] This shews, that the custom of men's marrying their brother's widow, when he left no issue (which was before the law of Moses, Gen. xxxviii.) was so ancient, that it was derived into other countries, who were not descended from Abraham.

Ver. 12. *Turn again, my daughters, and go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have a husband also to-night, and should also bear sons,*

Ver. 13. *Would you tarry for them till they were grown? Would you stay from having husbands?*] She persists in the same argument, and presses it home, that she was too old to marry, and they too young not to marry again: but should she marry immediately, and be sure she should have children, nay, sons, it would be unreasonable for them to wait till they were fit to be their husbands.

Nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me very much for your

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sakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.] She would have them by no means think of any such thing; and likewise represents to them, what a mean condition God had reduced her unto, which was the more heavy, because she was able to do nothing for them.

Ver. 14. *And they lifted up their voices, and wept again.*] It gave them great trouble, whether they thought of going with her, or of parting from her.

And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law.] Took her leave of her. The Jews observe three sorts of *kisses*, which were usual and commendable among them, all others being wanton: one in token of reverence to any person's dignity, (1 Sam. x. 1.) A second at the meeting of friends, (Exod. iv. 27.) A third at their parting, of which they give this as an example. Unto which R. Tanchuma adds a fourth, saluting of near relations, (Gen. xxix. 11.) which is, in a manner, the same with the second. Drusius thinks there was another, which he calls the *kiss of prayer*, which was in use in the primitive church, and taken, he thinks, from the Jews: but Buxtorf saith, he can find no such thing in all their books. (See Lex. Talmud. in the word *Nesikah*, fol. 1408.)

But Ruth clave to her.] Would not part from her, but steadfastly resolved to go with her to her own country.

Ver. 15. *And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back to her people, and to her gods.*] The principal of which was Chemosh, as we read Numb. xxi. 29. 1 Kings xi. 7. By this it appears, Orpah was not made a proselyte to the Jewish religion, but still continued to worship the gods of her country. Yet this did not make such a difference in the family (as diverse religions commonly do now), but that she loved her husband entirely, and had a great affection to his mother, even after his death.

Return thou after thy sister-in-law.] This may seem strange, that she should, in effect, press her to go and worship idols; but her intention was to try her, and to persuade her to do nothing rashly, especially not to change her religion, without due consideration, and weighing well her reasons for it: for if she had been led merely by her affection to her, to embrace also her religion, she might have revolted from it when she died, or when she saw her condition very desolate.

Ver. 16. *And Ruth said, Entreat me not to return from following thee: for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge.*] Be content, that is, with any condition in her company.

Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.] This is a resolution to embrace the Jewish religion entirely, so as to be incorporated with the Israelites, as if she had been a native among them.

Ver. 17. *Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.*] She resolves that nothing but death shall make a separation between them, and not that neither, wholly, for she would lie by her in the same sepulchre: and this she confirms with an oath, or solemn imprecation upon herself, that worse might befal her than any thing Naomi could suffer, if she did not faithfully adhere to her: which form of speech we find afterward in many places, (1 Sam. iii. 17. xiv. 44. xx. 13. 2 Sam. iii. 9. 35, &c.)

Ver. 18. *And when she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she left speaking to her.*] She said not a word more to her of her leaving her, when she saw she had a settled and well-grounded resolution to become a proselyte to the true religion. So the Chaldee paraphrast explains it, representing Naomi as declaring to her at large, that there was a great number of precepts (no less than six hundred and thirteen) to be observed by those who would be of her religion. In particular, the rest of the sabbath, to which they were obliged, and to worship one God alone, &c. Unto all which she answered, *Whatsoever thy people observe, I will do the same, as if I had been one of them from the beginning.*

Ver. 19. *So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem.*] Which shews they were but in a mean condition, having no servant to wait on them, nor an ass to carry them.

And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them; and they said, Is this Naomi?] It being reported by them who knew Naomi that she was returned, all the people ran out of their houses to see her, and beholding a great change in her garb and countenance, they could scarce believe it was she. But the Arabic and Syriac versions take it quite otherwise, *that all the city rejoiced, and said, This is Naomi.* And the LXX. whom they follow, to the same purpose, ἤχησε ἡ πόλις, *the city rang* with the news, and they asked if this were Naomi; for several had never seen her before, or did not remember her, but had only heard much of her.

Ver. 20. *And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara.*] She told them her old name was not suitable to her present condition, which required she should rather be called by a contrary; from whence some gather, that Naomi was not the name given her at first by her parents, but a popular name commonly given her by her neighbours, because of her comely presence and courteous behaviour.

For the Almighty hath dealt bitterly with me.] This is the reason of the new name of Mara, whereby she would be called, which signifies *bitter*. Josephus saith that Naomi, in their language, signifies εὐτυχίαν, *prosperity*, and Mara ὀδύνην, *grief* and *pain*.

Ver. 21. *I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.*] The Targum takes this to relate unto her husband and children, with whom she went out to the country of Moab, which now were taken away from her; but it is reasonable to extend it to the estate they carried along with them for their support in a strange country, where they lived to spend it all.

Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?] God is said to *testify* against any persons when he passes sentence upon them, and judges them, by sending afflictions upon them; at which Naomi doth not murmur, but only humbly acknowledges God had inflicted grievous punishments upon her, which she thought testified his displeasure.

Ver. 22. *So Naomi returned, and Ruth her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab.*] As much as to say, This is a brief account of Naomi's return to her own country, together with her daughter-in-law, who would accompany her.

And they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley-harvest.] The time of their return is also noted, which was about the Passover; for after the offering of the sheaf, mentioned Lev. xxiii. 10, 11. on the second day of unleavened bread, they began to cut barley: whence the

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Chaldee paraphrast thus explains these words, *They came to Beth-lehem in the entrance of the Passover; and on that day the children of Israel began to mow the sheaf that was to be waved, which was of barley.*

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AND Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth.*] So *gibhor chail* is well translated; for riches make men mighty and powerful. Though the Chaldee would have it signify a man *mighty in the law*, by which they do not mean a man of great wisdom and goodness, but, as that paraphrast explains it upon 1 Chron. iv. 22, 23. after the manner of the Jews (whose heads are full of their Academies and Sanhedrins), he was the *rab* or chief ruler of the academy of wise men at Beth-lehem.

Of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.] Whose ancestors are mentioned in the conclusion of this book, and his descendants also, who lived at Beth-lehem as he did.

Ver. 2. *And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me go into the field, and glean ears of corn.*] This is a great argument of her modesty and dutiful affection to her mother-in-law, that she would not go any whither, no, not to earn something for their support, without her leave.

After him in whose sight I shall find grace.] Either she did not know that poor strangers had a right to glean, as well as the poor of Israel, (Lev. xix. 9, 10.) or out of her great piety she would not challenge it as a right, but as a favour, which she would thankfully acknowledge.

And she said, Go my daughter.] This is a sign of Naomi's low condition, otherwise she would not have suffered her to go and seek for a supply of their needs among the poorest sort of people.

Ver. 3. *And she went, and came.*] Into a field, where she saw some reapers.

And gleaned in the field after the reapers.] Gathered up the scattered ears of corn, which fell from them, and were left behind them.

And her hap was to light on a part of a field belonging to Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.] By the direction of God's good providence (not by any man's guidance) she came into a piece of ground which belonged to the great man beforementioned.

Ver. 4. *And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem.*] It is remarkable, that he followed her into the same field.

And said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.] Such was the piety of ancient times, that they were wont to pray God to prosper the honest labours of those that they saw employed, who made a return of the like prayers for them, which the gentiles themselves practised, especially in harvest-time, which they would not begin, by putting the sickle into the corn, till Ceres had been invoked, as Virgil informs us in his Georgics, lib. i. ver. 347, 348.

This is the first time that we meet with this religious salutation, *The Lord be with you;* which we afterward find was familiar, and was continued even to our Saviour's days, when the angel saluted the blessed Virgin after this manner, (Luke i. 28.)

Ver. 5. *Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers.*] To see them do their work, and that they had provision fit for them; and, it is likely, to pay them their wages. Josephus calls him ἀγρονόμος, and the Chaldee calls him *rab*, the *master, ruler*, or *governor* of the reapers.

Whose damsel is this?] Either she did not appear, when all the city came to see Naomi; or Boaz did not take so much notice of her, as to know her again.

Ver. 6. *And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.*] He did not know her name, perhaps, but he describes her as a stranger, that, out of love to her mother-in-law, and her religion, had left her own country, and come to dwell among the Israelites. So the Chaldee paraphrast makes him answer, *She is become a proselyte.*

Ver. 7. *And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.*] What she might have demanded by the law as her right, she asks a courtesy, which, no doubt, moved the man to be the more obliging to such a modest and well-bred woman.

So she came.] That is, he admitted her; for, perhaps, they were not bound to let the poor come immediately into the fields, as soon as the reapers had cut down the corn, and bound it up in sheaves, but when it was carried off. They might choose also, among the poor, whom they thought most worthy, or most necessitous.

And hath continued even from the morning until now.] That is, all the day; for I suppose it was in the afternoon, when the heat of the day was over, that Boaz came to visit his reapers. So the servant describes her as a very diligent woman, who had not intermitted her labour, but only for a little time, to eat, or to rest herself.

That she tarried a little in the house.] The meaning is, she went and stayed awhile in the tent which was pitched in the field, for such as were weary to refresh themselves; or for other necessary occasions. So Aben Ezra expounds the word *house;* in which some think Boaz found her resting herself, and wondering to see a stranger there, inquired who she was.

Ver. 8. *Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter?*] A form of speech calling for attention to what is said.

Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence.] He would not have her go to glean in any other field, nor to stir from thence to supply any of her wants, as appears by what follows.

But abide here fast by my maidens.] Who reaped as well as men (as the next verse shews), and their company was the fittest for her on all accounts. Some think this was a labour too hard for women, and therefore they will have it, that his maidens only came to bring provisions for the men, as Virgil describes Thestylis to have done, in his second Eclogue, ver. 10.

Ver. 9. *Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them.*] Observe their motions, and follow them.

Have I not charged the young men that they touch thee not?] Give thee no molestation, as the Vulgar understands it. And so the word *touch* sometimes signifies, *to do harm to others*, (Psal. cv. 15.) But the Chaldee paraphrast extends it further, that they should *not come near her*, but

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keep at a distance from her, and consequently offer no incivility or rudeness to her, which was too common among rustics, especially when they were full of mirth, in harvest and vintage-time.

And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.] There was excellent water at Beth-lehem, (2 Sam. xxiii. 15.) which either the reapers, or some that attended them, had brought in vessels into the field, to quench their thirst when they were dry.

Ver. 10. *Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground.*] A posture of the greatest reverence and submission, either in civil or religious worship, and was used when they would express their most grateful sense of any favour done them. (See Gen. xxiii. 7. 12. xxvii. 29, &c.)

And said, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?] To *take knowledge* of any person, is to shew kindness, in the Scripture language, and is the effect of *finding grace*, that is, favour with any one; which was the greater in Boaz, because he had never seen her before, or was not acquainted with her.

Ver. 11. *And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath been fully shewn me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of her husband.*] Naomi had related to some friends, who had informed Boaz at large of her great affection to her mother.

And how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people whom thou knewest not heretofore.] To be a proselyte to their religion (as the Chaldee paraphrast explains it), upon which account the greatest kindness was due to her.

Ver. 12. *The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee.*] He looked upon it as a very high act of faith and virtue in her, to leave all that was dear to her in this world to become a member of their church; which he prays God amply to requite. The Chaldee paraphrast makes her say here, "That she was come from a strange people, who were made unworthy to be admitted into the congregation of the Lord:" but he answers to her, "Our wise men say, That the men of Moab only, not the women, are excluded from our society," &c. (See what I have noted upon Deut. xxiii. 5.)

Of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.] To seek for protection, and commit thyself unto his care and good providence; which was a pious confidence so pleasing to God, that the Chaldee paraphrast makes Boaz say, "In this thy righteousness thou shalt be delivered from the judgment of hell, and thy portion shall be with Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel;" that is, she should have an eternal recompence. This phrase, of trusting under the wings of the Divine Majesty, is often used by the Psalmist, Psal. xvii. 8. xxxvi. 7. lvii. 1. lxi. 4. lxii. 7. xci. 4. All which places speak of the *shadow*, or the *covert* of his wings, which seem to be a metaphor taken from the cherubims, who spread their wings from one side of the holy place unto the other, upon which the Divine Majesty sat; which protection and safeguard was represented in the cloud which covered the Israelites in the wilderness, (Numb. xiv. 14.)

Ver. 13. *Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thy handmaid.*] She humbly begs the continuance of his good opinion of her (though she acknowledges herself, in the next words, to be very unworthy of it), for it had given the greatest consolation to her in her desolate condition.

Though I be not like to one of thy handmaidens.] So obscure she means, being a stranger, and of a country under an ill character among them, that she was not equal to one of his meanest servant maids.

Ver. 14. *And Boaz said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither.*] He enlarges his favour to her, and orders her at the time of repast to come and eat among his servants. I cannot devise how the ancient Jews came to apply these words to the kingdom of the Messiah, and to his suffering condition here in this world; but so it is, that the Midrasch, upon this place, makes these words, *Come thou hither*, to signify as much, as *come to thy kingdom;* and the *morsel dipped in vinegar*, to denote *the reproaches and torments of the Messiah:* which is an argument that they expected such a king, as should be exposed to such sufferings as our blessed Saviour endured, who saith, in the Psalmist, "They gave me vinegar to drink," (lxix. 21.) which, perhaps, was the original of this application of Boaz's words to the Messiah, whose coming they longed for, and found it foretold in more places than we are aware of.

And eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.] Under the name of *bread* is comprehended all the provision which was made for the reapers, with which they had vinegar for sauce, it being very cooling and refreshing in hot seasons, as the time of harvest was. So Pliny observes, lib. xxiii. cap. 1. "Aceto summa vis est in refrigerando;" which cooling quality is taken notice of by Rasi, and others, upon this place.

And she sat beside the reapers.] With the women, that is, who reaped.

And he reached her parched corn.] This seems to signify, that Boaz himself ate with them, or stood by them, to see they were well provided; and took a particular care of her, unto whom he reached some parched corn, which was an usual, and no mean food in those countries, as appears from 2 Sam. xvii. 28. But it may be understood of the servant set over the reapers, (ver. 5.) or some of them, who, observing her modesty, that she did not carve for herself, reached to her some of the provision made for them.

And she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.] There was such plenty (Boaz being a great and a good man), that more was set before them than they could eat; at least, she left some of that which was carved to her. This meal, I suppose, was after the heat of the day was over, in the afternoon; for then they dined, but their best meal was a supper.

Ver. 15. *And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not.*] For that looked something like filching, to come among the sheaves. But Josephus takes the sense to be, that she should be permitted, if she pleased, to cut down corn herself for her own use, which is not likely.

Ver. 16. *And let fall also some of the handfuls on purpose for her, and leave them that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.*] As if she was too bold, in gathering what belonged not to her.

Ver. 17. *So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat*

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out that she had gleaned.] It seems they did not in those days carry home their gleanings as they gathered them in the ears, but beat the corn out with a rod; and freeing it from the chaff, carried it away pure, with less trouble than otherwise it would have given them.

And it was about an ephah of barley.] An *ephah* is commonly taken to be about a bushel of our measure. See my notes on Exod. xvi. 36. where it appears, that an *ephah* contained ten omers, and that an omer was sufficient for one person's food for a whole day; therefore Ruth now had gathered as much as would keep her and her mother five days.

Ver. 18. *And she took it up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned.*] That is, wondered at the quantity.

And she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved, after she was sufficed.] Josephus thinks this is spoken of Naomi, that set before her daughter-in-law some remainders of the victuals that her neighbours had brought her in Ruth's absence; but it rather signifies Ruth's care of her mother-in-law, whom she had in mind, when she was feasted with the reapers with more than she could eat, (ver. 14.) and therefore brought what she left home for her refreshment.

Ver. 19. *And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee.*] For she concluded, that without the special favour of some person to her, it had not been possible for her to have made such a day's work.

And she shewed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz.] Whose near relation to them Ruth did not yet know.

Ver. 20. *And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord.*] Or rather, *Let him be most blessed;* for *lamed* prefixed to Jehovah increases the sense, as in Gen. x. 9. (See there.)

Who hath not left off his kindness to the living, and to the dead.] Continued to be kind to the relicts of Elimelech and his son, as he had been to them when they were alive.

And Naomi said, The man is near of kin to us, one of our next kinsmen.] In the Hebrew, *one of our goels,* to whom of right it belonged to redeem the land, and raise up the name of his dead brother, by marrying his widow, according to the command, Lev. xxv. 25 Deut. xxv. 5. (See upon the fourth chapter of this book, ver. 5.)

Ver. 21. *And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men.*] Though the word *nearim* be of the masculine gender, yet it signifies all young people, and particularly the maidens, to whom he bid her keep close, (ver. 8.) And so both the LXX. and the Chaldee here expound it; and so Naomi, it appears by the next verse, understood it.

Until they have ended all my harvest.] Not only the barley-harvest, in which they were now employed, but the wheat-harvest, which followed it. (See ver. 23.)

Ver. 22. *And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.*] She advises her to accept his kindness, and not to be found gleaning in any other field, where she might not be so welcome; and beside, it would look like a distrust of his kindness, if not a despisal of it, should she not do as she was invited.

Ver. 23. *So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean, unto the end of barley-harvest, and of wheat-harvest.*] Which continued many days; and in all that time she found, no doubt, the same kind entertainment, which is not here repeated.

And dwelt with her mother-in-law.] Constantly came home to her at night, after she had done her labour. Or the meaning is, when harvest was ended, she did not gad abroad, but kept her mother company at home; for so the Hebrew, *she sat with her mother-in-law.*

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *THEN Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee.*] A settlement in a house of her own, with a good husband.

That it may be well with thee?] That she might live more comfortably than she could do with her. The Chaldee understands it, as if she confirmed it with an oath, that she would give herself no rest till she had married Ruth.

Ver. 2. *And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast?*] She puts her in mind of what she had told her before, (ii. 20.)

Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the thrashing-floor.] The corn being gathered, thrashed or trodden out, it was next of all winnowed, to separate it from the chaff; and this was commonly done in the evening, when the heat of the day was over, and cool breezes began to rise. (See Gen. iii. 8.)

Ver. 3. *Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee.*] Frequent bathings were necessary in those countries, where they continue to this day for cleanliness; and anointing for smoothing their skin, and making them appear more amiable.

And put thy raiment upon thee.] Her best clothes, as the Vulgar expresses it; or her ornaments, as the Chaldee.

And get thee down to the floor.] To some place near it, where she might see, and observe what was done.

But make not thyself known unto the man.] She would have her conceal herself, so that Boaz might not see her; nor, as some understand it, any man else.

Until he shall have done eating and drinking.] Upon such occasions they made feasts for the labourers in the harvest.

Ver. 4. *And it shall be, when he lieth down, thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie.*] To sleep, after the feast was done, and the guests were gone.

And thou shalt go in.] To the thrashing-floor, where he lay down, as we read ver. 7.

And uncover his feet, and lay thee down.] She was not to lie by his side, for that had been immodest; but at his feet, in the posture of an humble supplicant.

And he will tell thee what thou shalt do.] Either he presently understood her meaning, when she told him who she was, or explained it unto him; and Naomi did not doubt he would comply with her desires, and put her into a legal way of accomplishing them.

Ver. 5. *And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.*] She put a great confidence in her mother's

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prudence and piety, and trusted God would give good success to her design; which seemed not very modest, but had no other intentions than what was agreeable to the law of God, and accordingly prospered.

Ver. 6. *And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.*] Concealed herself, but observed when he came into the thrashing-floor, and where he lay down to sleep.

Ver. 7. *And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry.*] This is a sign he had made a great feast, that he and his reapers, and perhaps other neighbours, might rejoice together; and (as the Targum understands it) praise God for his goodness in giving them plenty, after the famine that had been in the land. For so the words there are, *His heart rejoiced, and he blessed God, who had heard his prayer, and removed the famine from the land of Israel.*

He went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn.] Such was the plain way of living in those ancient times, that the most wealthy persons looked after their own business, both in the field and at home; which made Boaz not go to his house, but lie perhaps upon the straw in the floor where his corn had been winnowed, to secure it from thieves, till it could be laid up in his barns. These thrashing-floors were covered at top to keep off rain, but lay open on all sides, that the wind might come in freely for the winnowing of the corn; which being done, I suppose they were shut up at night with doors fitted to them, that, if any body lay th r he might be kept warm; and the corn, as I said, be secured from the danger of robbers.

And she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.] Before the doors were shut up, she came in so softly, that none perceived her, and when he was asleep, lay down at his feet, not naked, as it is supposed she was, but in her clothes, which we do not find she put off; for she had no intention of lying with him, but only of giving him an opportunity to consider what the law required of him. This, indeed, looks like a dangerous practice, which her mother-in-law put her upon, exposing both her and him to great temptations, and therefore many have condemned it as a very perilous adventure; but the known piety both of Boaz and Ruth, who were not now in their youthful years (at least Boaz was of a great age), made Naomi confident no sin would be committed by them.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid.*] It is a sign he went to bed sober, though merry, in that he waked so soon, and was not drowsy, but apprehensive of something extraordinary; for going to sleep alone, he perceived another in bed with him. Or, all this is to be ascribed to a Divine motion, which secretly suggested such thoughts to Naomi, and awaked Boaz at a time when men used to sleep most soundly.

And turned himself.] Being much troubled, he turned himself about to feel who or what it was. The Hebrew word *jilaphet*, which we translate *turned himself*, is variously interpreted, and hath an unusual signification put upon it by the Targum, and the Gemara Sanhedrin, (cap. 2. n. 4.) where the modesty and chastity of Boaz is highly extolled, and compared with that of Joseph.

And, behold, a woman lay at his feet.] He perceived by her clothes, and (when she spake) by her voice, that it was a woman.

Ver. 9. *And he said, Who art thou?*] He had no thoughts of abusing her, as the Targum observes, but only inquires who she was, and what her business was there.

And she answered, I am Ruth thy handmaid.] She humbly acknowledges her meanness, and then acquaints him with her business.

Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid.] In the Hebrew, *Spread thy wing;* which is a phrase importing taking a person into one's protection and tuition; and here not a common one, but such as was matrimonial. Therefore the Chaldee plainly renders it, *Let thy name be called upon thy handmaid, by taking me for thy wife.* See of this phrase upon Deut. xx. 30. From hence, at this day, when two persons are married among the Jews, the man throws the skirt of his *talith* over his spouse, and covers her head with it, as Buxtorf observes in his Synagoga Judaica, cap. 39.

For thou art a near kinsman.] This is the reason of her address to him; which may be rendered, as we translate it in the margin, *one that hath right to redeem;* for so the word *goel* signifies. (See the foregoing chapter, ver. 20.)

Ver. 10. *And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter.*] He was so far from being incensed at her boldness, that he wishes her all happiness.

For thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning.] He doth not condemn her as immodest, but commends her true kindness both to her mother and to her husband, which appeared now more than before, by her endeavours to preserve his name and family.

Inasmuch as thou followedst not young men.] This is a high commendation, that she did not seek a husband to satisfy her lust, but to preserve the memory of him who was dead.

Whether poor or rich.] That is, of any sort.

Ver. 11. *And now, my daughter, fear not.*] He would not have her think he had an ill opinion of her because she took this course, or be in doubt whether her motion was acceptable to him; or that, being a stranger and poor, he would despise her.

I will do unto thee all that thou requirest.] That is, take her to be his wife.

For all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.] She had behaved herself so, as to gain a general report of extraordinary virtue, as the Hebrew word *chajil* imports; which signifies one that doth things *strenuously*. The words we translate, *all the city of my people*, in the Hebrew are, *all the gate of my people:* by which we rightly understand, all that entered in at the gate; that is, the whole city. But *the gate* being the place where justice was wont to be administered, the Chaldee paraphrast interprets it, *It is manifest unto all that sit at the gate of the great Sanhedrin of my people, that thou art a just woman*, &c. This shews that Boaz was truly a very excellent person, *who thought great virtue to be a great portion.*

Ver. 12. *And now, it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.*] This, I suppose, was well enough known to Naomi; but she understood his disposition so well, that she thought it would be in vain to make any application unto him.

Ver. 13. *Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part.*] He resolved to make no longer

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delay than was absolutely necessary; but promises in the morning she should have right done to herself, and to her deceased husband, either by the next kinsman, or by himself. Some of the Jews take the word *Tob*, which signifies *good*, and we rightly translate *well*, to have been the name of the other kinsman, who was called Tob: and indeed, it is likely, this was a name among that people, from whence, by the addition of *iah* to it (which was very common) came Tobiah. Rasi saith he was the brother of Elimelech; but there is no reason to believe this: for, when it had been proper to mention his name in the next chapter, ver. 1. we only read that Boaz called him *Peloni almoni (Ho, such a one)*, which were words used when they called any one indifferently.

But if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth.] He confirms his promise to her with an oath, that, if the other person refused, he would marry her.

Lie down until the morning.] Having given her this security, and thereby quieted her mind, he bids her take a little bodily rest; which was very needful, having been, no doubt, full of restless and anxious thoughts, what would become of her all the former part of the night.

Ver. 14. *And she lay at his feet until the morning.*] In the same place where she lay down at first; having no other design, but only humbly to implore his justice and kindness unto her deceased husband.

And she rose up before one could know another.] That is, before it was light; so that if any body had seen her, they could not have known who she was.

And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.] Some think he spake this to his servants: but they were not yet stirring; and if they were, they could not discover whether she was man or woman. It was spoken therefore to her, whom he would have to be careful both of her own fame and of his; for, as Josephus here notes, *Great caution is to be used to prevent such rumours, especially when there is some ground for them,* καὶ μάλιστ' ἐπὶ γεγονόσι.

Ver. 15. *Also he said, Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it.*] The Hebrew word *mitpacath* is variously interpreted, it signifying any kind of covering. The LXX. translate it περίζωμα, by which they seem to have meant that which we call an *apron*, or a *kirtle*, which is bound about one. The Vulgar, *pallium;* but it is by us most properly rendered *a veil;* which modest women were wont to throw over their heads, to cover their faces.

And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her.] He would not let her go away without some token of his love to her; and nothing was more ready at hand in the thrashing-floor than the corn that lay there. It is not certain how much this *measure* contained, but, no doubt, in the whole, he gave her as much as she could well carry; and was so kind also, as himself to lay it upon her shoulder. Some fancy that this load was too heavy for her, but barley is far lighter than wheat: and the Chaldee paraphrast here saith, "Strength was given her from before the Lord to bear it." And then adds, "Immediately there was a prophecy, that from her should proceed six righteous persons;" each of which should be blessed with *six benedictions;* "David, Daniel, his three companions, and the king Messiah."

And she went into the city.] The Chaldee saith, *Boaz went* into the city; and the Hebrew favours this interpretation. For the word for *went* is in the masculine gender, as in the next words it is in the feminine.

Ver. 16. *And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter?*] It was so early in the morning when she returned home, that Naomi could not well discern who it was that desired the gate might be opened; but perceived it was a woman, whom she calls her daughter, as they used to do in civility, it appears, by Boaz's language, ver. 10. But the Vulgar takes it quite otherwise, that she asked her, *What hast thou done, my daughter?* That is, how hast thou succeeded? And, indeed, the answer favours this; and the Hebrew words will bear it, if *mi* be interpreted not *who*, but *what*.

And she told her all that the man had done to her.] How kindly he had treated her; and what promises he had made her.

Ver. 17. *And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me.*] Then she shewed her the present he made her.

For he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.] Without some token of my affection. Some imagine barley (which is not so valuable with us as wheat) was too mean a thing to bestow upon her. But they do not consider, that in those countries it was a better sort of corn than it is in these parts of the world; for bread was commonly made of it, and that not only by the poor, but the better sort: of which we find examples, both in the Old Testament and the New. See 2 Sam. xvii. 28. 2 Kings iv. 42. And in the gospel we read of barley-loaves, wherewith Christ fed the multitude; particularly John vi. 9. And, indeed, Pliny saith this was the most ancient food. (Antiquissimum in cibis Hordeum, lib. xviii. Nat. Hist. cap. 7.)

Ver. 18. *Then said she, Sit still, my daughter.*] She bids her trouble herself no farther, for she had done enough.

Until thou know how the matter will fall.] But wait and expect, till she saw the issue: which the Targum expresses piously, in this manner, *Till thou knowest how this matter will be determined from heaven, and wonderfully disposed.*

For the man will not be in rest till he have finished the thing this day.] She knew him so well to be a man of his word, that he would immediately go about the business, according to his promise, (ver. 14.)

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *THEN went Boaz up to the gate.*] Where there was a great concourse of people; and where the judges sat. So the Chaldee paraphrast, *He went to the gate of the house of judgment, where the Sanhedrin sat.* (See my note upon Deut. xvi. 18.)

And sat him down there.] Among the elders, as the forenamed paraphrast will have it: but that is not likely, for he called the other kinsman to come and sit down by him.

And, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by.] See iii. 12.

Unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here.] When they could not think of a man's name, or did not think fit to name it, they used these words, *Peloni almoni;* which Daniel contracts into one word, *Palmoni*, (viii. 13.) and is the same with the Greek ὁ δεῖνα.

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And he turned aside, and sat down.] Supposing Boaz had some business with him, he did not go on his way, but turned aside to speak with him. This was about noon (as Josephus saith), when greater multitudes were wont to be assembled in such public places, than at other times of the day.

Ver. 2. *And he took ten men.*] He would have a sufficient number of witnesses of what he did; which, as Maimonides observes, was very necessary in the espousal of a person to one's wife. For, saith he, if it had been enough to do it privately, many would have taken a harlot into their houses for a time, and pretended she was their wife; therefore it was ordained, that, after any man had espoused a woman, he should marry her publicly, after the example of Boaz, of whom we read, *he took ten men*, &c. (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 49.)

Of the elders of the city.] How many elders there were in every city, is not certain; insomuch that Bertram conjectures, there were as many as there were captains of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and tens, in every city. Josephus, indeed, saith, there were seven, (lib. iv. Antiq. cap. 6.) which perhaps was the determinate number in his time. But anciently, one would think, there were more, because here Boaz mentions *ten elders* (who were the same with judges) in the city of Beth-lehem, which made Bertram (de Republ. Judaica, cap. 9.) the more confident, that, as the captains of thousands, &c. in every city, were the elders of that city, so there were as many in every city, of the one as of the other. As for what the Talmudists say, that there were three judges in pecuniary causes, and three-and-twenty in capital, it must belong, if it be true, to later times.

And said, Sit you down here. And they sat down.] To hear the cause he intended to bring before them.

Ver. 3. *And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's.*] He calls him their *brother*, because he was near of kin to them. And he mentions Naomi's return out of the country of Moab, to intimate, that her poverty constrained her to sell her estate, which her husband left her. That interest she might part withal, to supply her necessities, but it could not take away the right of redemption; for, as Mr. Selden observes in his book de Successionibus, cap. 16. both Elimelech the father, and Mahlon the son (unto both which Boaz was of kin), gave this patrimony to their wives before they died (for otherwise they could not have had the possession of it): or rather, the former gave his interest to Naomi, and the latter his to Ruth; which, how it was done, Maimonides shews in his treatise de Donationibus, cap. 6.

Ver. 4. *And I thought to advertise thee of it, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people.*] Before those that sat in the gate of the house of judgment, and before these elders, as the Targum expounds it; that is, the ten elders beforementioned, that the bargain might be firmly made, and the estate legally passed over to him.

If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know.] That is, understand thy mind in this matter.

For there is none to redeem it besides thee, and I am after thee.] That is, no other kinsman remaining of that family but they two.

And he said, I will redeem it.] For it is likely it lay convenient for him.

Ver. 5. *Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead.*] For they both had an interest in it; but Boaz prudently conceals the name of Ruth, till he had consented to buy the land, and then tells him whom he must take along with it.

To raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.] According to the law mentioned Deut. xxv. 5, &c. as it is commonly interpreted. But it was rather (in Mr. Selden's opinion) the fulfilling of the law, mentioned Lev. xxv. 24, 25. lib. de Successionibus ad Leges Hebr. cap. 15. where he observes, that this phrase, *to raise up the name of the dead*, (which is mentioned also, ver. 10.) is quite different from that mentioned in Deuteronomy; being no more, as R. Solomon notes, (upon iii. 9.) than if he had said, that the name of *her dead husband may be had in remembrance, so that when she came into that field, men might say, This is the wife of Mahlon.* There is a long discourse also in Abarbinel, upon Deut. xxv. to prove, that this doth not belong to that law, of a man's raising up seed to his brother. (See Buxtorf, de Sponsal. et Divortiis, sect. 27.) But if it do, Grotius thinks that law only obliged ὁμοπάτριοι, *brethren by the same father* to marry the brother's widow; but custom, in process of time, obliged the next of kin to do it. (See upon Matt. xxii. 24.)

Ver. 6. *And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my own inheritance.*] He had a wife and children already, which made him afraid to marry a poor woman with a small parcel of land, which would not provide for the children he might have by her, without diminishing his own inheritance of which he was possessed. To which the Chaldee paraphrast adds, that it might have made great contentions in his family: for thus he makes him speak, *I cannot redeem it* (viz. *on that condition*), *for I have a wife already; and it is not fit for me to bring another into my house, for fear brawling and quarrelling arise in it, and lest I hurt my own inheritance.* In like manner the Midrasch, upon this book, makes him discourse. But Rasi interprets the words, as if the meaning was, that he *should bring a blot upon his posterity*, by marrying a Moabitish woman (which he thought was forbidden by the law), for children are called a heritage, Psal. cxxvii. 3. But in this he acknowledges the man was mistaken, as many of their ancient doctors were, for the law did not forbid the marrying a woman of that country. But the plainest sense is (as Mr. Selden observes), that many inconveniences might arise in his family by this marriage, not only by the disagreement of his wives, but by the difficulty of providing for so many children as she might bring him, and of giving them good education, and by distracting his inheritance, and such-like things; which he prudently considered as good reasons of his refusal. (See lib. i. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 9.)

Redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.] Which is thus paraphrased by the Targum, *Do thou therefore redeem it, because thou hast no wife, which hinders me from redeeming.*

Ver. 7. *Now this was the manner in former times in Israel, concerning redeeming, and concerning changing.*] There was no law, that we can find, about the following rite, but only custom, which had long prevailed; when men redeemed lands that had been alienated, or gave possession of them to another person.

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For to confirm all things.] To make the bargain valid.

A man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour; and this was a testimony in Israel.] A sufficient evidence, that he transferred all his right unto that person to whom he delivered his shoe. It is not easy to give an account of the original of this custom; but the reason of it is plain enough, it being a natural signification that he resigned his interest in the land, by giving him his shoe, wherewith he used to walk in it, to the end that he might enter into it, and take possession of it himself.

The Targum, instead of his *shoe*, hath the *right-hand glove;* it being the custom, perhaps, in his time, to give that in room of the shoe. For it is less troublesome to pull off a glove than a shoe, and deliver it to another, though it hath the same signification; as now the Jews deliver a handkerchief to the same purpose. So R. Solomon Jarchi affirms, *We acquire, or buy, now by a handkerchief, or veil, instead of a shoe.*

Ver. 8. *Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee.*] After the accustomed manner.

So he drew off his shoe.] And gave it Boaz, in token that he parted with all his right to him. The Jewish doctors, indeed, differ very much about this matter; for some say, he that parted with his right to redeem the land pulled off his shoe, and gave it to him that bought it; but others, that he who bought it, gave his shoe to him that sold it. The truth is, the text may be either way understood, but it seems to me most reasonable to think, that he who parted with his right parted with his shoe also. See Selden, lib. vi. de Jure Nat. et Gent. juxta Disciplin. Hebr. cap. 5. where he observes again, how different this was from the rites used, when one renounced his brother's wife. And Abarbinel looks upon this as a demonstration, that the plucking off the shoe here mentioned, is not the same with that in Deut. xxv. For Ruth doth not here appear to loose his shoe, (as the brother's wife is there ordered to do, ver. 9.) much less did she come to spit in his face; of which there is not one word in this ceremony; which he shews wholly belongs to the sale of lands, or to their redemption, and bringing them back again into the family to which they belonged. This appears from the following words, where mention is made of nothing but of a purchase of Elimelech's estate.

Ver. 9. *And Boaz said unto the elders, and to all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.*] She had the first right in the land after the death of her husband, and her two sons after her; which she entirely parted withal by this contract unto Boaz, to whom the other kinsman had passed over his right of redemption, by the political ceremony of plucking off the shoe.

Ver. 10. *Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife.*] He had her by the right of the same purchase, and did not succeed into the right of a brother, mentioned in Deut. xxv.; for he was not brother to Elimelech, but only a remote kinsman of the same family, as Abarbinel there observes, who could not enjoy the land, while she lived, unless he would take her with it; to whom it belonged as long as she lived, and was to go to her issue when she died.

To raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.] That the parcel of land which he bought, might still be called by the name of Mahlon, whose wife Boaz married.

That the name of the dead be not cut off from his brethren, and from the gate of his place.] That his name hereby might be remembered, not only in his own family, but in all the city of Beth-lehem; for by *the gate of his place*, is meant all the people that entered in at the gate.

Ye are witnesses this day.] Both that he bought the land, and Ruth together with it, at such a time.

Ver. 11. *And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses.*] After this open declaration, there was no need of any instrument in writing to confirm the purchase.

The Lord make the woman that is come into thy house like Rachel and like Leah.] Such a solemn benediction of those who were going to be married was very ancient, as we learn from Gen. xxiv. 60. and the Jews continue it to this day, which, they say, was always in the presence of ten grave persons, at the least, (as Mr. Selden observes, lib. ii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 12.) conformable to this example of Boaz, (ver. 2.) and the eldest of them pronounced the benediction, which was a ratification of what was agreed: so our Mr. Thorndike excellently observes, that the benediction, which we Christians use in marriage, is a sign of the allowance of the church presupposed, as this benediction of Boaz and Ruth presupposeth the act to be allowed by the elders, or consistory, who sat in the gate of Bethlehem. See Rites of the Church in a Christian State, p. 241. In the Review of which he observes, that this seems to be confirmed by the opinion of Epiphanius, who saith, Our Lord was invited to the marriage of Cana in Galilee, that, as a prophet, he might bless the marriage; which, it is certain, the church hath always practised, to signify, that the marriage was approved to be made according to the laws of God. And therefore Conradus Pellicanus (an eminent man at the beginning of the Reformation) here well notes, that *prayers and benedictions are never to be omitted in marriage.*

Like Rachel and Leah.] That is, very fruitful.

Which two did build up the house of Israel.] Were blessed with a numerous posterity. They do not mention the two handmaids, because these were Jacob's principal wives (and Rachel chosen first, as she is here placed), whose servants bare children, not for themselves, but their mistresses. (See Gen. xxx. 3.)

And do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.] These two are but different names of the same place, where Boaz and Ruth also lived, who seems now to have been present, as Josephus represents her, and who they prayed might be a great example of all virtue in that city.

Ver. 12. *And let thy house be like the house of Pharez (whom Tamar bare unto Judah), of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.*] Both Boaz, and all the Beth-lehemites, derived their original from Pharez, whose family was very illustrious in Israel; and therefore they could not have wished Boaz a greater blessing, than to have as noble an issue as he was to Judah.

Ver. 13. *So Boaz took Ruth.*] Carried her home to his own house, with all the solemnity, it is likely, which was usual in such cases.

And she was his wife.] And all other rites, which were

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observed in those days, being performed, they were completely made man and wife.

And when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son.] A year after their marriage, as Josephus saith

Ver. 14. *And the women said unto Naomi.*] After Ruth's delivery.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not left thee this day without a kinsman.] The Hebrew name of *goel* (which we translate *kinsman)* properly belonged to Boaz, and not to his son, who was now born: and yet the child seems to be here meant, which made the Arabic translator render it, *hath not left thee without an heir,* who being to succeed his father, what he had done might be ascribed to his son.

That his name may be famous in Israel.] They hoped God would make him an eminent person among them.

Ver. 15. *And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life.*] Such a comfort, as to make her, in some sort, young again.

And a nourisher of thine old age.] And in old age take care of her, and support her.

For thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.] For they hoped he would inherit his mother's virtues, and particularly her affection to Naomi, which was so surpassing, that it made her a greater blessing to her, than a great many sons of her own body would have been; for they would scarce have been able, out of so small a fortune, to maintain themselves; whereas this being the son of a rich father, could afford her also a plentiful maintenance.

Ver. 16. *And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her own bosom, and became nurse unto it.*] Brought it up with a most tender affection, for his mother gave him suck: and then Naomi took him from her, and educated him as her own child.

Ver. 17. *And the women her neighbours gave it a name.*] It did not belong to the neighbours, but to the father or mother, to name the child; but they advised Naomi to call it by a name suitable to their foregoing discourse. (See Luke i. 39, &c.)

Saying, There is a son born unto Naomi.] Unto whom they had promised such great comfort from this child, that it moved them to desire it might have the following name.

And they called his name Obed.] That is, one who should be very serviceable unto her; for *Obed* signifies δουλεύων, *a servant,* as Josephus interprets it. By which name, saith he, Naomi called the child κατὰ συμβουλίαν γυναικῶν, *by the advice and counsel of the women,* ἐπὶ γηροκομίᾳ αὐτῆς τραφησάμενον, *as one appointed to take care of her in old age.* The Targum thus paraphrases upon this name, *Who served the Lord of the world with a perfect heart;* a piece of which service consisted in giving due honour unto parents. Some make it a question, why this child was not called Mahlon, according to the law which seems to require it? But this hath been answered already, that what Boaz did, was not in obedience to the law in Deut. xxv. for he was not the brother of Mahlon (in which case the child must have borne Mahlon's name), but only a remote kinsman.

He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.] For whose sake this whole book seems to have been written, that it might be certainly known from whom he was descended, the Messiah being to spring from him; which is the reason why the following genealogy is annexed for the conclusion of this book.

Ver. 18. *Now these are the generations of Pharez.*] He begins no higher, because every one knew that Pharez was the grandson of Jacob, and he the son of Isaac, &c.

Pharez begat Hezron.] In the land of Canaan, before they went down into Egypt, as we read Gen. xlvi. 12.

Ver. 19. *And Hezron begat Ram.*] So he is called in 1 Chron. ii. 6. but in the New Testament, Aram, (Matt. i. 3. Luke iii. 33.)

And Ram begat Amminadab.] These two were born in the land of Egypt, where Amminadab also begat Nahshon.

Ver. 20. *And Amminadab begat Nahshon.*] Who was prince of the children of Judah, when they came out of Egypt, as the author of the book of Chronicles observes, (1 Chron. ii. 10.) which is confirmed by Moses, in his words, Numb. i. 7. vii. 12. x. 14. where we find, that, in the second year after their coming out of Egypt, he was the principal person in his tribe.

And Nahshon begat Salmon.] Who was born in the wilderness, in all probability, and was called also Salma, (1 Chron. ii. 11.)

Ver. 21. *And Salmon begat Boaz.*] Of Rahab, whom he took to be his wife after the taking of Jericho, (Matt. i. 5.)

And Boaz begat Obed.] Here the Targum makes Boaz the same with Ibzan, Judg. xii. 8. (which is altogether improbable), in whose days he saith the famine, spoken of in this book, happened; from which they were delivered by the prayers of Boaz.

Ver. 22. *And Obed begat Jesse.*] Who was also called Nahash, as some think, and is expressly affirmed by the Targum, because Zeruiah and Abigail are said to be David's sisters, 1 Chron. ii. 16. and Abigail is said to be the daughter of Nahash, 2 Sam. xvii. 25. But David's mother, perhaps, had a former husband, whose name was Nahash, by whom she had these daughters.

And Jesse begat David.] Unto whose time there being but four generations; and Salmon, the first of the four, married Rahab, after their entrance into Canaan; from thence, to the fourth year of king Solomon, there being four hundred and forty years, (as appears from 1 Kings vi. 2.) it must necessarily follow, that, unless we suppose some other coming between (for which we have no good warrant), these four persons, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, begat a child in their old age. And, indeed, Boaz supposes himself to be no young man, when he spake those words to Ruth, iii. 10. And Jesse was counted an old man, when David his son was a youth, (1 Sam. xvii. 12.) and therefore, that account which primate Usher hath given of this matter, in his Chronologia Sacra, par. i. cap. 12. seems very reasonable, that taking out of that number of four hundred and forty, the seventy years that David lived, and the four first years of Solomon's reign; then, from their coming into the land of Canaan, to the nativity of David, there remain three hundred sixty and six, as Aben Ezra observes in the conclusion of this book. Now these years may be thus commodiously distributed, if we suppose Rahab to have borne Boaz in the forty-second year after they entered Canaan; and if we assign a hundred and two years before he begat Obed; and a hundred and eleven to Obed, before he begat Jesse; and as many to Jesse before he begat David; which make the just sum of three hundred

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sixty and six. And this is nothing strange; for long after this time, we read of very old men who might be capable to beget children at the age now mentioned; particularly Jehoiada the high-priest, who lived a hundred and thirty years, (2 Chron. xxiv. 15.) And in our days, Thomas Parr lived a hundred and fifty-two years, and begat a child when he was a hundred and five years old, as the same primate there observes, and produces a great many other examples of persons who lived to a great age, very vigorous. And, if we could believe the Jewish doctors, they tell us in Juthasm, that Ruth lived to the time of Solomon, and sat with Bath-sheba, when he caused a seat to be set for her at his right hand, (1 Kings ii. 19.) I shall only add, that Bonfrerius hath largely confirmed this opinion of these persons begetting the children here mentioned in their old age, and confuted those who explain this otherways, by supposing three Boazes, and other devices, in his commentary upon the first verse of this book. Only he (and Serrarius, also, who before him was of the same mind) has made a different distribution of the three hundred sixty-six years beforementioned, by supposing other years of their age, wherein these four persons begat their sons; which is not at all material.

I shall end all with the Targum's paraphrase on the last words of this book; which are, *Jesse begat David king of Israel.* Which some Latin copies following, from thence Cardinal Cajetan concludes, this book was written not only after the birth of David, but after he was made king of Israel; that is, after he was anointed by Samuel to be king of Israel.

THE

FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

THE two books which bear the name of SAMUEL, are thought by the Talmudists, in Bava Bathra, to have been composed, in part, by himself (that is, the first twenty-four chapters of the first book), and the rest by Gad and Nathan the prophets. And so Procopius Gazæus saith, that this book is called by the Syrians the Prophecy of Samuel. This opinion the Talmudists found upon the 1 Chron. xxix. 29. where it is said, "Now the acts of David, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer." By which words it is evident, that Samuel did write a book, and that it contained some of the acts of David, which, it is very probable, are these that we read in this book. Besides which there were two other books, written by two other prophets, who continued his history to the end of his life. It must be confessed, indeed, that three distinct books are mentioned in that place of the Chronicles; and we cannot be sure that we have in those two books all that was contained in those three; but only an extract of the substance of them, which perhaps might be made by some following prophet, and divided into two books, which were called by the name of Samuel, because he was the most eminent person of the three, and his acts are here recorded in the first place. Certain it is, this work was extant before the book of the Kings was written; for mention is there made, of what we read in this history, 1 Kings ii. 27. And in the book of the Chronicles several things are repeated, which we find here, in the very same words. It is highly probable, also, that Samuel having undertaken to write the history of the Judges (to which as an appendix he added the book of Ruth), would not leave it imperfect; but added in this book what concerned Eli and himself; who were the last judges of that nation.

See the preface to the book of Judges.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *NOW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim.*] Either he was born at this place, or lived there (perhaps both), which is called Ramah, ver. 19. of this chapter; and here Ramathaim (in the dual number, as the grammarians speak), because it was built upon two hills, which made it appear like a double city. The title of Zophim seems to be added to it, because it being a high place, there was a watch-tower in it: where, upon occasion, men were set to observe who approached from all parts round about. Or, as St. Jerome, and others think, because here was a school of the prophets, who were wont to seat themselves in such places as were remote from company, and fit for contemplation; which made Elijah and Elisha frequent Mount Carmel. And thus the Chaldee paraphrase translates these words, *There was a man of Ramathaim, a disciple of the prophets.* Who in the book of Ezekiel are called *watchmen:* and from hence some think came the Greek word Σοφός: which was the title of astronomers at the first, who from high places contemplated the stars.

Of Mount Ephraim.] This is added to distinguish this from other places, which had the name of Ramah, in other tribes; particularly in that of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 25.

And his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu.] It appears by this genealogy, that Samuel was a Levite, of the family of the Kohathites; as we read 1 Chron. vi. 33, 34, &c. See Mr. Selden, in his book de Succession. in Pontif. lib. i. cap. 18. where he confutes those who fancy Samuel was a priest, yea, the high-priest, as Petavius himself imagined.

The son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.] Ephrata is the same with Beth-lehem, which was in the tribe of Judah. Therefore Zuph is not called an Ephrathite, because he was descended from the Beth-lehemites (for he was a Levite), but

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because he dwelt in that place; as the Levites were dispersed through all the tribes. So Mr. Selden there speaks (from the Hebrew doctors, and the Targum), "Domicilii ratione, non sanguinis;" he is called an Ephrathite, *on the account of his habitation, not of his blood.*

Ver. 2. *And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah,* &c.] Hannah seems to have been his first wife, who proving barren, his earnest desire of children moved him to take another, as Abraham had by Sarah's consent; which was not in those times disallowed by God; who saith himself, that he had given to David many wives, (2 Sam. xii. 8.) which shews it was not then a sin in them to have more than one. (See Grotius, in his book de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 5. sect. 9, 10.)

Ver. 3. *And the man went up out of his city.*] For though Ramah stood high, yet Shiloh stood higher: and he first went down the hill from Ramah, before he could go up to the other.

Yearly to worship, and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh.] Where the tabernacle now was, and where all sacrifices were to be offered, and no where else. Hither all the people were bound to resort, at the three great festivals, (Deut. xvi. 16.) and not to appear before the Lord empty. Accordingly Elkanah not only *worshipped* God, with prayers and thanksgivings, but *offered* such sacrifices as were suitable to the festival: and it is likely presented other gifts, according to his ability, as is there required, ver. 17.

And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there.] Ready to offer such sacrifices as were brought to the altar. Whose service Elkanah did not refuse to use, because they were notoriously profane; but reverenced their office, as still priests of the Lord, from whose impure hands he vouchsafed to accept the offerings of pious people.

Ver. 4. *And when the time was that Elkanah offered.*] His peace-offerings, which were wont to accompany others at the great festivals. For instance, at the Passover, they offered not only the paschal lamb, but several other sacrifices, as I noted upon Deut. xvi. 7; all the seven days of unleavened bread having peculiar sacrifices belonging to them. (See Numb. xxviii.) And so there were on the seven days of the feast of tabernacles, (Numb. xxix.) Now, on some of these days, Elkanah offered such sacrifices as might make a feast for his family and friends, according to the law, Deut. xii. 12.

He gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all his sons and daughters.] The males only were bound to appear before God at these festivals; but devout persons were wont to bring their wives also with them, and their daughters as well as sons; especially when they dwelt so near the house of God as Elkanah did, whose habitation at Ramah was not above seven miles from Shiloh. It doth not appear that there was any peculiar court at the tabernacle (as there was afterward at the temple) for the women to worship in by themselves; but they came in with their husbands, and performed their duty close to them.

Portions.] Of that part of the peace-offerings which belonged to him that offered them. Which was the whole, except the fat which belonged to the Lord, and the breast and right shoulder which belonged to the priest. (Lev. vii. 34.) With the rest the sacrificer made a feast for himself, his family, and friends; giving to every one a portion of the sacrifice; whereby they had communion with the Lord, by partaking with him of his sacrifice, which had been offered to him at his altar.

Ver. 5. *But to Hannah he gave a worthy portion.*] Or a double portion; in token of his extraordinary respect and kindness to her.

For he loved Hannah: but the Lord had shut up her womb.] Or, *though the Lord,* &c. Her barrenness did not make him love her less, but rather more; because he would support and comfort her under that affliction.

Ver. 6. *And her adversary also provoked her sore, to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb.*] It added to her affliction, that Peninnah set herself against her; and was wont to twit her with her barrenness, saying, when her husband sent her a more liberal portion of the holy things than she received, Though he be so kind to you, yet you bring him no children, as I do; which gave her great vexation.

Ver. 7. *And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her.*] She constantly took this occasion to upbraid her with her barrenness, when her husband expressed such extraordinary kindness to her.

Therefore she wept, and did not eat.] Her grief was so great, that it made her turn the festival into a fast. So Tertullian understands it, who (in his book de Jejuniis, cap. 7.) saith, God rewarded her fasting and prayers with what she desired, vouchsafing, "inanem cibo ventrem filio implere, et quidem propheta;" *to fill her belly empty of meat with a son, and he a prophet.*

Ver. 8. *Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?*] In him we have an example of a most excellent husband, who patiently tolerated the insolent humour of Peninnah, and comforted dejected Hannah with words full of tender affection. Which was truly, in St. Peter's language, to dwell with his wives, κατὰ γνῶσιν, *according to knowledge,* as Victorinus Strigelius here observes. We cannot from the last words of this verse conclude (as some of the Hebrew doctors do) that Peninnah had ten sons (which was not such a pleasure to her as the affection he had for Hannah would have been), for they may signify, according to the common language of holy Scripture, only a great many sons.

Ver. 9. *And Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk.*] The kind words of Elkanah seem to have persuaded her to eat and drink cheerfully. In whom we have an example of an excellent wife; who, sensible of her husband's kindness, endeavoured to please him by complying with his desires, and avoiding all things that might be grievous to him.

Now Eli the priest.] He was both the high-priest and also the judge at this time of the Israelites, being born in the end of Gideon's judicature, and died in the middle of the Philistines' tyranny over the Israelites, twenty years before the great victory Samuel got over them at Eben-ezer, as Sir John Marsham computes, who rightly observes, that whensoever his judicature began (which is not recorded) it consisted only in hearing and judging causes by his pontifical authority. For he wrought no deliverance for Israel

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that we read of: but was such a judge as Samuel's sons were, (viii. 1.) and as Samuel himself was after Saul began to reign. When all the days of his life he continued to go about the country and do justice, which he administered also when he came home at his own house, (vii. 15. 17.)

Sat upon a seat by a post.] The Hebrew word is *upon a throne;* it being a seat raised up to some height to make him conspicuous to all that entered into the house of God, where he sat at the door of it. The Jews, in Seder Olam, and in Jalkut, have a conceit that Eli was this very day, when Hannah came to pray, made judge of Israel: so that from hence they date the beginning of his judicature. But this is a weak conjecture, built merely on this phrase, *sat on his seat.* Where, as Abarbinel observes, he sat as the high-priest, and not as a judge. And this was no new thing, but according to custom, that he might preserve good order there; give his advice to those who had occasion to consult him; resolve their doubts, and give them his blessing. And he thinks that Samuel was born ten years or more before the judicature of Eli.

In the temple of the Lord.] It is not unusual to call the tabernacle by the name of a temple: as the temple, when it was built, is called a tabernacle. (See Jer. x. 20. Lament. ii. 6.) Yet the Talmudists, from the Hebrew word *hachil* (which is here used), say, that when the tabernacle was removed from Gilgal to Shiloh, the sides of it were built of stone, and covered at the top with curtains, having no solid roof. And from hence they fancy it is called *beth,* the *house of the Lord,* (ver. 24.) which Maimonides interprets *a house of stone.* But there is no certainty of this: for such words as these have a larger sense. And indeed we are taught as much by the 1 Kings iii. 2. where it is expressly said, that there was *no house built unto the name of the Lord,* until the days of Solomon: and 2 Sam. vii. 6. where Nathan speaks in God's name to David, in these words, " I have not dwelt in a house since I came out of Egypt." (See L'Empereur, in his preface to Codex Middoth.)

From the first words of this verse, it appears that Hannah rose up to go to the temple at the time of the evening sacrifice, for it was after they had dined.

Ver. 10. *And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.*] Her grief returned when she was alone, and thought of her barrenness; which made her pray with great vehemence, and many tears, for a child.

Ver. 11. *And she vowed a vow.*] As was usual, when they earnestly longed to obtain what they sought with prayers and tears.

And said, O Lord, if thou wilt indeed look upon the afflictions of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid.] These are three various expressions of the same thing: whereby she declares, though with great humility, how much she was concerned, to obtain her request, of being delivered from her barrenness: for that is the meaning of *looking upon her affliction,* and *remembering her.* (See Gen. viii. 1. Exod. iii. 7. 16.)

But wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child.] She thrice calls herself his handmaid, out of a profound sense of her meanness and his majesty: and desires a man-child, because only such could wait upon the Lord in the service of the tabernacle; as she intended her son should do, if God bestowed one upon her.

Then will I give unto the Lord all the days of his life.] The Levites were not bound to serve at the tabernacle until they were twenty-five years old; and not after they were fifty: but she devoted him to the ministry there from his childhood, as long as he lived.

And there shall no razor come upon his head.] She vowed he should be a Nazarite; part of whose description this is, (Numb. vi. 5.) And so the best of the Jewish doctors interpret it; for the exposition of the Chaldee paraphrast is very forced: but from hence the opinion of the Talmudists is confuted, who say, (in the Mischna, in the title Sota, cap. 3.) that a man might devote his child to be a Nazarite before he was of age; but a woman could not. Nor doth any of them take notice of this example of Hannah; which hath made some think, that possibly they looked upon this as done by an extraordinary motion, and therefore not to be a rule to others; especially since she did it before her child was born. (See J. Wagenseil, in his learned notes upon that book, p. 448.)

Ver. 12. *And it came to pass, that as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth.*] The inward anguish of her soul, it is probable, made the motions of her mouth and her countenance very different from what is usual.

Ver. 13. *Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she had been drunk.*] Hearing her say nothing, but only seeing her lips move a long time; with such gestures, it is likely, of her body, hands, and eyes, as argued a very great commotion; he took her to be disordered with the wine she had drunk liberally at the forenamed feast. For it is apt to make one talk much, and the great agony wherein she was might something distort her face.

Ver. 14. *And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee.*] He seems to bid her go to bed and sleep; and then come and pray to God.

Ver. 15. *And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord; I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: and have drunk neither wine nor strong drink.*] Of the difference between *wine* and *strong drink,* see Numb. vi. 3. 5. Great affliction of spirit makes one distaste meat and drink

But have poured out my soul before the Lord.] An usual expression for sincere and fervent prayer.

Ver. 16. *Account not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial.*] This is a phrase signifying the most lewd persons, that regarded neither God nor men. (See Deut. xiii. 13.)

For out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.] The accusation against her being very foul, she purgeth herself from it very earnestly; but in a modest manner, and with due respect to the office which Eli held in the church.

Ver. 17. *And Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of heaven grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.*] Her sober and respectful answer convinced the old man of his error; and moved him to dismiss her with his blessing, and a solemn prayer to God that he would grant her request.

Ver. 18. *And she said, Let thy handmaid find grace in thy sight.*] For which she returned him most humble thanks, and desired the continuance of his prayers.

So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.] She departed from the temple

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with such satisfaction and assurance her own prayers and his would be heard, that there remained no more any token of sorrow and grief; but she ate her meat, and looked cheerfully.

Ver. 19. *And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned, and came to their house in Ramah.*] I suppose she acquainted Elkanah with her prayer and with Eli's blessing: and it is likely that he now made a solemn vow to God if he would be pleased to fulfil her petition. (See ver. 21.)

And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the Lord remembered her.] According to her prayer, (ver. 11.)

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, when the time was come about, after Hannah conceived.*] The usual time that women go with child before they be delivered.

That she bare a son, and called his name Samuel.] Sometimes fathers, and sometimes mothers, gave the name to their children. (See upon Gen. iv. 26.)

Saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord.] This was the reason of his name: which she gave him, that he as well as she might keep in mind the interest God had in him; from whom she obtained him by ardent prayers. For *Saulmeel* (which is contracted into Samuel) signifies *asked of God*, as we translate this word in the margin of our Bibles. He was born (as Sir John Marsham computes with great probability) in the time when the Philistines domineered over Israel for forty years together, (see Judges x. 7. xiii. 1.) but in what year cannot certainly be determined.

Ver. 21. *And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice.*] At the feast of the Passover, or some other of the three great festivals. He is a great example of piety; who carried his whole family to worship God with him at those solemn times which the law enjoined.

And his vow.] Which it is likely he made, either when he saw his wife was with child, or, perhaps, before, when she told him what hope she had her prayer would be heard, and he worshipped God, (ver. 19.)

Ver. 22. *But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up till the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever.*] She was not bound by the law to go up with her husband: and, therefore, though she was wont to go, she resolved, as became a prudent woman, to stay at home till the child was strong enough, not only to accompany her, but to be left at the house of the Lord, and be capable of being instructed in the service of God.

Ver. 23. *And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good: tarry until thou hast weaned him.*] Interpreters here note the sweet agreement that ought to be (according to the example of this happy couple) between husband and wife.

Only the Lord establish his word.] We do not read of any thing the Lord had spoken about this child: unless Elkanah looked upon what Eli had said as spoken by God, because he was God's high-priest. Or the Hebrew words may be translated, *the Lord establish his work; i. e.* perfect what he hath begun, by making the child grow till he was fit for his service. For the word *dabar* signifies any *matter* or *thing* as well as *word*.

So the woman abode.] At home.

And gave the child suck till she weaned him.] She herself was his nurse, and suckled him, after the example of Sarah. (See upon Gen. xxi. 7.) And, it is likely, continued to do so (out of her great affection to him) several years. Some think three; but it is not improbable six or seven, as Lyra conjectures. And so long I remember one to have sucked, in the place where I was born.

Ver. 24. *And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine.*] As they were not to appear before the Lord empty; so, upon this occasion, they brought an ample offering to him; to testify their gratitude to the Divine Majesty. And it is highly probable, that one of these bullocks was wholly offered to God as a burnt-offering, and the other two were peace-offerings; or, as some will have it, one a sin-offering, and the other a peace-offering. Which had a large measure of flour for a meat-offering, and of wine also attending it; that they might rejoice together before the Lord, when they feasted with him upon the peace-offering.

And brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young.] In the Hebrew the words are, *hanaar-naar*, the child was a child, *i. e.* wholly at their disposal.

Ver. 25. *And they slew the bullock, and brought the child to Eli.*] They first performed their duty to God, by offering a whole burnt-offering to him; reserving the rest, I suppose, till they had acquainted Eli with God's goodness to them, that they might all rejoice together.

Ver. 26. *And she said, Oh, my lord! as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord.*] Many take these words, *as thy soul liveth*, for an oath; whereby she assures him, that, as certain as he was alive, she was the person whom he saw in that place praying, and took for a distempered woman. But others (particularly D. Kimchi) think there is nothing of an oath in them, they being only a form of well-wishing to him; as if she said, I wish thee a long life, that thou mayest educate my son.

Ver. 27. *For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him.*] She had told him nothing of what she prayed for, when he reproved her, but only in general, that she was extremely afflicted for want of something, which she earnestly begged of God. But now she acquaints him with it, and with her vow she made, if God granted her desire; which she was now come to accomplish.

Ver. 28. *And therefore also I have lent him unto the Lord.*] Or, *restored* him to the Lord (as the Targum expounds it), from whose gift she received him.

As long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord.] Or, as the words may be translated, *all the days that he shall be desired for the Lord.* That is, as long as God should think fit to employ him in his own house; which was till he made him a judge, (vii. 15.) Then he was not fixed at Shiloh, but went about the country to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh; and then settled at his own house in Ramah, as we read there, ver. 17.

And he worshipped the Lord there.] This shews that Elkanah was with Hannah, and gave his consent to this dedication of their child, to such service as God should think fit to employ him in: which he humbly prayed God to accept.

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CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AND Hannah prayed, and said.*] Hymns are wont to be comprehended under the name of *prayers*, (Psal. lxxi. 20.) to the composition of which holy souls were sometimes raised by Divine inspiration, in their devout meditations upon the extraordinary goodness of God to them. And, indeed, it was the most ancient way, as I have observed heretofore, of preserving the memory of things to posterity: poets being more ancient than historians, or orators, as Lactantius observes, lib. vii. Div. Instit. cap. 23. Nor were the western people less famous for this than the eastern: the Germans, for instance, having their most ancient annals in verse; as Hermannus Conringius hath shewn out of a great many authors, in his preface to Corn. Tacitus, de Germanorum Moribus.

My heart rejoiceth in the Lord.] She was acted by the same spirit which moved St. James to give this direction, chap. v. ver. 13. "Is any afflicted, let him pray, (as she did, i. 10.) is any merry, let him sing psalms," as she now doth: for she was lately extremely sad and sorrowful, and could not eat: but now, by the goodness of God, is filled with joy; which made her burst out into this thanksgiving.

My horn is exalted in the Lord.] She who was bowed down and dejected, now lifts up her head and triumphs: for *exalting the horn* signifies the height of glory.

My mouth is enlarged over my enemy.] She was now furnished with a full answer to Peninnah, who upbraided her with her sterility.

Because I rejoice in thy salvation.] All this joy and triumph arose from the goodness of God to her; who had delivered her from the reproach of barrenness: which raised her, as appears by the sequel, to the expectation of far greater things.

Ver. 2. *There is none holy as the Lord.*] The *holiness* of God signifies his peerless perfections; as Mr. Mede hath shewn in many parts of his works. (See p. 11.)

For there is none besides thee.] Which perfections are peculiar to himself: for though the Scripture vouchsafeth sometimes unto the gentile *demons* the name of *gods*, yet it never calls them *holy ones*.

Neither is there any rock like our Rock.] See upon Deut. xxxii. 31.

Ver. 3. *Talk no more so exceeding proudly.*] This was good advice to Peninnah, and such-like persons; not to insult over others who are not so happy as themselves.

Let not arrogance come out of your mouth.] Or, as the Targum interprets it, *forbear reproaches*. For so the Hebrew word *atat* signifies, *hard words*.

For the Lord is a God of knowledge.] None knows what he intends, who perhaps will exalt those who are now abased. Or, he knows how to bring to pass such things as men think to be impossible.

And by him acts are weighed.] Or, *by him works are prepared*: even when there is no disposition in nature to them.

Ver. 4. *The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girt with strength.*] Now the great sense she had of God's power branches out itself into an humble acknowledgment of this glorious attribute, in divers instances. And, first, in vanquishing the most victorious: for *bows* were a principal part of warriors' weapons, (Psal. xliv. 6.) and their *girdles* being a principal part of the military habit, is elegantly translated to signify strength and warlike prowess. Whence Virgil calls feeble persons unmeet for war, *discinctos, ungirt*, as Servius observes. (See Bochart, in Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 13.) Whence the apostle, among the spiritual armour, exhorts the Ephesians to be *girt about with truth*, (Ephes. vi.) For to *gird* and to *arm*, to be *girt* and to be *armed*, are the same thing in Greek and Latin authors. (See also Psal. xviii. 39. lxv. 6.)

Ver. 5. *They that were full have hired themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased.*] To complain of hunger. This vicissitude of human affairs, especially the sudden turns there are sometimes, from a great height of prosperity to a very low condition, and on the contrary, are very wonderful, and seriously to be pondered; that no man may be proud, nor any man despair. The instances of these in history are to be found in a great many authors, besides what our own experience may furnish us withal.

So that the barren hath born seven.] That is, many children. She reflects upon the great change which God had made in her own condition. And Procopius Gazæus notes, that here, "Hymno prophetiam admiscet;" *she mingles prophecy with her hymn of praise*, and foretells the fecundity of the church: for the number *seven* denotes a multitude.

And she that hath many children is waxen feeble.] The Jews fancy, that every time Hannah bare a child, two of Peninnah's children died. But this seems rather to have a general respect to those that have been fertile, and grow barren when God pleaseth.

Ver. 6. *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.*] The same thing is repeated in different words; and the sense is, the power of life and death is in the hands of God: whom he pleases he takes out of the world, and whom he pleases he continues in it; raising men up even from the grave, when they were dropping into it. (See Deut. xxxii. 39. Psal. xxx. 3.)

Ver. 7. *The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and raiseth up.*] She acknowledgeth the power and wisdom of God, in making men of different eruditions; some poor, and others rich; yea, in making the same men who were very poor to become very rich; and they who were mean and contemptible become great and eminent. Theodoret treats excellently of the wise providence of God, in not making men all alike; but some of a lower, some of a higher rank: Oration vi. against the heathens.

Ver. 8. *He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill; to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.*] Instances of this kind in the Holy Scriptures are Joseph and Daniel; the one a prisoner, the other a captive: but preferred to the highest dignity, by the kings of Egypt and Babylon. And in these later ages, Victorinus Strigelius observes a memorable instance of the truth of these words, in Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary; who was brought out of prison, and set on the throne, not by sedition, nor by civil war; but by the unanimous consent of all the estates of the realm, in grateful memory of the benefits they had received by his father, the great Hunniades.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.] These words contain the reason of all that precedes in the five foregoing verses: for the very earth being founded, upheld, and supported by the

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Lord, no wonder that all the inhabitants of it are in his power, to dispose of them as he thinks good.

Ver. 9. *He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness.*] Pious affections in those days rose up, many times, to the height of prophecy: whereby God continued in that nation his true religion, in the midst of their idolatrous inclinations. Accordingly, here Hannah begins to predict the deliverances of the Israelites (who were God's *holy ones*, or *saints*, by being peculiarly separated to him and his service) from the hand of the Philistines, and other enemies: who she prophesies should stumble and fall, as men do in the dark, when the Israelites, by God's direction, succeeded in their enterprises.

For by strength shall no man prevail.] As appeared afterward in Goliath.

Ver. 10. *The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them.*] As he did literally when Samuel fought with the Philistines, (vii. 10.) and when David also vanquished them, (Psal. xviii. 13.) Procopius Gazæus applies this to the assumption of Christ, with the mission of the Holy Ghost, and the happy success of the apostles' preaching, and to Christ's second coming.

The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth.] As he did when he subdued the Philistines, who lived in the extremity of the country of Judea westward: and now sorely oppressed the Israelites.

And he shall give strength unto his King.] That is, to David. Of whom she prophesies; who was most properly God's king, whom he appointed in the room of Saul; who by his disobedience forfeited his kingdom and was rejected by God.

And exalt the horn of his Anointed.] God commanded Saul to be anointed by Samuel, x. 1. but it was upon condition, which he not fulfilling, the same person was commanded to anoint David, xv. 29. xvi. 1. Upon which the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and rested on David, xvi. 13, 14. Whom God so wonderfully protected, that all the subtlety and power of Saul could not destroy him: and when he came to the throne, God wonderfully *exalted him*, as she here speaks: by enlarging his dominion very far, and making him such a glorious prince (higher than the kings of the earth), that he was the most eminent type of the great King of all, our Lord Christ, to whom these words in the fullest sense belong. "For who doth not see, (saith St. Austin, in his seventeenth book, de Civitate Dei, cap. 4.) that the spirit of this woman (whose name was Anna, which signifies *grace*) prophesied of the Christian religion, the city of God, whose king and founder is Christ; and of the grace of God, from which the proud are estranged, that they may fall; but the humble are filled with it, that they may rise:" which is the chief import of this hymn. And, indeed, this is the first time that the name of Messiah (or *Anointed*) is found in Scripture: there being no such word in all the foregoing books of Moses, Joshua, the Judges, or Ruth. And therefore it is the more to be remarked: this prophetess being the first that mentions the Messiah, in this song: with which the song of the blessed Virgin hath such a perfect resemblance, that one cannot but think Hannah had a respect to something higher than the quarrel between her and Peninnah, and the son which God had given her, or the great acts of David: for the words are too magnificent to be confined to so low a sense. And therefore Kimchi upon these words ingenuously acknowledges the King here mentioned is the Messiah, of whom Hannah spake either by prophecy or tradition. For there was a tradition among them, that there should a great King arise in Israel: and she seals up this song, with the mention of that King, who should save them from all their enemies.

It may be thus paraphrased:

1. Great is the goodness of God to me, which makes my heart leap for joy; great is the honour he hath done me: so that my mouth, which had nothing to answer when my enemy upbraided me, now boasts of the favour of God to me, who to my exceeding great joy hath bestowed a son upon me.

2. For the Lord is incomparable in all perfections, which none have but himself alone: whose excellences are so transcendent, that there is none in whom we can find so secure a sanctuary in all our troubles as we have in him.

3. Do not vaunt and brag therefore any more on this fashion, nor speak contemptuously of others: for as nothing can be hid from him, so he knows how to bring to pass the strangest things: nor can any man hinder it (let their pride, and confidence, and power, be ever so great), but his counsel shall stand.

4. The strength of armed forces is good for nothing, if not prospered by him: who brings down those who were mighty conquerors; and advances those who were their miserable slaves.

5. The rich have been seen to fall into such decay, as to want their necessary food: and poor starved wretches have come to great plenty. As likewise barren women, as I, have had a numerous offspring, and they that had many children lost them all.

6. No man can keep himself alive when God calls him away from hence: and he unexpectedly restores men to life, when they were in the very jaws of death.

7. It is according as he orders, that some men are rich, others poor: and the very same men who now are in a low condition, he raises up to greatness and splendour; and, on the contrary, abaseth those that walk in pride.

8. They that are in the most sordid plight he advances, when he pleases, to the most glorious state: for what can hinder him from shaking the very foundations of the earth, and overturning all things, which are upheld and supported only by his almighty power?

9. The best way therefore is, by piety, to secure the favour of God; who, by preserving all his faithful servants from falling, will fill their mouths with his praises: but confound the wicked, who now boast themselves, when with amazement they are thrown down into a miserable condition. For let not any man be so vain as to imagine, that by his strength he can maintain himself in his high station; or keep down good men from rising up to glory.

10. They that oppose God shall be broken in pieces; he will strike a terror into them, and make them fall flat before him. For it is he that is the Judge of the world; and there is no corner of it where men can hide themselves from his sentence. He will advance the king whom he shall choose, even the Lord Christ; and make him great in spite of all opposers: who shall not be able to hinder his exaltation, or the growth and increase of his kingdom.—

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Ver. 11. *And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house.*] When the festival was ended.

And the child did minister unto the Lord.] As soon as he was capable.

Before Eli the priest.] According as he appointed him.

Ver. 12. *Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial.*] Very wicked men, (see Deut. xiii. 13.) being impious, covetous, guilty of violence, and filthy lusts.

They knew not the Lord.] They were not professed atheists; but they minded not the Divine service, nor took any care to do God honour; being ignorant (as Kimchi expounds it) of his law.

Ver. 13. *And the priest's custom was, when any man offered sacrifice.*] Brought his peace-offerings to be offered at the altar.

That the priest's servant came, while the flesh was seething, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand.] The person who brought the peace-offerings having the largest share in these sacrifices, there were certain rooms, when the temple was built, both in the court of the women, and of the men, wherein they had liberty to boil the flesh, in order to feast with God at his own house: which Christians afterward imitated in their *feasts of charity*. The like rooms there were at the tabernacle, in the outward court of it. (See L'Empereur, in his Annot. upon Codex Middoth, cap. 2. sect. 6. p. 80, 81.)

Ver. 14. *And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot.*] There were several sorts of vessels for this use; according as the flesh to be boiled was little or much.

All that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took for himself.] This was a new custom, which they profanely introduced: for, not content with the right shoulder and the breast, which were theirs by the law, (Lev. vii. 32.) they would take what they pleased of the rest, that belonged to the people: at least, so much as a fork with three teeth brought up, when they struck it into the pot where the flesh was boiling.

So they did in Shiloh, unto all the Israelites that came thither.] This aggravated their crime, that they made a constant practice of it: and did not only on some occasions commit such wickedness.

Ver. 15. *And before they burnt the fat.*] Which entirely belonged unto God, (Lev. ii. 16. vii. 23. 25.)

The priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest.] This was a high contempt of God, to demand their part before God had his. For the noblest guests at feasts were always served first.

For he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.] The flesh-hook did not always bring up the best; therefore, as soon as the sacrifice was cut up, they came and took the choicest pieces.

Ver. 16. *And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth: then he would answer, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: if not, I will take it by force.*] This argues the very height of imperious impiety, that such submissive language should not prevail with them to have so much respect to God, as to let him have his portion in the first place: though they offered the priest more than his share, after God was served. None knows to what pitch of wickedness a man may arrive, when once the sense of God is extinguished, and gone out of his mind.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord.*] Having many grievous aggravations.

For men abhorred the offering of the Lord.] Nothing brings religion so much into the contempt of the people, as the open profaneness of those who are the ministers of it.

Ver. 18. *But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child.*] Though very young, yet he carefully performed such offices at the tabernacle as he was capable to discharge: and did not follow the bad example of his familiars and domestics, as we may suppose Hophni and Phinehas were.

Girded with a linen ephod.] We do not read any where of any peculiar garments appointed for the Levites in their ministration, but only for the priests; and this was none of them, as appears from Exod. xxviii. 40, 41. And therefore the ephod which the priests are said to wear in chap. xxii. of this book, ver. 18. were quite different from the ephod ordered in Exod. xxviii. for Aaron the high-priest alone: which had a curious girdle belonging to it, and the breast-plate with precious stones inseparable from it; and was wrought with gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, (Exod. xxviii. 6.) But the ephod which the priests, or any other persons are said to wear, is (for distinction's sake) always called *ephod bad*, an *ephod made of fine linen:* which was not a sacred but an honorary vestment (as I may call it), being a short garment hanging upon the shoulders down to the middle of the back, but without any girdle or curious work in it; which having some likeness to that of the high-priest's, was used by the inferior priests to make them more respected as special ministers of God; and by other great persons upon some solemn occasion, as David did, (2 Sam. vi. 24.) and Eli (seeing such a great appearance of God in him) ordered Samuel to do; though it was not a habit appertaining to the Levites, much less to him who was not of age, according to the exact rules of the law, to serve in the tabernacle. Thus Kimchi and Ralbag understand it. And the LXX. in 2 Sam. vi. 15. translate it στολὴν ἑξαλλον, an *eximious garment*. (See Jo. Braunius de Vest. Sacerd. lib. ii. cap. 6. p. 602.)

It seems no improbable conjecture of Fortunatus Scacchus, that from hence was derived the *latus clavus* among the Romans, which was a vestment proper to their senators and presidents. It was first brought from the Etruscans, by Tullus Hostilius, when he conquered them: whose ancient language agrees so much with the Hebrew, that one may well think they had many things from them. (See Myrothec. cap. iii. 43.)

Ver. 19. *Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.*] The ephod being used, I suppose, only in the service of God, it was provided at the public charge. But for his ordinary wearing, Hannah took care, at her charge, to provide him a coat, and other things, it is likely, suitable to it, that she might still express her piety in contributing to his maintenance at the house of God. And it is very probable, that this little coat was woven with her own hands; as the ancient tradition is, that Christ's seamless coat was woven by the blessed Virgin. And so in Joma the doctors say, (cap. 3.) that a priest might use a garment in his ministry, which was made by his mother. (See Braunius, lib. i. cap. 17.)

Ver. 20. *And Eli blessed Elkanah and Hannah his wife,*

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and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman, for the loan which is lent unto the Lord.] He gave them this benediction by a Divine suggestion; and thereby verified what she uttered in her prophetical song, (ver. 5.)

And they went to their own home.] Their affection to their son did not make them stay there, and neglect their domestic affairs.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters.*] None are losers by what they lend unto the Lord.

And the child Samuel grew before the Lord.] Not only in stature, but in wisdom also and virtue, (see ver. 26.) Of so great moment it is to season the minds of children early with a sense of God and of religion: which is likely to continue with them, and improve, as they grow in years.

Ver. 22. *Now Eli was very old.*] Which made him listless and unactive.

And heard all that his sons did unto all Israel.] Yet wanted not information of all the forementioned enormous practices of his sons.

And how they lay with the women that assembled.] Whose impiety and luxury proceeded so far, as to move them to debauch those women who came to worship God. Of the word *assembled*, see Exod. xxviii. 8. Unto which may be added, that the Hebrew word *tzaba* signifies not only a great many gathered together, but also a *station:* that is, stated times of attendance, which devout women observed for fasting and prayer. For that was their business at the temple; unto which they resorted at certain times for these ends.

At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.] These words sound as if they committed this lewdness in the presence of all the people. But such beastiality would not have been suffered: and therefore this refers to their *assembling* at the door of the tabernacle: from whence they led them to some private room about the tabernacle (as there were many afterward about the temple), where they defiled them.

Ver. 23. *And he said unto them, Why do you these things?*] Beforementioned, ver. 14—16. 22.

For I hear of your evil doings by all this people.] Their wickedness was so notorious, that there was a general complaint of it; which should have moved him to greater severity, than merely to reprove and chide them with such gentleness and lenity, as these and the following words import. Which proceeded partly from the coldness of old age; partly from his too great indulgence to his children; and partly (as Corn. Bonavent. Bertram conjectures) from his being more intent upon the defence of their civil liberties, than the restoring ecclesiastical discipline.

Ver. 24. *Nay, my sons; it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress.*] By making them neglect and despise the service of God, (ver. 17.) and tempting them to lewdness, (ver. 22.) This is the language of a tender father, not of a zealous judge; who ought to have passed a public censure upon them, for their public crimes, by turning them out of their office, or some sharp punishment; which his office gave him authority and power to inflict upon such infamous offenders.

Ver. 25. *If a man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?*] If one neighbour do an injury to another, the business may be composed by the judge; who, interposing his authority, either takes up the difference, or sees the person satisfied who was offended. But if one injure the judge himself (which was the present case), who shall take the confidence to speak in his behalf? Was it ever heard that any one interceded for a man to his prince, when he intended to kill the prince himself? Eli argued well; but he should not have referred their punishment unto God, when it was in his power to punish them himself.

Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father; because the Lord would slay them.] The words may be rendered out of the Hebrew, *But they would not hearken to the voice of their father; therefore the Lord resolved to slay them.* But, according to our translation, the sense is right enough: for when men have long sinned grievously against many admonitions (which it may be supposed their father had given them), whereby they become incurable; God deprives them of that prudent consideration and discretion, which would save them from destruction. So Rasi upon these words, *The sentence of judgment was already sealed against them.*

Ver. 26. *And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord and with men.*] The words in the Hebrew are, *he went on*, or grew great and tall, and *was good*, that is acceptable, *both to God and men.* The meaning is, he made a great progress in wisdom and goodness, as well as increased in stature: so that God was well pleased with him, and he was well esteemed by the people. The same is said of our Saviour, Luke ii. 52. where Theophylact thus glosses, Τουτέστι, καὶ τῷ Θεῷ εὐάρεστα ἔπραττε, καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπαινετά; *i. e. He did those things that were well-pleasing to God, and were praised by men.*

Ver. 27. *And there came a man of God unto Eli.*] That is, a prophet, who was divinely inspired to deliver the following message to him. Some say this was Phinehas, others Elkanah; without any ground.

And said unto him, Thus saith the Lord.] This is the constant language of prophets.

Did I plainly appear.] In the Hebrew, *manifestly reveal myself.*

Unto the house of thy fathers.] Unto Aaron, who was the head of the family of priests. (See Exod. iv. 27.)

When they were in Egypt, in Pharaoh's house?] In miserable bondage. As much as to say, Have I conferred such favours upon you, and do you thus requite me? It is the way of the prophets, when they call men to repentance, to aggravate their sins by an enumeration of God's great benefits unto them. (See Isaiah i. 2, &c. and Micah vi. 3—5.)

Ver. 28. *And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest.*] The highest dignity in the nation.

To offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me?] These were the several parts of the priest's office: and the last contains the greatest of them all, which belonged only to the high-priest; who alone appeared before God to consult him by *urim* and *thummim*, when he wore the golden ephod, with the breast-plate annexed to it; for they were inseparable, (Exod. xxviii. 6. 12. 28.)

And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?] There were none of the sacrifices offered at the altar of which the

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priest had not some share, (see Numb. xviii. 8—10, &c.) For even of the burnt-offerings, which were wholly consumed on the altar, the skin was, by an express law, given to the priest, (Lev. vii. 8.)

Ver. 29. *Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at my offerings, which I have commanded in my habitation.*] As refractory oxen were wont to do, when they were pricked with a goad, to stir them up to work at the plough: which signifies the highest irreverence and contempt of God's authority. (See Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 29. latter end.)

And honourest thy sons above me, &c.] By suffering them to continue in the priest's office, and profanely to feast themselves with the best of the sacrifices, before God was served.

Ver. 30. *Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said, indeed, that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now saith the Lord, Be it far from me.*] God revokes the decree he had made in favour of him and his family, of being high-priests throughout all generations. Which office was first settled upon Eleazar, the eldest son of Aaron, and upon his posterity; for the very same promise is made to Phinehas the son of Eleazar, (Numb. xxv. 15.) which is here said to be made to Eli, who was descended from Ithamar, the youngest son of Aaron: unto whom the high-priesthood was translated from the family of Eleazar, for some sin or other: as now it was resolved it should be translated back again from the family of Ithamar, to that of Eleazar; because of the horrid sins of the sons of Eli. For what cause Phinehas, or his posterity (for there are various opinions about the time), lost the priesthood, and how they recovered it in the time of David, see Mr. Selden, lib. i. de Success. ad Pontificat. cap. 2, 3. and Constant. L'Empereur, in his annot. on Bertram de Repub. Jud. p. 411. Some think, that after Phinehas, those three persons mentioned in 1 Chron. vi. 50, 51. Abishua, Bukki, and Uzzi, succeeded in the priesthood; and then came in Eli: but of this there is no certainty. Procopius Gazæus here observes, that this verse, "Latenter totius Judaici sacerdotii finem innuit;" *doth secretly intimate the abolishing of the whole Jewish priesthood.* For this promise, saith he, *Thy house, and the house of thy father, shall walk before me for ever,* was not made to Ithamar, but to Aaron; and, therefore, he shews here what should befal the whole tribe. Such conditional decrees are frequent in Scripture; particularly in Jer. xviii. 7—10.

For he that honoureth me I will honour, and he that despiseth me shall be lightly esteemed.] A remarkable instance of which we have in the records of the Christian church: for Eusebius tells us, in the time of that persecution which he mentions in the eighth book of his Ecclesiastical History, some of the pastors of the church, who had not governed the flock of Christ as they ought to have done, were condemned to be keepers of camels, and of the Emperor's horses (a punishment among the Romans in those days, as Valesius observes), ἡ θεία κατακρίνασα δίκη, &c. *The Divine justice judging them worthy of no better employment.* (Cap. 12. de Martyribus Palestinæ.)

Ver. 31. *Behold, the days come, that I will cut off the arm of thy father's house.*] Our arm being the instrument whereby we perform all things; this threatening signifies, that not long hence God would utterly take away all power and authority from him, and from his family; both as he was a priest, and as he was a judge.

That there shall not be an old man in thy house.] But his posterity should die, as it follows, (ver. 33.) *in the flower of their age,* which was accounted a great judgment in that nation. So Manasseh ben Israel, who observes, in his book de Termino Vitæ, p. 87. that the Gemara upon Jebamoth mentions a certain family in Jerusalem, none of which commonly lived above eighteen years. Of which they inquiring the reason of R. Johanan ben Zachæi, he bade them search, if they were not of the family of Eli, upon which God had passed this sentence, that they should die in the *flower of their age:* and it was discovered that they sprang from him.

Ver. 32. *And thou shalt see an enemy in my sanctuary.*] The marginal translation seems most literal, *Thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle.* As he did, for he saw the tabernacle deprived of the ark, which was the glory of it; and lived to hear the ark was taken by the Philistines, (iv. 4. 11.) But his family was not thrown out of the priesthood till the days of Solomon.

In all the wealth which God shall give Israel.] The Hebrew words may be translated, *After all the good God hath done to Israel.*

And there shall not be an old man in thy house for ever.] He repeats the foregoing threatening, to shew the certainty of it. But some by an *old man* understand an *elder.* So the Talmudists in the Gemara of the Sanhedrin, cap. 1. where they make the meaning to be, that if any of his family did live long, they should never come to honour. For so they tell the story; that R. Johanan missing of some preferment that was designed and endeavoured for him, and taking it very heavily, the doctors that were his relations prayed him not to be troubled; For we are (said they) of the family of Eli, of whom it is said, *there shall be no old man of thy house for ever;* that is, none be promoted to any dignity.

Ver. 33. *And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from my altar, shall be to consume thy eyes, and to grieve thy heart.*] It was not a favour to let any of them live, but a punishment to those who were grieved to see the high-priesthood taken from their family, and those that belonged to it reduced to great poverty. It is usual in Scripture, to say that of the parents, which properly belongs to their posterity.

And all the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age.] This doth not belong to all the posterity of Ithamar, but only to the family of Eli.

Ver. 34. *And this shall be a sign to thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas; that in one day they shall die both of them.*] See iv. 11. 17.

Ver. 35. *And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do all that is in my heart, and in my mind.*] This seems to be meant of Zadok, who was anointed in the room of Abiathar, (1 Chron. xxix. 22.)

And I will build him a sure house.] The high-priesthood continued in his line till the captivity of Babylon, as appears from Ezek. xl. 16. and a long time after it, as Josephus shews, lib. x. cap. 4. and our famous Selden, lib. i. de Success. in Pontif. cap. 5, 6. where he shews their perpetual succession till the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. But Procopius Gazæus here notes, that though

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this, according to the history, is meant of Zadok, who was put into the priesthood by Solomon, and in whose line it continued; yet it belongs to none, in the highest sense, but to our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered himself to the Father for us, and is our great high-priest for ever.

And he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.] By the *anointed of God* here is meant the king; for whom the high-priest consulted God on great occasions: and therefore is said to *walk before him;* because he directed him in his proceedings, and shewed him what he ought to do, in all difficult cases.

Ver. 36. *And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thy house.*] The remainder of his family, who were not cut off.

Shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver, and for a morsel of bread.] The Hebrew word which we translate *crouch,* signifying to bow and to worship, the Vulgar understands these words, as if they were spoken not of their coming to beg of the high-priest, but to pray to God in so poor a condition, as not to be able to bring more than a farthing, or mite, to the treasury, and nothing but a bit of bread (not so much as a bird, much less a sheep or bullock) for a sin-offering. But the Chaldee takes the words as we do, for humbling himself to the priest beforementioned, begging a small relief of his great poverty, to which he was reduced. The Hebrew word for a piece of silver is *agorah,* which signifies a minute piece of silver, in the very derivation of the word, as many think. So the meaning is, he should humbly beg, though ever so small a relief.

Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.] Begging of the high-priest that he might enjoy the meanest pension that was allowed to those priests who were prohibited to officiate. For so the words may be translated, *Somewhat belonging to the priesthood.* (See 2 Kings xxiii. 9. Ezek. xliv. 13.) This seems to have been fulfilled in the days of Abiathar, who, for treason, was not only put out of his office, but sent to live upon his own farm in the country; and not suffered to live upon the portion given to priests at the temple, (1 Kings ii. 26, 27.) By this means his posterity fell into extreme want; in which the just judgment of God may be observed; that the children of those who were so wanton, that they would not be content unless they had the choicest parts of the sacrifice for their portion, should fall into so low a condition, as to beg their bread.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *AND the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli.*] Performed such services at the tabernacle as Eli directed, being now about twelve years old, as Josephus thinks.

And the word of the Lord was precious in those days.] God did very rarely in those days reveal his mind to any person. (See ver. 21.)

There was no open vision.] Here *vision* includes all the ways whereby God revealed himself to men. Which he did then so seldom, that whatsoever revelation there might be privately to some pious persons, there was none then publicly acknowledged to be a prophet, unto whom the people might resort to know the mind of God. Which was the cause that Samuel, being twice called by God to attend unto him, thought it had been Eli who called him: for they were so unacquainted in these days with the prophetical spirit, that we read of no more than two prophets in all the days of the Judges, (iv. 4. vi. 8.)

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass at that time.*] After the man of God mentioned in the foregoing chapter (ver. 27.) had been with Eli; perhaps that very night after he had delivered his message.

When Eli was laid down.] To sleep.

In his place.] In the court of the tabernacle, where there were divers rooms for several uses of the priests; as there were afterward at the temple.

And his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see.] Clearly to do his duty, after it grew duskish: which made him, it is likely, go to bed betimes, and leave directions with Samuel what to do, until it was time for him to repose himself. And this might be the reason that Samuel ran so hastily to him, when he thought he called for him, that he might know what he wanted, men of his age, and dimsighted, being less able to help themselves.

Ver. 3. *And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.*] The lamp in the great shaft of the golden candlestick, which bent towards the most holy place (called the western lamp), never went out; but some other of them did go out when it was morning. (See upon Exod. xxvii. 20, 21.) The meaning therefore is, that, ere it was day, the Lord called Samuel. (See Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, chap. 14. sect. 4.)

And Samuel was lain down to sleep.] In the court of the Levites, as the Targum explains it; or in some other place near to Eli, that he might be ready to assist him on any occasion. The words seem to import, that he had watched most of the night, (for so some were to do, Psal. cxxxiv. 1.) and towards morning went to repose himself. For thus the words run in the Hebrew, and in the LXX. and Vulgar: *Before the lamp of God went out, and Samuel lay down to sleep in the temple of the Lord,* &c. Insomuch, that Victorinus Strigelius translates the words thus, *And Samuel went to lie down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, before the lamp of God went out.*

Ver. 4. *That the Lord called Samuel.*] Out of the most holy place. So the Targum: *A voice was heard out of the temple of the Lord.*

And he said, Here am I.] It is likely Eli lay nearer the tabernacle than Samuel did, and yet heard nothing: but the voice passing him by, was directed to Samuel, who alone heard it. These words, *Here am I,* are a form of speech, signifying attention to what was said, and readiness to do what should be commanded.

Ver. 5. *And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me.*] He thought Eli had some ministry wherein to employ him, and therefore started up presently, and ran to know what his pleasure was. Which shews the great readiness and promptness of his obedience, which made him come, yea, run at his first call.

And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.] He thought he might dream.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel rose, and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me,* &c.] He was sure there was nobody yet

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come to the temple, it being night and the doors shut, and therefore concluded it could be none but Eli that called him: and it is probable, the voice was like that of Eli's.

Ver. 7. *Now Samuel did not know the Lord.*] He had not yet learned to *know discipline from before the Lord,* as the Targum interprets it: that is, how God was wont to teach and instruct men in his will; which the next words explain.

Neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.] He was unacquainted with the way wherein God made known his mind unto the prophets, because he had never spoken to him before: so that he did not know how to distinguish between the voice of God and of a man. Maimonides expounds it, He did not understand that the Lord was wont to speak with a soft, whispering voice; which was therefore called *Bath-col.*

Ver. 8. *And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he rose, and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.*] This repetition of the voice so oft, awakened Eli to think that this was no fancy of the child's; and, therefore, since he knewtha t he did not call him, he concluded the Lord did; and by this means he was disposed to give credit to what Samuel should tell him, as an oracle of God.

Ver. 9. *Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.*] He tells him, in effect, that it was the voice of God which he heard; and instructs him how to behave himself, when he called again; and to answer, that he was ready to perform whatever he commanded.

So Samuel went and lay down in his place.] Which was not far, as I said, from the place where Eli lay.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord came, and stood.*] This word *stood* (Kimchi thinks) denoteth some glorious appearance of God to him; because this is the same word which is used in Numb. xxii. 22, 23. 31. where the angel is said to *stand* to oppose Balaam's proceedings. And so the Targum: *The Lord was revealed, and stood and called,* &c.

And called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel!] Only he repeats his name, to move the greater attention.

Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.] He omits the name of the Lord, in his answer which Eli directed him to make: either out of fear, or uncertainty, whether it was the Lord that spake to him, or not.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord said unto Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.*] Which in our language we express thus: *It shall stun all that hear it:* as a man is, when a clap of terrible thunder strikes his ears, which even deafens him, so that he can hear nothing else. This was fulfilled, when the doleful news came that the ark was taken, and both Eli's sons slain, and he fell down and brake his neck, &c.

Ver. 12. *In that day I will perform against Eli all the things that I have spoken concerning his house.*] By the man of God in the foregoing chapter.

When I begin, I will also make an end.] He doth not mean that he would begin and make an end at once; but that he would persevere in his punishments, and not desist when he began, till all his threatenings were fulfilled, *viz.* in the death of Eli, and of his sons; and the slaughter of eighty-five priests of this family by Doeg, and the thrusting Abiathar (who escaped that slaughter) out of his office, and so depriving that family of its dignity and honour.

Ver. 13. *For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth.*] For he could not be ignorant of the crimes committed so publicly; and of which there was such a general complaint.

Because his sons made themselves vile.] Or, they made light of God and of his people; having no regard to either of them. Or, they made the service of God vile in the eyes of the people; as the words may be translated, and as the LXX. understand them.

And he restrained them not.] He did not *frown upon them,* as it is in the Hebrew. Which doth not signify, that he shewed no sign of displeasure against their wickedness (for he did chide them, though too gently, for it), but he did not severely reprove them; and when that would not restrain them, turn them out of their office, or suspend them until they were reformed. For which cause God passed this severe sentence upon the whole family; that they should lose the dignity of the high-priesthood, and be made as vile and contemptible as they had rendered God's service.

Ver. 14. *And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.*] By *iniquity* is meant the *punishment* of iniquity; which he threatens should not be removed, or mitigated, by any sort of sacrifices, or oblations, that could be brought to the altar; but only (as the Gemara upon Rosch Hashanah ventures to say) *by the law, and by the retributions of the saints.* By the *law,* they mean not merely the study of the law, but the practice of it, by observing God's commands; and by *retributions of the saints,* works of charity, bounty, and liberality, beyond what the Divine law required. (See Dr. Windet, de Vita functorum Statu, p. 193.)

Ver. 15. *And Samuel lay down until the morning, and opened the door of the house of the Lord.*] This was one of the works of the Levites, to open and shut the door of the court of the Lord's house.

And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.] Having no commaud from God to do it; and being loath to grieve the old man by telling him bad news.

Ver. 16. *Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I.*] The old man being so solemnly threatened by the late message from God to him, was afraid he was concerned in what the Lord had now said to Samuel.

Ver. 17. *And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me,* &c.] He adjures him to declare to him all that he had heard, and conceal nothing; which obliged him to satisfy his desire, as Micaiah and our blessed Saviour did in the like case.

Ver. 18. *And Samuel told him every thing, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.*] This sentence being denounced by a child, who had his dependance upon Eli, far from any secular cunning, being unable to discern between the voice of the Lord and the voice of his tutor, till he instructed him, was a great deal more terrible to Eli than the message

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of the prophet had been, and wrought a greater effect upon him. For he humbly acknowledged the justice of God, and submitted to his sentence (as many of the fathers think) with a truly penitent heart. For now he knew (as our Dr. Jackson observes), that the sentence was irreversible, being confirmed by an oath, (ver. 14.) and the humility and modesty of Eli's answer, persuaded that excellent person, that the fearful sentence denounced against him extended no further, than to the irreversible deposition of him and his family from the priesthood, unto a poor and mean estate, wherein they were to live hereafter. (Consecration of the Son of God, chap. 18. parag. 5.)

Ver. 19. *And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him.*] There were manifest tokens that God favoured him, as he did Joseph, (Gen. xxxi. 2.) The Targum hath it, *Memra, the Word of the Lord was his help:* or he revealed more and more of his mind to him: so that Israel knew God intended him for the office mentioned in the next verse.

And did let none of his words fall to the ground.] A metaphor from arrows shot out of a bow, which hit the mark. And they may refer either to the words of Samuel, or of God; which is the same. This proved him to be a prophet, or a man divinely inspired.

Ver. 20. *And all Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.*] The whole country of Judea. (See Judg. xx. 1.)

Knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.] Settled to be a constant prophet, who supplied the want of *urim* and *thummim*, when the ark was taken from them.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.*] Having begun to appear in Shiloh, he continued this great favour: for he revealed himself to Samuel, not by dreams and visions, but by speaking to him in an audible voice, as he had done, ver. 4, &c. And indeed he seems to have been the first prophet, that was raised up to be a public instructor and governor of God's people. Others there had been before him; but not with so high an authority, and public approbation. And therefore St. Peter saith, (Acts iii.) "All the prophets from Samuel spake of those days:" as if he was the first eminent prophet whom the Lord raised up to them after Moses.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *AND the word of Samuel came unto all Israel.*] The revelation of God's mind and will, which had been very scarce among them in former days, (iii. 1.) now grew very plentiful: for, as Samuel himself was ready to instruct every one that came to him, so he set up colleges of the prophets (as we read in the following parts of this book), who in time were settled in divers parts of the country, for the better preserving and spreading the knowledge of God among the people, (x. 5. xix. 18—20, &c.) Which made Abarbinel discourse in this manner, upon the foregoing words: "In the days of Eli the word of the Lord was scarce, and vision was seldom: but when Samuel appeared, not only he prophesied frequently, but many of the Israelites, by his means, were endued with the same spirit, according to these words, *And the Lord appeared more frequently in Shiloh* (so he understands them), *because the Lord was revealed to Samuel in Shiloh.* Which signifies, that the influence of the spirit which descended upon Samuel in Shiloh, reached unto others, because of its abundance, who were disposed to receive it: so that they also prophesied."

And Israel went out against the Philistines to battle.] This was in the middle of that forty years' dominion that the Philistines had over the Israelites, mentioned Judg. xiii. 1. unto which they were encouraged, perhaps, by the death of the lords of the Philistines; and the great slaughter which Samson had made of them at his death, (Judg. xvi. 27. 30.)

And pitched besides Eben-ezer.] Thus this place was called when this book was written; and so denominated from the famous battle which Samuel fought with the Philistines, twenty years after this, (vii. 12.)

And the Philistines pitched in Aphek.] In a place in the tribe of Judah, as we read Josh. xv. 53. upon the confines of the Philistines' country. But see xxix. 1. of this book.

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines,* &c.] Though Samuel was established a prophet, and it was so publicly known, that all Israel came to consult with him (as the foregoing verse seems to import), yet the elders did not take his advice about this war; as Ralbag thinks. Whose opinion is more probable than theirs, who think they did advise with him, and that he bade them fight, on purpose that the sentence upon Eli's sons might be fulfilled.

Ver. 3. *And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines?*] They thought the justice of their cause was sufficient to entitle them to the favour of God, though they themselves were wicked. Thus Brutus cried when he fell, "O Jupiter! what is the cause of so great calamity?" not reflecting upon his horrible exactions in Cyprus; and his great ingratitude to Cæsar, whom he slew in the senate.

Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh, that when it comes among us, it may save us out of the hands of our enemies.] This was as foolish as the other, to confide in God's help, when they lived in open disobedience to him.

Ver. 4. *So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord.*] This being done without any warrant from God, provoked him, rather than procured his presence with them. But they seem to have done it in imitation of Joshua marching with the ark against Jericho; for which he had a Divine authority, but they had none. Strigelius, therefore, well applies to this the observation of Polybius, that "many not studying to imitate the lives of excellent men, but only some of their extraordinary actions, have done nothing but expose their own folly to the world."

Which dwelleth between the cherubims.] Or, *upon the cherubims,* as the Chaldee, the LXX. and the Vulgar here translate it. But Lud. de Dieu is not satisfied with this sense; for he thinks the Divine Majesty did not sit upon the wings of the *cherubims,* but under them; in the space between them and the ark, which was his footstool: and therefore he translates these words, *who inhabiteth the cherubims;* which were as a canopy over the Schechinah.

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But I have followed the ancient translation, in my notes upon Exod. xxv. 22.

And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.] Which they were ordered to bring out of its place (into which the Levites might not enter), and to accompany it unto the army.

Ver. 5. *And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout.*] As if they had already gotten the victory.

So that the earth rang again.] It was so loud, that it might be heard a great way off. (See 1 Kings i. 40. and what I have noted there.)

Ver. 6. *And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What means the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp.*] They sent to get intelligence, or were informed of it by some deserters.

Ver. 7. *And the Philistines were afraid: for they said, God is come into the camp.*] The symbol of God's presence; which perhaps they imagined the Israelites worshipped as their God.

And they said, Woe unto us, for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.] In all their battles that they or their neighbours had fought with the Israelites, they never heard of such a thing as this; which they thought must produce some extraordinary effect.

Ver. 8. *Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods?*] They fought with men before, but now with God, before whom none could stand. The Hebrew words *Adirim Elohim*, which we translate *mighty Gods*, are translated by Theodoret, *the strong God:* which agrees with what goes before, *God is come into the camp:* and with the Targum, *Who shall deliver us out of the hand of the Word of the Lord*, &c.

These are the Gods.] Or, this is the God.

That smote Egypt with all the plagues in the wilderness.] They seem not to have perfectly understood the sacred story; but thought all those plagues which are there spoken of had fallen on the Egyptians, while the Israelites were in the wilderness; where they were when their last plague befel them, by their being drowned in the Red Sea: but Jonathan thus paraphrases it: *Who smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues; and did wonders for his people in the desert.*

Ver. 9. *Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, ye Philistines!*] These words were spoken by their great commanders, as the foregoing words in all likelihood were; who understood what had been done in foreign countries.

That ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.] When they were recovered out of the fright, which seized on them at first, they considered, that notwithstanding the power of their God, they had made the Israelites subject to them, and also overthrown them in a late battle; and therefore their present danger should only raise their courage, and make them fight more valiantly.

Ver. 10. *And the Philistines fought.*] They gave battle to the Israelites.

And the Israelites were smitten, and they fled every man unto his tent.] They were so routed, that they did not flee to their camp with an intent to renew the fight, (as they did before, ver. 3.) but dispersed themselves to their own home. And hitherto many of them dwelt in tents, as I observed before. (See Josh. xxii. 14. Judg. vii. 8. xx. 8.)

And there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.] There fell but four thousand in the former battle, before the ark came among them, (ver. 2.) so little did the bare presence of the ark profit wicked men, that it rather did them hurt.

Ver. 11. *And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.*] It is likely that (as Josephus saith) Eli parted with the ark from the tabernacle very unwillingly; but when he could not help it, he charged his sons, who went along with it, to lose their lives rather than lose it.

Ver. 12. *And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day.*] Some of the Jews have a fancy that this man was Saul: for no other reason, that I can find, but because he was of that tribe, and a proper man, who, it is likely, could run swiftly. How far Shiloh was from Aphek, or from Eben-ezer (both which were in the tribe of Judah, as Shiloh was in Ephraim), near to which this battle was fought, is not certain; but not so distant but that a man might run the same day from the one to the other.

With his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.] According to the manner of those who bewailed any great calamity. (Josh. vii. 6. Job ii. 12. Ezek. xxvii. 30.) From which last places, it appears, it was a custom among other nations. And is most lively expressed by Virgil in Æneid xii. ver. 609—611. where Latinus is represented as rending his clothes, and throwing dust upon his grey hairs, when he lamented his private and the public losses. Tiraquellus hath heaped up a great many examples of this, in his annotations on Alex. ab Alexandro, lib. iii. cap. 7.

Ver. 13. *And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the way-side: for his heart trembled for the ark of God.*] He had caused a seat, I suppose, to be set for him, by the side of the gate that entered into the city, (ver. 18.) that he might hearken after news; being extremely concerned, above all things, for the ark of the covenant of God.

And when the man came into the city.] He passed by Eli, and said not a word to him, though he saw him sitting there; because he was loath he should be surprised with such sad tidings. Or, perhaps, he came into this city at some other gate.

And told it, all the city cried out.] Looking upon themselves as put out of the Divine protection, because they had lost the symbol of his presence, and the book of the covenant, the blessings of which they could no longer claim.

Ver. 14. *And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What means the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.*] They about him had not the heart to resolve his question, but brought the man speedily to acquaint him with the truth.

Ver. 15. *Now Eli was ninety-eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.*] He was not able to discern the sadness that was in the people's countenances, but only heard their shrieks and lamentations.

Ver. 16. *And the man said, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army.*] The man represents himself as an eye-witness of what had passed, that

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he might gain the more credit to what he said: and adds, that he brought the freshest news.

And he said, What is there done, my son?] He asked if they had fought, and with what success.

Ver. 17. *And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.*] He hid nothing from him; but reserved the worst news till the last.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward, by the side of the gate.*] At the entrance of the city, where his chair was set.

And his neck brake, and he died.] Though he was too indulgent a father, yet he was highly commendable in this, that he was not so much affected with the loss of his sons, and the slaughter of the people, as with the loss of the ark of God. For he kept up his courage, and did not fall, till he heard that mentioned. The more public any concern is, the more it is laid to heart by men of worthy spirits. Such a one was Eli, with whom God was angry upon his sons' account; otherwise he was adorned with many virtues, as Procopius Gazæus observes.

For he was an old man, and heavy.] Being oppressed with grief he swooned away; and being both very old, and very unwieldy, his fall was the more dangerous, and the vertebræ of his neck the more easily displaced.

And he judged Israel forty years.] This aggravated the calamity of his family, that, having been so long in the highest station, it fell into great afflictions in a moment. (See upon chapter the first, ver. 9.) The Jews observe, in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 13. that on the day he died, God forsook the tabernacle in Shiloh, having delivered his strength into captivity, &c. (Psal. lxxviii. 60, 61.)

Ver. 19. *And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas's wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.*] The great anguish of her mind brought on her labour: and, as Josephus thinks, two months before her time. Which doth not well agree with what is said in the beginning of this verse, that she was *near to be delivered.* The Hebrew word which we translate *bowed herself*, signifies she *fell on her knees.* For so the manner was in those countries: which Ludolphus confirms in his Ethiopic History, and his commentary upon it, (lib. i. cap. 14. n. 101.)

Ver. 20. *And, at the time of her death, the women that stood by her.*] Assisted at her labour.

Said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son.] The mention of which they thought would have revived her; according to what we read in the gospel of St. John, xvi. 21.

But she answered not, neither did she regard it.] Being so overcome with sorrow and grief, that she minded nothing that was said or done about her.

Ver. 21. *And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law, and her husband.*] Only having a little recovered her spirits, she lamented this chiefly, that God was gone from them: for so the word *glory* frequently signifies in Scripture, (Psal. cvi. 20. Jer. ii. 11.) The Hebrew word אי also signifies the same with לא *not*, as Ludolphus observes, in his commentary upon his Ethiopic History, (lib. i. cap. xvi. 106.) And so Bochartus here translates *Ichabod*, by *inglorious*, or without glory: that is, saith he, without the true God, (par. i. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 34.)

Ver. 22. *And she said, The glory is departed from Israel; for the ark of God is taken.*] She seems to have expired with these words; which she repeats again, because this chiefly lay at her heart; as the concerns of religion do in all pious spirits.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *AND the Philistines took the ark of God.*] Why God suffered the ark of his presence to fall into the hands of those uncircumcised people, Abarbinel gives four or five reasons. The Israelites were such great sinners, that they were unworthy of his presence among them. The idolatry of Micah remained to this day in the land; therefore he fulfilled his threatening, (Lev. xxvi. 19. 31.) The sin, also, of the priests highly provoked him to deliver up the ark, which was in their hands, when they were killed. And the Israelites greatly offended in carrying the ark into the battle, without asking counsel of God: who resolved to demonstrate his power even among the enemies of Israel.

And brought it from Eben-ezer.] Where the Israelites were encamped before the battle, (iv. 1.) and whither it is possible they fled, to save the ark, when their army was overthrown.

Unto Ashdod.] One of the five cities of the Philistines, where some of the Anakims were left unsubdued by Joshua, (Josh. xi. 22.) and was in future times the principal city of the country, called Azotus. And perhaps it was so now; which might be the reason the ark was carried thither, rather than to any other city; being situated also in the middle of the five principalities; and having a famous temple in it (mentioned in the next verse), whither all the country resorted.

Ver. 2. *And when the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.*] The heathen were wont to offer part of the spoil that they took in war unto their gods: and what could there be more acceptable than this to Dagon, who seemed to have triumphed over the God of Israel? thus we read, in after-ages, how conquerors triumphed not only over the people whom they vanquished, but over their gods also. As Isaiah represented Bel and Nebo carried captive, when Babylon was taken, (xlvi. 1, 2.) And Jeremiah saith the same of Chemosh, the god of Moab, and Malcolm, the god of Ammon, (xlviii. 7. xlix. 3. and see Dan. xi. 8.) Thus the Romans did very frequently, as Bochartus shews, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 34. Yet there are some who imagine, that their setting the ark by Dagon (on the side of him), signified that they intended to do some honour to it, as having the presence of God in it. Concerning Dagon, see what I have noted upon Judg. xvi. 23. and Mr. Selden, Syntag. ii. de Diis Syris, cap. 3. where he confutes those who think Dagon hath his name from *dagan*, which signifies *corn* (as if he were the inventor of it), and confirms the opinion of those who think

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he had his name from *dag*, which signifies a *fish*; fishes and pigeons being sacred to him. Some take this idol to have been the same among the Syrians, with Triton among the Europeans, or with Neptune, or (as Scaliger will have it), with Venus, who was worshipped under the name of Atergatis, and Adargatis: which are only the corruption of the Hebrew words *Addir-daga*, i. e. *magnificent fish*, as Mr. Selden there observes; though Bochart thinks this was a different goddess from Dagon, (par. i. Hieroz. lib. i. cap. 6.)

Ver. 3. *And when they of Ashdod arose early in the morning.*] To go to pray at the temple.

Behold, Dagon was fallen with his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord.] In a posture of the most humble adoration: which was prostration; acknowledging the God of Israel to be above all gods. In this some of the Jews think there was a miracle in a miracle, as they speak: for whereas the ark was set by Dagon (*i. e.* on one side of him) when Dagon fell, it was not right forward, but he was turned about with his face towards the ark. (See Buxtorf de Area Fœderis, p. 171.)

And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.] Looking upon it as a mischance.

Ver. 4. *And when they rose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord.*] Which shewed his former fall was not by chance, but by the power of God, before whom he could not stand.

And the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold.] It is likely Dagon stood on high, upon some pedestal or altar; from whence he was not only thrown down, but his head and his hands thrown out of the door with the greatest contempt: being cut off upon the threshold of the temple. A token (as most interpreters think) that this idol was void of wisdom and power, his head and his hands (which are the seat of those qualities) being gone. Some have a fancy that Dagon had feet also upon his tail: from whence the LXX. it is likely, here add, that both his feet were cut off also: which hath no ground at all in the Hebrew text. (See Selden, in the forenamed book; and Vossius de Idolol. lib. ii. cap. 16.)

Only the stump of Dagon was left him.] In the Hebrew the words are, *only Dagon was left to him:* that is, saith Kimchi, nothing but the form of a fish remained; all that resembled a man being broken off. Thus the Lord shewed there was no god besides him: his ark, though taken captive and carried into a strange land (as St. Chrysostom discourses, Orat. v. adversus Judæos), throwing down their idol twice, and thereby demonstrating, that the Israelites were not overthrown for want of any power in their God to defend them, but for the iniquity of those that worshipped him.

Ver. 5. *Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon unto this day.*] Out of reverence to it; looking upon it (as Abarbinel glosses) as a holy thing, by the touch of Dagon's head and hands. So foolishly did they pervert the meaning of God, that, instead of thinking Dagon to be no god, they honoured the very threshold of his temple as if it had some divinity in it. For it is an idle conceit which the Jews have in Jalkut, that forsaking Dagon they worshipped his *threshold*. (See Buxtorf, in his Hist. Arcæ, cap. 19. p. 172.) This superstition continued for some ages, as Bochartus gathers from Zephan. i. 9. where God saith he will punish those *that leap on the threshold*, after the manner of the Philistines, as he expounds it, after the Targum, par. i. Hierozoic. lib. ii. cap. 36.

From those words, *unto this day*, Hobbes and such-like writers frame an argument, that this book was not wrote by Samuel; not considering that these things happened when Samuel was but a youth, and that this was written when he was old; so that there was a considerable space of time between them.

Ver. 6. *But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod.*] Since they were so blind as not to see his hand in throwing down their god, &c. he smote them with such sore plagues in their own bodies, as made them sensible of his power.

And he destroyed them.] With a pestilence, I suppose, of which many died. (See ver. *ult.*)

And smote them with emerods, even Ashdod, and the coasts belonging to it.] Not only the people of the city, but of the villages belonging to it, were smitten with this plague. About which interpreters differ very much: some taking this disease for a dysentery, which was so violent that it rotted their guts, and made them fall down and come out. Whereupon others think it was that which we call *procidentia ani, the falling of the fundament;* but most interpreters, both ancient and modern, take it as we do, for the *emerods*. For it was some disease in the hinder-parts, as appears from the words of the Psalmist, lxxviii. 66. as they are commonly understood. See my notes on Deut. xxviii. 27. and Nic. Fuller Miscell. lib. v. cap. 3. especially Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 36. where he gives a large account of the Hebrew word *apholim*, which is used only here and in the forenamed place of Deuteronomy.

At the end of this verse, the Vulgar and the LXX. also add, that a great number of mice started up out of the earth, and overrunning their fields, made great waste there. But, as Lyra well observes, this gloss in all likelihood being written in the margin, out of chap. vi. ver. 4, 5. it crept at last into the text, though it be neither in the Hebrew, nor the Chaldee, nor Syriac, nor Arabic. (See Bochart, in his Hierozoic. par. i. lib. iii. cap. 34.)

Ver. 7. *And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.*] Now their eyes were opened to see, that though they had vanquished the Israelites, they could not stand before the God of Israel. And it seems no unreasonable conjecture, that they speak here, and in the following verse, concerning the ark, with a note of distinction; calling it *the ark of the God of Israel*, (ver. 8. 10, 11. vi. 3.) and *the ark of the Lord*, (vi. 8.) For other nations had such arks, and for the same use, to put their mysteries in them: as in this were the tables of the covenant alone. Clemens Alexandrinus relates what trash and other filthy stuff was in the μυστικαὶ κισταὶ, the *mystical coffers* of the heathen. From whose superstition, that the Israelites might be preserved, God, perhaps, appointed this ark to be made by Moses. (See his Προτρεπτικὸς λόγος, p. 13, 14.)

Ver. 8. *They sent therefore, and gathered the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?*] They desired a general council

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might be held, to consult what to do in this case; whether to keep the ark, or how to dispose of it.

And they answered.] *i. e.* The lords of the Philistines (who in the language of that country were called *Sarnim*, the same with *Sarim* in the Hebrew) came to the following resolution.

Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither.] They seem to be possessed with a superstitious conceit, that there was something in the place which was offensive to him; and that he might be better pleased with another: just as Æneas and his people indicted their beds and their houses, of the disasters that befel them; and Cadmus forsook his own city,

——— "tanquam fortuna locorum
Non sua se premeret"———.

as if the ill luck which hunted him had been the place's, not his own: as our Dr. Jackson observes, out of Ovid, in his Original of Unbelief, chap. 18. parag. 4.

Gath was the next city to Ashdod, northward of it: in which some of the Anakims also remained. (Josh. xi. 21.)

Ver. 9. *And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction.*] A great many died of the pestilence, as they had done at Ashdod.

And he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.] They that did not die were sorely tormented by *emerods;* which was a disease they had never known before; as some understand the last words. Or, they had those the physicians call *blind emerods:* which do not swell outwardly, but lie hidden within; and are the most grievous and hard to be cured of all other.

Ver. 10. *Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron.*] The last city of the Philistines northward: where in after-times (if not now) the famous god called Baal-zebub was worshipped, (2 Kings i. 2.)

And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.] These seem to be the words of the governors of the city; who had learned, from the experience of the other great cities, that no place was secure from the stroke of the God of Israel.

Ver. 11. *So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines.*] As they of Ashdod had done, (ver. 6.)

And said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, that it slay us not, and our people.] Destroy the whole city.

For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; and the hand of God was very sore upon them.] Which made them desire it might be sent out of the country, and not to the other cities in the south, Gaza and Askelon.

Ver. 12. *And the men that died not were smote with emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.*] This is the explication of the foregoing words: some were struck with the pestilence as soon as the ark came thither, and others lingered under intolerable pains, which made them cry out in an inexpressible manner: for this is an hyperbolical speech; things that are exceeding great beyond expression, being said to reach up to heaven, (Deut. i. 28.) Thus Virgil, lib. ii. Æneid. in many places, ver. 223. 338. 488.

"Clamores simul horrendos ad sydera tollit.
——— Sublatus ad æthera clamor.
——— Ferit aurea sydera clamor."

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *AND the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months.*] The Hebrew word *sadeth,* which we translate *country,* signifying a *field* (as the LXX. here translate it, ἐν ἀγρῷ), Theodoret, and Procopius Gazæus, think, that the Philistines, being so plagued by the ark in their cities, sent it into the *open fields:* but were disappointed of their hope, of being freer from the hand of God there, than in their cities; for mice sprung up out of the ground, and wasted their corn and their fruits, as the LXX. here add, at the end of this verse, as they did in the foregoing chapter, ver. 6. καὶ ἐξέζεσεν ἡ γῆ αὐτῶν μυίας, *and their land bubbled up mice.* But the Chaldee hath no such thing; and saith expressly, The ark was *in the cities of the Philistines seven months.*

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines.*] That is, the lords of the country.

Called for the priests.] Who were best skilled in sacred rites and ceremonies.

And the diviners.] Who were a kind of prophets, pretending to know the will of God, and to foretel future events. See Deut. xviii. 12. of this word *kosemim,* which we translate *diviners.* From whence Bochartus thinks the Roman word *Casmilli* is derived, being as much as *Kosme-el,* the *minister of God.*

Saying, Tell us what we shall do to the ark of the Lord?] They never called it the *ark of the Lord* till this time: but now were struck with some apprehension that the Lord was above all gods.

Tell us wherewith we shall send it to its place.] They did not call them to be resolved by them whether they should send it home or not, (for upon that they seem to have been resolved already, ver. 11.) but in what manner it should be sent, and whether accompanied with any presents to obtain his favour.

Ver. 3. *And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel.*] Against which resolution they had nothing to object, but rather approved it.

Send it not empty.] They answer directly to the question, first in general, that it must not be sent back without some offering.

But in any wise return him a trespass-offering.] Concerning the Hebrew word *asham,* which we translate *trespass-offering,* and how it differs from a sin-offering, see upon Lev. v. 15. It seems to be presented by the Philistines as an acknowledgment that they had offended the God of Israel, by bringing his ark from its proper place, for which they begged his pardon by this offering.

Then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.] It seems their plagues still continued (notwithstanding their resolution to send home the ark), but they hoped by this offering they would be removed; and the reason would appear why they were removed no sooner: for these diviners were not sure

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from whence these plagues came: but by this means they thought they should either be healed, or know the ark was not the cause of their sickness.

Ver. 4. *Then said they, What shall be the trespass-offering which we shall return to him?*] It is very observable what reverence they had to their priests and prophets, without whose advice they would do nothing: and therefore desire to be particularly informed what the trespass-offering should be, that they might not send one that was improper. All nations thought their gods were to be appeased when they were angry, by honorary gifts, as many have observed: particularly Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 36. And of that opinion they were in these ancient times. But wise men still gave it in charge, "Ne quis impius oblatis donis Deum placare audeat:" that *no wicked man should presume to attempt to appease God by the offering of gifts*, as Cicero speaks, lib. ii. de Legibus.

They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines.] Who were five, and were to be at the charge of offering one for each of them. This also was a custom among the ancient heathens, to consecrate unto their gods such monuments of their deliverances, as represented the evils from which they were freed. As they dedicated to Isis and Neptune a table, which contained the express image of the shipwreck, which they had escaped: and slaves and captives, when they had regained their liberty, offered their chains. Which Christians in the fifth century began to imitate, as Bochartus observes (in the forenamed place) out of Theodoret. Accordingly the Philistines, hoping shortly to be delivered from the *emerods* and *mice*, wherewith they were sorely afflicted, sent the images of them unto that God from whom they expected deliverance. And this is still practised among the Indians, as Tavernier relates in his travels to their country, p. 92. where he saith, that when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure of the member affected; made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality; which he offers to his god, and then falls a singing, as all others do after they have offered. Mr. Selden also hath observed, that *mice* were used among the ancient heathen for lustration and cleansing, de Diis Syris, Syntag. i. cap. 6.

For one plague was on you all, and on your land.] The plague of *emerods* upon their own bodies; and the plague of *mice* upon their land.

Ver. 5. *Wherefore ye shall make images of the emerods, and images of your mice which mar the land.*] By this it appears, that their country was infested by *mice*, which had eaten their corn in the field, and other fruits of the earth. Which is a plague which divers ancient authors mention, as sent upon several countries, by the anger of their gods: particularly upon a city in Mysia, and upon the country of Troas, as is observed by Huetius, in his Quæstiones Alnetanæ, lib. ii. cap. 12. n. 12. And Bochart hath collected a great many more examples of such devastations in Spain, Italy, Thrace, &c. made by mice; which have the name of *achbar* in Hebrew (as he thinks), signifying *a destroyer of the field*. (Hieroz. par. i. lib. iii. cap. 34.)

And ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel.] That is, acknowledge him, by this present to him, to be the inflicter of these plagues, and to have power to remove them; begging his pardon, and seeking for healing from him. For thus this phrase signifies in the like case, Rev. xvi. 9. where St. John complains, that after many plagues men did not *repent, to give glory unto God:* that is, by repenting, to acknowledge his sovereign authority, justice, holiness, &c.

Perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.] For they had all suffered; their gods as well as themselves, and their land.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had wrought wonderfully among them.*] These words seem to import, that some of them were loath to send the ark away with such presents; and objected against it: which moved the priests and diviners, to bid them take heed, lest they brought upon themselves the fate of Pharaoh, and his people. With whose history these men were acquainted; and being discreet persons made a good use of the examples of former times: and believed as much as many of the Israelites did, or rather more.

Did they not let the people go, and they departed?] When it was too late, they consented to what was demanded. The Jews say in Jalkut, that the Philistines at first said among themselves, This is the God who smote the Egyptians with ten plagues: but they are all ended. Whereupon God said, "Do you imagine I have not one plague more? I will send such a one upon you, as never was from the beginning of the world," &c. (See Buxtorf. Hist. Arcæ Fœderis, cap. 19.) If they had any such thoughts, their priests pertinently enough put them in mind of the Egyptians: that they might not make themselves like them in hardness of heart; as God had made them like in their plagues.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch-kine, on which there hath come no yoke.*] Both these were in honour of the ark; that they employed nothing about it which had ever served for any other use. And there was another reason also for the latter of these; that they might be the more certain they were led by the God of Israel, if they went directly unto his country: for kine unaccustomed to the yoke are wont to run back, and turn out of the way into which they are put.

And tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them.] This would make it still more wonderful, if they did not return to their calves, when they heard them bleat after them; which they naturally would have done, if a greater power had not drawn them a contrary way.

Ver. 8. *And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which you return him for a trespass-offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.*] They had either heard, or by their present sufferings were made to fear, that it was dangerous to look into the ark; and therefore they did not open it, to put their present within it; but put it in a coffer by the side of it. It is probable the word *argaz* (which we meet withal no where else), in the language of the Philistines, signifies either a *coffer*, or a *purse*, or a *wallet*, as Josephus translates it: and Bochartus thinks it likely, that these golden jewels were put into little bags, which hung on either side the ark.

Ver. 9. *And see, if it go by the way of its own coast.*] Without any guide: and being set (as Josephus saith) in a place where three ways met.

To Beth-shemesh.] A city in the tribe of Judah, in the confines of both countries.

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Then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us.] From some unknown cause.

Ver. 10. *And the men did so; and took two milch-kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home.*] The men of Ekron did all this, as the priests had directed.

Ver. 11. *And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.*

Ver. 12. *And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand, or to the left.*] Though they had no driver, nor visible director; and had such strong attractives to draw them back, and there were so many other ways in which they might have gone; yet they went directly towards Beth-shemesh, without the least deviation; lowing all the way after their calves, which had been taken from them: unto whom their natural affection would have inclined them to return, if by a higher hand they had not been led forward to the land of Judah.

And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the borders of Beth-shemesh.] To observe (as the priests advised, ver. 9.) whether of themselves they would go thither.

Ver. 13. *And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat-harvest in the valley.*] Which being about Pentecost, it shews the ark was taken captive in the latter end of the foregoing year. (Compare this with ver. 1.)

And they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.] Come back to them in such a wonderful manner, without any visible conductor.

Ver. 14. *And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there.*] This was another marvellous thing, that the kine went no further; being come into a territory of a city of the priests, (for so Beth-shemesh was, see upon Josh. xxi. 16.) who were to take care of the ark of God.

Where there was a great stone.] Which seems to have been the boundary of the two countries.

And they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the Lord.] The great stone, I suppose, serving instead of an altar; whereon they offered a whole burnt-offering of praise and thanks to God for his goodness: for they thought in reason that this cart, and these kine, should never be converted to any common use, and therefore employed them in making this sacrifice. In which the priests did not sin, though cows were not, by the law, allowed to be offered to God, and no offering was to be made, but in the place which God had chosen. For this was to be understood of ordinary offerings, not of such as an extraordinary occasion might require; and besides, the ark being here, God was so also (who as yet appointed no place for its future residence, now Shiloh was destroyed), and so their sacrifices, they thought, in reason, might be here acceptable to him. And they the rather chose to offer these cows to God, because they belonged to him, and therefore were to be his sacrifices; they having drawn his ark, and been particularly directed by him.

Ver. 15. *And the Levites took down the ark of the Lord, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were.*] It was not the business of the Levites to take down the ark; but of the priests: who after they had disposed it to be fit for the Levites to take it upon their shoulders, the Kohathites were to carry it. (See Numb. iv. 15.)

And put them upon the great stone.] Where, it is probable, they had before offered up the kine, instead of an altar.

And the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed sacrifices, the same day unto the Lord.] The *sacrifices* (which they are said to *sacrifice*) were *peace-offerings;* which they added to their whole burnt-sacrifices, that they might make a feast upon them; as an expression of their great joy to see the ark returned to them in such a miraculous manner.

Ver. 16. *And when the five lords of the Philistines.*] Who stood upon the borders of their country, (ver. 12.)

Had seen it.] Beheld all the forenamed wonders.

They returned to Ekron the same day.] And reported, no doubt, what they had seen: which convinced them, that their plagues came from the God of Israel

Ver. 17. *And these are the golden emerods, which the Philistines returned for a trespass-offering unto the Lord; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one.*] Each city of this country, I suppose, was at the charge of presenting one emerod. Which cities are not reckoned in the order wherein they lay; but Ashdod being the city to which the ark was first brought, it is mentioned first. But from south to north they lay in this order Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod (which as I said was in the middle of them), Gath, and Ekron.

Ver. 18. *And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the Lord; which stone remaineth to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.*] As the golden emerods were made at the public charge of those cities, so were the mice also: unto the making of which the villages likewise contributed. For their fields being principally afflicted by the mice, as the cities were by the emerods; and they being all sharers, some way or other, in the public calamities, it was thought reasonable they should all join in this trespass-offering: which was an offering of the whole nation, as far as ever their coast extended, and that was to the great stone mentioned ver. 14. which is there called *Eben-gedolah,* the *great stone;* but here *Ebel-gedolah,* the *great weeping,* from the lamentations which were here made upon the following occasion, mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 19. *And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord.*] Which God had forbidden, not only to the common people, but to the sons of Levi also, (Numb. iv. 20.) But their curiosity made them forget their duty: being desirous either to see whether the Philistines had taken out the tables of the covenant; or that they might have a view of such an ancient sacred monument, written by God's own hand. Out of this story, as Bochartus ingeniously conjectures, the Greeks forged the fable of Bacchus; who was very angry with the Athenians, because they did not receive his mysteries with pomp, when they were brought out of Bœotia into Attica; and smote them with a sore disease in their secret parts. In his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 18. in the latter end.

Even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men.] This translation is made by an unaccount-

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able transposition of the words: which in the Hebrew lie exactly thus, *He smote of the people, threescore and ten men, fifty thousand men.* Which the Gemara, with Jarchi and Kimchi, and the Targum, expound, *He smote all the Sanhedrin, which were seventy men, and fifty thousand of the common people.* (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 19. n. 3.) But as it is a question whether there was any such Sanhedrin in these days, and it is certain there was not at Beth-shemesh; so it is not likely it was such a populous place, nor is there any particle to couple the last sum with the foregoing. Therefore Bochart's interpretation is far more reasonable, which is this, He smote *threescore and ten men; fifty out of a thousand men.* God was so indulgent, that is, as not to slay all that were guilty, but only seventy of them; observing this proportion, that out of a thousand offenders, he smote only fifty persons; that is, a twentieth part. So that of fourteen hundred that deserved punishment, he smote only seventy men; which is the twentieth part of that number. And this interpretation is very easy, only supplying the particle *mem* before *eleph*, making the sense to be *out of a thousand.* And he instances in many places of Scripture, where this particle is manifestly wanting, to make out the true meaning. See his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 36. p. 370. where he shews that Josephus thus understood these words, lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 2. where he saith God smote Ἑβδομήκοντα τῶν ἐκ τῆς Βηθσάμης κώμης, *seventy of those of the village of Beth-shemesh.* And thus Abarbinel also understands the first words, that he smote at Beth-shemesh only seventy men; the other number, he thinks, refers to those who were slain in the country of the Philistines; the story whereof is now finished. For the particle *beth*, he thinks, signifies as much as *with*, in this manner: *Together with the seventy of Beth-shemesh, he smote in all fifty thousand, because of the ark.* But Bochartus's interpretation is most natural; which is highly applauded by another person of very great learning, Johan. Wagenselius, who, in his annotations upon the Gemara of Sota, (cap. 7. sect. 15.) saith, "Ipsa veritas militat," *Truth itself defends this opinion* of Bochartus. And indeed it cannot be conceived, there should be so many as our translation supposes, to be slain at Beth-shemesh, and the coasts thereof, being but a village; or if there had, it is very improbable that God would smite so many at once: for there would have been none left to make lamentation. Therefore, as the Romans decimated the soldiers that had offended; that is, put every tenth man to death; so God here punished half so many for this offence of looking into the ark.

And the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten of the people with a great slaughter.] It was a great slaughter, considering the smallness of this place; as Abarbinel glosses upon these words, who takes it, as Josephus doth, for a village. And it is not strange that some should be smitten with death; for it was always accounted, in all nations, a great profaneness for any one that was not initiated to look into their mysteries; to prevent which hereafter God made so many examples of his displeasure in this place. Instances of those among the heathen, who were struck blind, or upon whom some other calamity fell upon such account, the illustrious Spanhemius hath noted in his observations upon Callimachus's hymn in Lavacrum Palladis, ver. 34. yea, though they did it ignorantly, as he shews upon ver. 78. 82. p. 606. (See also Huetius, in his Alnetanæ Quæstiones, lib. ii. cap. 12. p. 200.)

Ver. 20. *And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us?*] They seem by this to be sensible of their rashness, and acknowledge the holiness of God to be such, that they were not worthy of his Divine presence among them; but desires that some who could do him honour better than they, might take the ark into their care. But Abarbinel thinks they were only struck with a great fear, as the Philistines were when God plagued them; which made them send the ark from one place to another, as they of Beth-shemesh now sent to those of Kirjath-jearim, to come and fetch the ark to their city; fearing more of them should die, if it stayed with them at Beth-shemesh.

Ver. 21. *And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down, and fetch it unto you.*] This was a city which stood upon a hill, and therefore they desired them to *come down* from thence. And being a strong place, there they thought the ark might be secure, in case of any new incursions of their enemies. See concerning this city, Josh. xv. 9, 10. where it is called also Kirjath-Baal, xviii. 14. and Baalah, or Baal-Judah, 2 Sam. vi. 2. 1 Chron. xiii. 6.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *AND the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord.*] They cheerfully received the message; and were so far from thinking themselves in danger by entertaining it, that they thought it a blessing, and kept it with them till the reign of David.

And brought it to the house of Abinadab in the hill.] In the highest part, I suppose, of the city: as David afterward placed it upon Mount Sion.

And sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord.] Which belonged to the Levites: therefore Abinadab was of that tribe, otherwise he could not have consecrated (*i. e.* set apart, or solemnly appointed) his son to *keep the ark, i. e.* to attend it, and see that no rudeness was offered to it; as well as to keep a guard about it, to defend it from violence. If it be inquired why they did not carry the ark to Shiloh, its ancient seat, the answer is, that the Philistines had destroyed that place; and the tabernacle, upon the death of Eli, was removed from thence unto Nob, where it remained till the death of Samuel. And after his death it was carried to Gibeon, where it remained fifty years, according to the account of the author of Seder Olam Rabba. All which time the ark was in Kirjath-jearim, till David brought it first to the house of Obed-Edom, and then to his own city. After which the tabernacle still remained at Gibeon till Solomon's temple was built, 1 Chron. xvi. 39. 2 Chron. i. 3. where we read, that, even after the death of his father, Solomon sacrificed at Gibeon, the tabernacle being there.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, the time was long; for it was twenty years.*] This is not to be understood of the whole time that the ark remained here; for it continued, as I said before, in this place, till the time of David, (2 Chron. vi. 3.) which

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was about forty-six years; therefore it refers to the following words.

And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.] Or rather (as Dr. Lightfoot translates them), *Then all the house of Israel*, &c. Their idolatry had taken such deep root in them, that neither the loss of the ark, nor the slaughter of so many Israelites, wrought upon their hearts. But it was twenty years before they minded the ark, or took any notice of it. Then they were awakened to some sense of their duty, and began to seek the favour of God, and lament their apostacy from him. (See his Annot. on this place, and upon Acts iii. 24. p. 758.) And one reason why they did not regard the ark, was, perhaps, because it was now seated in the borders of the country of the Philistines, of whom they were afraid. And this is the sense of Abarbinel. For though others think, that from the day that the ark came to Kirjath-jearim, the Israelites began to lament their sins, and to turn to God; having heard of the miracles that had been done in the land of the Philistines, &c. yet he doth not approve of this opinion; but will have their lamentation to begin after the ark had been twenty years at this place, where it remained many more years than twenty.

Ver. 3. *And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel.*] Who were assembled at some solemn festival; or were summoned by him to attend him; for after the death of Eli he began to judge Israel.

If you return to the Lord with all your heart.] By this it appears, that his reproofs and instructions, and the representation he had made of their sin, and of their danger, had touched their hearts, and made them begin to lament themselves, and seek his favour; whereupon he exhorts them to give this following proof of their sincerity.

Then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you.] By the *strange gods* I take Baalim to be meant; which are frequently joined with Ashtaroth, as they are in the very next verse to this, where their obedience to this exhortation is reported. (And see upon Judg. ii. 12, 13. 17. iii. 7. viii. 33.)

And prepare your heart unto the Lord.] By serious resolutions.

To serve him only.] As it follows in the next verse.

And he will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines.] Who had now oppressed them, less or more, for the space of forty years.

Ver. 4. *Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only.*] There was now, I suppose, a general reformation made in the worship of God.

Ver. 5. *And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh.*] A place where they had been wont anciently to assemble upon great occasions. (See upon Judg. xx. 1.)

And I will pray for you unto the Lord.] To accept of their repentance, and pardon their sins, and establish them in their good resolution to serve the Lord alone; and to deliver them out of the hand of the Philistines. For all which he could have prayed alone by himself; but he thought their public prayer would be more effectual.

Ver. 6. *And they gathered in Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord.*] This being a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, as appears by the latter part of these words, interpreters commonly expound the former part of them, as belonging to the same matter. And some think, as the Targum doth, that by *pouring out water*, is to be understood the tears of contrition, which were drawn from the bottom of their hearts, and fell from their eyes before the Lord. Others think they washed their bodies in water, signifying the purification of their souls from the filthiness of sin. And others (which Bochartus himself thinks more probable), that this water was poured on the ground, in token of the expiation of their sin, which they desired and hoped might be remembered no more: as water poured on the ground could no more be seen. Unto which they think a place in Job alludes: (xi. 16.) but we no where find any such rite as this among the Jews, either in ancient or later times. And the conjecture of Fortunatus Scacchus seems more ingenious, that an altar being to be erected to offer sacrifice, they poured out water to cleanse the ground, that it might not be set up in an impure place, (Myrothec. Elæochrysm. Sacr. ii. cap. 31.) But after all, I think the interpretation which Constantine L'Empereur hath given of these words (in his annot. on Codex Middoth, cap. 2.) is far more reasonable; which is, that they *poured out water* in token of joy, after they had fasted and confessed their sins (for he translates the words, "Postquam jejunarunt," *after they had fasted on that day*), as they were wont to do in the feast of tabernacles: unto which he refers those words in Isa. xii. 3. in which the prophet foretels the joy that should be in the days of the Messiah, by saying, "Ye shall draw waters with joy out of the wells of salvation:" alluding to a known rite among the Israelites in the feast of tabernacles, unto which our Saviour is thought to allude, John vii. 37, 38. And there is the greater reason for this interpretation, because Samuel had just before promised them, that the Lord would deliver them from the Philistines, if they heartily repented: which made them rejoice in hope of it, because they did now sincerely turn to him.

And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.] When they were reconciled to God, he reconciled them one to another, by determining their differences and doing right where any one was wronged: or he declared the law to them whereby they were to be judged; and, perhaps, punished some gross idolaters, or other great offenders.

Ver. 7. *And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together at Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel.*] Being ignorant of the true reasons of this meeting, the Philistines imagined the Israelites assembled to consult about war, and so resolved to be beforehand with them, and surprise them.

And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.] Being unarmed, I suppose, or not prepared to give them battle.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel said unto Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hands of the Philistines.*] According to the promise made to them, (ver. 3.)

Ver. 9. *And Samuel took a sucking lamb.*] For after a lamb was eight days old, it was fit to be sacrificed unto God, (Exod. xxii. 30. Lev. xvii. 27.) The Hebrew word *tale* is the name for the youngest sheep, as *ajil* is for the eldest, and *chebes* for one between both.

And offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord.]

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Whereby he supplicated the Divine mercy, as the son of Sirach explains it: (Ecclus. xlvi. 16.) "He called upon the mighty Lord, when his enemies pressed him on every side, *ἐν προσφορᾷ, by the obligation of a sucking lamb.*"

And Samuel cried unto the Lord God of Israel; and the Lord heard him.] Which is a demonstration, that though he was not a priest, nor this place appointed for sacrifice, yet, as a prophet, he had authority from God to build an altar any where, and to make his supplication in this manner. Thus other holy men, Gideon and Manoah, were warranted to offer extraordinary sacrifices in places which God had not before appointed. And it is probable that God answered Samuel, as he did Manoah, by fire consuming the sacrifice, in testimony of God's acceptance, (Judg. xiii. 20.) And thus we read of an altar he built in another place, ver. 17. as Elijah did in following times.

Ver. 10. *And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering.*] Before it was consumed.

The Philistines drew near to battle against Israel.] Hoping to find them unprepared. The son of Sirach saith, they of Tyre joined with the Philistines in this action, (Ecclus. xlvi. 17.)

But the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.] They were affrighted, like men out of their wits, with thunder and lightning; which killed many of them before the Israelites could come up to fight them. For, together with this horrible tempest, Josephus saith there was an earthquake, and that the earth opened in several places, and swallowed up some of them, who, like blind men, ran into those gaps.

Ver. 11. *And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued after the Philistines.*] Having Samuel to lead them, as their captain, according to Josephus.

And smote them, until they came under Beth-car.] A place in the confines of the tribe of Judah. This victory was the more wonderful, because we do not find the Israelites came appointed with any weapons to Mizpeh; but, as far as can be gathered by the relation of the fight, they smote them with their own weapons; which the Philistines threw away when they fled, and which were found among those that were slain by the lightning.

Ver. 12. *And Samuel took a stone, and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen.*] So Jacob and Joshua had done, as monuments of God's mercy to them, and their obligations to him.

And called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.] That is, thus far we have gotten the better: for they were not utterly destroyed, but driven quite out of their coasts, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 13. *So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel.*] He put an end to the forty years' tyranny of the Philistines, mentioned Judg. xiii. 1. (See my notes there, and upon ver. 5. of that chapter, and Judg. xv. 20.)

And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.] As in this battle he gave them such an overthrow, that they were quite driven out of the country of Israel: so, during Samuel's government, until Saul was made king, we never read that they attempted with an army to invade them; but then they did, (xiii. 19.)

Ver. 14. *And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel.*] They not only expelled the Philistines, but recovered also several places of which the Philistines had possessed themselves, during their dominion over them.

From Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines.] Ekron was in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 45.) which the Philistines now forsook out of fear, as some think: or were driven out of it for the present, though it was not long before they got possession of it again.

And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.] Not by compact and covenant; but by the inclination of both sides, they abstained from all hostile actions. The Amorites were not the only remainders of the old inhabitants of Canaan; but being the most powerful among them, they had long given name to the rest, (Gen. xv. 16.) And now the Philistines were thus subdued, none of them, who used to infest the Israelites, durst stir to give them any molestation, but sat quiet and still.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.*] From these words Mr. Hobbes and his followers draw an argument that this was written by somebody after the death of Samuel. Which is a very weak proof: for the sense may be no more than this: that Samuel was so diligent in the discharge of his office, that he gave himself no rest, but sat to judge causes every day.

Ver. 16. *And he went from year to year in a circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.*] Ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις τούτοις, *in all these sanctified places*, as the LXX. translate these last words (though there be no such thing in the Hebrew), because, as Mr. Mede conjectures, here were *proseuchas*, i. e. *places of prayer*, in those ancient days. But we may more certainly gather from hence, that there was no such high court then established (which they called the Sanhedrin in following ages) to judge all causes; at least, not such inferior courts as were appointed by the law in Deut. xvi. 18. as the high court is in Deut. xviii. 8. For if there had, there would have been no need of Samuel's riding circuit every year about the country to do justice, as other judges had done. (Judg. v. 10. x. 4. xii. 14.)

Ver. 17. *And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house: and there he judged Israel.*] The power of the judges was greatest in war: but when it was over, they still retained such an authority, that all difficult causes (at least) were brought before them. They were consulted also in all political affairs: and, that they might know where to resort to Samuel, when he had ended his circuit, he kept his constant station at Ramah.

And there he built an altar unto the Lord.] There being no declaration yet made where God would have the ark to be fixed, after the destruction of Shiloh, he built an altar where he himself constantly resided. Because it was fit, when they consulted about any public business, concerning the good of the commonwealth of Israel, that there should be a public invocation of God's direction and blessing: which was done by sacrifice, as appears from ver. 9.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when Samuel was old.*] The Jews in Seder Olam Rabba, and other books, make

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Samuel to have lived no more than fifty-two years; when he could not be said to be old. Therefore Abarbinel forsakes the doctors in this, and shews their proofs of it to be very weak; and thinks that he rather lived until he was seventy, if not eighty years old. But less than seventy, he affirms, none of the prophets or good men lived.

That he made his sons judges over Israel.] When he could not well sustain all the labour, he took them to assist him: both when he went his circuit, and in hearing causes at home. Or, perhaps, when he was old, he went circuit no more; but settled them in a convenient place (as it follows in the next verse) where people might have justice done them, either by him or by them.

Ver. 2. *Now the name of his first-born was Joel, and the name of his second Abijah; they were judges in Beer-sheba.*] As his constant residence was at Ramah, so he ordered theirs to be at Beer-sheba. Whereby, as Corn. Bertram observes, (cap. 9. de Repub. Jud.) the country was divided into two parts, for the greater convenience of the people; that the causes of all those who dwelt between Dan and Mount Ephraim, might be brought to be judged by Samuel at Ramah; and the causes of those between Mount Ephraim and Beer-sheba, might be judged by his sons.

Ver. 3. *And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.*] Covetousness made them take bribes, (contrary to the law, Exod. xviii. 8.) and they made them *pervert judgment.* (See Exod. xxiii. 21. Deut. xvi. 19.) Procopius Gazæus here asks this question: Why God did not punish Samuel as he did Eli, for the wickedness of his sons? Unto which he answers, that Samuel's sons were not so bad as Eli's: for taking bribes privately, was not like open profaning the tabernacle, and making the worship of God contemptible. And, besides, it is possible Samuel might be ignorant of this corruption in his sons: who did not live near him, but he in Ramah, and they at Beer-sheba.

Ver. 4. *And all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah.*] All the great men who were dissatisfied with the management of affairs came to Ramah: which was one of the places where Samuel judged the people, and determined their controversies, (vii. 16, 17.)

And they said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: make us a king to judge us like all the nations.] The weakness of Samuel's body, and the ill disposition of his sons' minds, they make their pretence of demanding what they had long desired to have. The Gemara of the Sanhedrin, cap. 2. sect. 6. according to the tradition of R. Eliezer, saith, the elders were in the right in *desiring a king to judge them:* for, according to the opinion of some of their doctors, this was one of the three things God commanded to be done, when they came into Canaan, that they should make them a king. The only error was, which arose, they say, from the perverseness of the vulgar people, that they desired a king like *all the nations.* But these are mere fancies; for God gave no such command, as their best authors, Bechai, Nachman, Ralbag, and others, acknowledge. But their own pride and vanity suggested these desires to them, that they might not want that outward pomp and show which was among their neighbours. Fear also of a potent enemy, who was about to invade them, might make them think a king necessary to lead them on successfully to encounter him, (ver. 20. and xii. 12.) But above all, this proceeded from their insensibility of the great honour they enjoyed above all mankind, in being under the peculiar government of God: for whom they had so little regard, that he saith, (ver. 7.) they *despised him;* that is, made nothing of such a King as they could not see. But that he had the supreme power over them was apparent, in that when they prayed Samuel to make them a king, immediately he prayed to God; shewing it was not in his power to do it, but in God alone.

Ver. 6. *But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.*] To give him direction what to do in this case: but thus far the elders were in the right, that they came to the prophet to ask a king: for none, as I said, could make one, but the Lord alone, who was their sovereign.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord said, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee.*] These are the words of an angry sovereign, (Hos. xiii. 11.) being as much as to say, Let them have their will. Which he indulged to them, partly to punish them, and partly to preserve them from apostacy from their religion. For being as violently set upon having a king, after the manner of the Egyptians, as they had been to follow their gods, they might have thrown off the law itself, and conformed entirely to the customs of other nations, if they had not been humoured: for they were so set upon it, as appears from ver. 19. that after the prophet had represented to them, how much they would lose by having their desires granted, they persisted in them, saying, "Nay, but we will have a king," &c. Which expresses a resolution to have one whatsoever became of them.

For they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.] These words shew that Samuel took it very heavily, that they should be dissatisfied with his government: but God tells him, he himself had more reason to be angry: for, in truth, they had thrown off his authority, who was their king: (as Samuel tells them afterward, xii. 12.) and therefore was highly offended they should desire any other. Which the Jewish doctors abovementioned (ver. 5.) justly make an argument that God did not command them in the book of Deuteronomy to make them a king; because he was displeased when they desired to have one. For the supreme Lord of the world was their sovereign; who governed them by judges, whom he raised up and extraordinarily inspired, when he saw occasion: as he had before conducted them by Joshua and Moses, who never ordained any thing of moment without a special command for it from God: who reserved to himself the sole power of establishing laws, and appointing magistrates, and making war, as appears by the war against the Midianites, Numb. xxxi. For there is no truth in their opinion, who imagine that the government of the Israelites, before they had a king, was an aristocracy. Josephus, indeed, seems to say so, in one or two places of his Antiquities: but, in his book against Appion (a very learned gentile), wherein he writes most accurately, he makes it a distinct sort of government, different from all other; which he truly calls by a new name, Θεοκρατία, *the government of God,* (lib. ii.) For God exercised the supreme authority among them, by his express command. Which being without example, that it may not seem incredible to those who are

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wont to detract from the sacred history, it may be fit to observe, (to use the words of Hermannus Conringius, in his animadversions on Machiavel's Princeps, cap. 6.) that the demons, who were worshipped as gods by the gentiles, attempted to imitate this, by setting up a like government. So that memorable history of the original of the commonwealth of the Cyrenians in Egypt, mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pausanias, Justin, and others; and that history of the beginning of Heraclea in Pontus, which Justin relates, lib. xvi. cap. 3. For this republic being raised by the express command of demons, was, upon that account, they say, exceeding flourishing. No less memorable is the republic of the Mexicans in America, erected by the command of their demon Vitzipultzi: who, above all others, endeavoured to imitate the miracles wrought by God for the Israelites. Many others, he there shews, pretended to this: though all was transacted by themselves.

Ver. 8. *According to all the works that they have done, since the day that I brought them out of Egypt unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.*] No wonder they desired another sort of ruler than Samuel, for they had chosen other gods. And this had been their wicked humour ever since they were delivered from the tyranny of Pharaoh.

Ver. 9. *Now therefore hearken unto their voice.*] Since they had no greater regard unto God and his minister; he resolved to let them exchange his government for such a one as the nations had, who often oppressed them.

Howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.] He continuing still their king, God was so very gracious as to order Samuel to lay before them at large, into what servitude they were going to throw themselves by casting off the government of judges set over them by God himself; and subjecting themselves to the power of such kings as ruled in other nations.

Ver. 10. *And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.*] How ill God took it, looking upon it as a rejection of himself; who had hitherto governed them most graciously, and often delivered them from the heaviest oppressions. For he either stirred up some person, by an immediate signification of his will and pleasure, to be their judge: or, when there was none, he was ready to rule their proceedings himself, by *urim* and *thummim*, directing them what course to follow in the public concerns of the nation. These two things plainly demonstrated (as our Mr. Thorndike hath well observed) that God was their king, whom they now cast off. (See Review of the Rites of the Church, p. 68. 133.)

Ver. 11. *And he said, This shall be the manner of the king that shall reign over you.*] And, moreover, he declared what kind of government they chose instead of God's. There are various opinions about the *jus regium, the royal power*, here mentioned. Which containing divers particulars that seem arbitrary and unjust, interpreters have chosen to expound the Hebrew word *mishpat*, not by *jus*, but by *mos* and *consuetudo*; that is, not by *right*, but by *manner* and *custom*. And so the words may be translated, as Joseph Scaliger observed long ago from many instances, (Epist. xv.) particularly Gen. xl. 13. and in this book, xxvii. 11. (See Petavius also upon Epiphanius, Hæres. lv. n. 9.) But there is no necessity of this, as Grotius rightly observes, and from him Conringius. For Samuel doth not speak of a just and honest right of a king to do these things (for his right is quite otherwise described in that part of Moses's law which concerns the king's duty), but such a right as the kings of the nations had then acquired: for they desired such a king as their neighbours had; who were all under the absolute dominion of their princes. Which Aristotle calls, δεσποτικὴν ἀρχήν· lib. v. polit. cap. 10. Οἱ περὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν ὑπομένουσι μὲν δεσποτικὴν ἀρχὴν οὐδὲν, δυσχεραίνοντες, *They of Asia endure a despotic government, nothing at all complaining.*

He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself.] To attend him as the guards of his body, and in other offices. This shews that he speaks of an arbitrary power, which kings in those days used. And therefore Abarbinel observes, that Samuel doth not say absolutely, *I will shew you the manner or right of the king* (as if it were a right belonging to all kings), but *that shall reign over you;* that is, of such a king as you desire, who will administer affairs in this fashion.

For his chariots, and to be his horsemen.] To look after his chariots and his horses. For so the word *paras* signifies (as Lud. de Dieu and Bochartus have observed), and these words should be thus translated, *For his chariots and his horses.*

And some shall run before his chariots.] Be his footmen.

Ver. 12. *And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties.*] Others should be disposed of to military offices, higher or lower, as pleased him, (xiv. 52.) who were to be perfectly subject to him, and displaced by him when he thought good.

And will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest.] Others should be made husbandmen, to plough his ground and reap his corn on his own terms; when, perhaps, their labour was necessary about their own fields.

And to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.] Others he would make artificers: which was not very agreeable to that nation, who were inclined from their beginning rather to look after the breed of cattle.

Ver. 13. *And he will take your daughters to be confectioners, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.*] He would exercise, he shews, as arbitrary power over the women as over the men; whom he would make to serve in such employments as he thought fit, either for nothing, or such wages as he pleased to give them.

Ver. 14. *And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.*] Bestow them on such of his courtiers as he thought good to raise to great estates. Which is not to be understood as if he should challenge a right to take their lands from them (for the contrary appears from the story of Ahab, who without a very wicked contrivance could not possess himself of Naboth's vineyard), but that he should take the fruit of them when he thought it necessary, especially in time of war, to gratify his soldiers. To this case Abarbinel confines the sense of these words.

Ver. 15. *And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards.*] This was part of the *jus regium* in the eastern countries, (see my notes upon Gen. xxviii. 22.) to have the tenth part of the fruit of the land for the king's share: and if they contented themselves with this portion they were accounted good kings. As Cypselus, king of

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Corinth, is observed by Aristotle to have exacted no more of his subjects than the tenth of their fruits. Such capitations and taxes, as Bodinus speaks, (lib. vi. de Republ. cap. 2.) which are usual now, being unknown in those days.

And give to his officers, and to his servants.] This revenue being brought into his exchequer, he therewith paid his bedchamber-men, and other servants, their salaries. I call them *bedchamber-men,* because the Hebrew word (which we translate *officers)* signifies *eunuchs* (as the LXX. here translate it), who commonly attended them in their chambers. And it was the more grievous to have such men maintained out of this revenue, because they were strangers: for it was not lawful for the Jews to make any of their nation an eunuch. This revenue itself also proved a heavy burden upon the Jews, because this tenth part was exacted out of the remainder, after the tenth part had been paid to the Levites, as Kimchi and Abarbinel observe.

Ver. 16. *And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men.*] The most beautiful and proper persons he could find.

And your asses, and put them to his work.] Either at the plough, or for carriage, or any other employment wherein they were necessary.

Ver. 17. *And he will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.*] So subject to him, that, if he pleased, they should be no better than his slaves. I know none that hath discoursed this whole matter so perspicuously and fully, as the late learned Puffendorf, whose words I shall translate, as I find them in his book, De Rebus Gestis Philippi. This people, saith he, had hitherto lived under governors raised up by Divine instinct, who had exacted no tribute of them, nor put them to any charges. With which government they being not contented, but desiring to have a king, like other nations, that should live in pomp and splendour, and keep standing forces about him, to be ready to resist any invasion; Samuel informs them what it was they desired, that they might consider, when they understood it, whether they would persist in their choice: if they would have a king magnificently attended, then he tells them, the king will take their sons, and put them in his chariots, &c. (ver. 11.) If they would have him keep up constant forces, then he must appoint them for colonels and captains, and employ those in his wars who were wont to follow their family business, (ver. 12.) And since, after the manner of other kings, he must keep a stately court, they must be content that their daughters (ver. 13.) should serve in several offices; which the king would think below the dignity of his wives and daughters. Many ministers also in several employments, both in war and peace, must have salaries to support them; which must be paid out of their fields and vineyards, (ver. 14.) For which services, he tells them, the king will exact the tenth of all belonging to them, that he may maintain his royal expenses. In one word, if you will have a king, he must be maintained, after a royal manner, out of your estates.

Ver. 18. *And ye shall cry out in that day, because of your king which you have chosen.*] This shews, that, in all the foregoing verses, Samuel describes the uncontrollable power which the eastern princes exercised over their subjects; who were patiently to bear whatsoever their princes imposed upon them, without any power to help themselves. For, as Grotius observes, this *mishpat* doth not signify a true right, but such a fact as hath *effectum juris (the effect of right), viz.* an obligation of not resisting: which is the reason that Samuel adds these words; that the people, loaded with intolerable oppressions, should implore the help of God: because there was no human remedy left for their relief. (See lib. i. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 4. sect. 3.) This plainly confutes the fancy of the Jews concerning their Sanhedrin, and their power to scourge princes: for, as Samuel consulted nobody in making a king, but God alone; so, when he was made, he got such a power, that it is ridiculous to think that high court could control him.

And the Lord will not hear you in that day.] But leave them under this heavy yoke; because they would not hearken unto him, when he represented to them what would be the effect of that power which they desired him to set over them.

Ver. 19. *Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel: and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us.*] This description of the government of the eastern kings did not deter them from persisting in their desires. But they peremptorily demanded a king, though Samuel told them that this *demand* was a throwing off the government of God. Who always heard their cry, when they were oppressed by their enemies; but now would leave them without any help, when they groaned under the oppression of their kings. Which obstinacy, as an excellent person of ours (Dr. Jackson) speaks, did prognosticate that incurable and desperate disease, which had its fatal crisis in their rejecting Christ: who was both priest and prophet, and their lawful king. In casting off whom they could not but cast off God, that he should not reign over them. And so a great admirer of his paraphraseth the seventh verse of this chapter: *Let it not grieve thy spirit that they grow weary of thee: but let them have their will, for so will they serve the Lord and thy Redeemer.*

Ver. 20. *That we may be like all other nations.*] Strange blindness! that they could not see it was their singular felicity, that they were not like other nations: but had God for their governor, who never failed, in time of need, to raise up men of wonderful worth to be their deliverers. It was their vain-glorious humour, therefore, that made them think they were inferior to other nations, unless they saw a prince set over them shining in gold and jewels, living in a sumptuous palace, attended with guards richly clothed, appearing in great pomp and state, as they did in other countries; which they fancied would be for the glory of their land.

To judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.] There was anciently a respect to their military virtue, in the choice of their kings; the very word *rex,* among the Romans, having its original from their abilities to govern armies, and keep them in good order and discipline. Such were all those great men whom God had raised up, as there was occasion, to judge Israel. Who had been so successful when they fought for them, that they were always victorious; which they could not promise themselves their kings would be; the very first of which was slain in battle.

Ver. 21. *And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord.*] As he had told all the words of the Lord unto the people, (ver. 10.)

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Ver. 22. *And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.*] Such as they desired, like those of other nations: for so it appears in the following history many of them were, as Samuel had predicted. Witness the words of the people to Rehoboam, concerning Solomon's government, (1 Kings xii. 4.) And the tyrannical words of Jezabel to Ahab, about Naboth's vineyard, (1 Kings xxi. 7.) And all the violence of Manasseh, who shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem with it, (2 Kings xxi. 16.) And what David himself did, in the matter of Uriah, when he had defiled his wife, (2 Sam. xi. 15, 16.)

And Samuel said unto the men of Israel.] To the elders of the people, who had attended him about this matter.

Go ye every man unto his city.] He bade them leave the business unto him; and God, he doubted not, would set a king over them.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *NOW there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite.*] In this genealogy there is no difficulty but one; which is, that in two places of the Chronicles it is said, that Ner begat Kish, (1 Chron. viii. 37. ix. 39.) But by *begetting* there must be meant, the giving him his breeding and education. For it is evident Ner was Kish's brother, (1 Sam. xiv. 51.) D. Kimchi will have it that he had two names, Abiel and Ner.

A mighty man of power.] This seems not to be meant of his wealth or interest in his country, (for Saul himself saith he was of a mean family, ver. 21.) but of his great strength, courage, and fortitude; which is therefore mentioned, because it hath been often observed, that *fortes creantur fortibus.*

Ver. 2. *And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly; and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.*] They desired a king like the rest of the nations, who looked upon persons of an heroic stature and countenance to be marked out for empire. Whence the saying of Euripides, Εἶδος ἄξιον τυραννίδος; and that of Curtius, "Quippe hominibus barbaris in corporum majestate veneratio est." But no words are more memorable, to this purpose, than those of Pliny, in the conclusion of his fourth chapter of his panegyric to Trajan, where he saith, the strength and talness of his body, the nobleness of his aspect, the dignity of his mouth, the gracefulness of his speech, &c. "Nonne longe lateque principem ostentant?" Do they not every where proclaim a prince? This was a thing so carefully provided for in ancient times, to have a goodly race of kings, that the Lacedemonians set a fine upon their king Archidamus (as Plutarch tells us in the beginning of his book, περὶ παιδῶν ἀγωγῆς) for marrying a wife of a low stature; who was likely to bring them, οὐ βασιλέας ἀλλὰ βασιλίσκους, *not kings but kinglings,* to reign over them.

Ver. 3. *And the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost.*] Wandered out of their pasture.

And Kish said unto Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go and seek the asses.] It is no wonder that he was employed in this inquiry, for I suppose he had the charge of looking after his father's cattle: which was an employment the greatest men did not disdain in ancient time: as we learn from the history of Hercules and Paris, and others among the Greeks. And in Judea asses were a considerable part of their substance: for the greatest persons rode upon asses till the time of Solomon, when horses began to be multiplied, (Judg. x. 4.)

Ver. 4. *And they passed through Mount Ephraim, and they passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not; then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not,* &c.] They searched, that is, all the mountainous country of the tribe of Ephraim, which lay next to Benjamin, after they had first gone through that tribe, as it here follows:

And they passed through the land of Benjamin, &c.] Or, *they had passed through the land of Benjamin;* where hearing no tidings of them, they went into the next country, to see if they were strayed thither.

Ver. 5. *And when they were come to the land of Zuph.*] A territory in the tribe of Ephraim, where some of Samuel's ancestors had lived, (i. 1.) and Ramah, where Samuel now dwelt, seems to have been in it; as we may gather from the next verse.

Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, let us return.] Being uncertain whither to go next, after they had sought so many places in vain.

Lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.] Be afraid that we are lost. The Hebrew word, as Dr. Hammond observes, (upon Psal. xxxviii. 18.) signifies solicitude of mind, mixed with grief and sorrow.

Ver. 6. *And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God.*] A prophet.

And he is an honourable man.] A person of great fame, and held in high esteem.

All that he saith comes surely to pass.] Which procured him such honour.

Now, let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.] To find the asses.

Ver. 7. *Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man?*] This was a part of the honour they did to great men in those countries, to make them a present, when they had occasion to address themselves to them. Particularly prophets were thus honoured; being *men of God;* before whom they were not to appear empty. Thus also they demonstrated their reverence to their king, in the next chapter of this book, (ver. 27.)

For the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we?] Provision for their table was as acceptable a present as money: which appears from what Jeroboam's wife brought to Ahijah the prophet, (1 Kings xiv. 3.)

Ver. 8. *And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand a fourth part of a shekel of silver; that will I give to the man of God to tell us our way.*] A small present, but as acceptable as the widow's mite; being all they had left in their travels.

Ver. 9. *Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God.*] By consulting a prophet.

Thus he spake, Come, let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a prophet, was beforetime called a seer.] Though the word *nabi* (a *prophet*) had been anciently known, as appears by the books of Moses; and used in Samuel's days,

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as appears from many places in this book; yet the more common word, which now prevailed, when Saul was anointed king (for in all languages words are in and out of fashion, in several times), was *roeh* (a *seer*). But in following years, when Samuel wrote this book, *nabi* was become the more usual word in all men's mouths. This is a fair account of these words, from whence some argue, that Samuel was not the author of this book, nor Moses the author of the Pentateuch: where Abraham is called *nabi;* (xx. 7.) which shews that this was no new word in these days, as they would have this place understood. But it might be sufficient to answer unto this, that *nabi* did not signify, in ancient times, one that foretold things to come; but only one that was familiar with God, and was instructed in his will, that he might instruct others. But now, in Samuel's time, it came to be appropriated to the revealing future things, and foretelling what should come to pass, or revealing secrets, which none could know but God.

Ver. 10. *Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; let us go. So they went to the city where the man of God dwelt.*] That is, to Ramah.

Ver. 11. *And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going down to draw water.*] At the fountain, which (as usual) was at the bottom of the hill.

And said unto them, Is the seer here?] Of which there might be some doubt; because some time he was wont to go circuit about the country.

Ver. 12. *And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now.*] That is, they could not fail to find him, if they lost no time, but went speedily to the city, before he went to sacrifice; when it would not be proper to interrupt him.

For he cometh to-day to the city.] He either lived without the gate of the city; or returned from his country circuit.

For there is a sacrifice of the people to-day.] Either at some solemn festival (the new moon some imagine), or upon some special occasion of prayer and thanksgiving to God; for the people of that city, or for all Israel.

In the high place.] All sacrifices were regularly to be offered before the ark, in the place which the Lord should choose. But while this choice stood suspended, because Shiloh was laid desolate, and no other place appointed; they sacrificed in other places, where neither the ark, nor the tabernacle was: the tabernacle being void of the ark, which was its principal furniture; and the ark being without a house for God to dwell in. What place then, in this condition, could be more commodious, than those cities where the priests and Levites lived; to which the people went for instruction? and they chose the highest parts of those cities for this purpose. Corn. Bertram (cap. 11. de Repub. Jud.) imagines, that from this example high places came to be in use in after-ages (unless we suppose them to be the relics of the Canaanites, or more ancient people), for this is the first time we read of a high place among the people of God. Yet we read before of the thing, though not of the name. See Judg. vi. 20. xiii. 19. and so early as Abraham's time we read (Gen. xxii.) he was directed to Mount Moriah to offer his son. The same learned man also thinks, that this was the beginning of synagogues and schools, as our Mr. Thorndike doth in his Religious Assembly, p. 29. For though, when the ark was settled, it became unlawful to offer sacrifices in high places; yet it was no offence to continue there for public prayer, and the praises of God, and the learning of the law.

The Jewish doctors take this *high place* to have been some house, where, after they had sacrificed, they feasted when they had done. And so the Targum here translates these words, *the house of feasting.*

Ver. 13. *As soon as ye come into the city, you shall straightway find him.*] For on this day he appeared publicly.

Before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice.] That is, the feast upon the sacrifice, which were peace-offerings; the greatest part whereof belonged to him that brought the sacrifice; wherewith he entertained his friends.

And afterward they eat that be bidden.] The guests of him that offered the sacrifice; who, at this time, I suppose, was Samuel. For God having told him, that he should that day see the man whom he intended for their king, it is likely he appointed more sacrifices to be added unto those which were usually offered at such times, at his own charge. That there might be the greater feast, unto which he invited the people, (ver. 24.) that is, the principal of the people; and placed the guests, (ver. 22.) and carved at the table, (ver. 23.) which are all tokens that he was at the expense of the sacrifice, and made this feast for his friends.

Ver. 14. *And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go to the high place.*] Met them directly in his way to the feast: for so God in his providence had disposed things; as it follows in the next words.

Ver. 15. *Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *He revealed or uncovered the ear of Samuel;* as is noted in the margin. Now that was done in order to tell him something; and therefore the meaning is, God told him a secret; using, in all likelihood, a whispering voice.

Ver. 16. *To-morrow, about this time, I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin.*] This shews still that all was done by God's direction.

And thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines.] Who had grievously oppressed them for forty years together: and though driven out of the country by Samuel, yet were ready to invade them again; as they did, it appears, by the following history.

For I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.] Though he would not hear their cry to relieve them from the oppression of their kings, (viii. 18.) yet he was so gracious as to make those kings instruments of their deliverance from the oppression of their cruel neighbours.

Ver. 17. *And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him.*] With such a low voice as he heard the day before, (ver. 15.)

Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! the same shall reign over my people.] The word we translate *reign,* signifies something of coercion and restraint, as is observed in the margin; and denotes, he should rule them with an absolute, uncontrollable power, sternly and rigidly, after the manner of the eastern monarchs. Which was, as I said,

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a punishment for throwing off the kind and gentle government of God.

Ver. 18. *Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate.*] He came up to him, as he was going out of his house.

And said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.] It is an argument that Saul had led a very private life, since he had never seen Samuel, who went about into so many places to judge the people.

Ver. 19. *And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place.*] This seems to be spoken out of respect to him.

For thou shalt eat with me to-day; and to-morrow I will let thee go, and tell thee all that is in thine heart.] All that he desired to know. This shews it was a supper, not a dinner, to which he invited him; otherwise he might have dismissed him as well after dinner, as the next morning. But the custom of that country was to make their entertainment in the evening, when business was over.

Ver. 20. *And as for thy asseswhich were lost three days ago.*] This satisfied him he was a prophet, that he knew what he came to him for, though he had not told him.

Set not thy mind on them, for they are found.] He frees his mind from all care about the asses; that he might eat and drink the more cheerfully at the feast.

And on whom is all the desire of Israel? is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?] The meaning is, all Israel desire a king, and there is none fitter for it than thyself; whose family God is resolved to advance.

Ver. 21. *And Saul answered and said, Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?*] He thought no person more unfit for the dignity; both because the tribe of which he was had been lamentably impaired in the time of the Judges, (chap. xx.) and his own family was very inconsiderable in this little tribe.

Wherefore then speakest thou so unto me?] He concluded therefore, that Samuel did but jest with him.

Ver. 22. *And Samuel took Saul and his servants and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden.*] He convinced him he was in earnest, by setting him uppermost at the table, in the most honourable place among the guests.

Which were about thirty persons.] The principal persons, I suppose, of the city, who were witnesses of the extraordinary respect which he paid him.

Ver. 23. *And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said, Set it by thee.*] The master of the feast distributed to every one their portion; or ordered what dish should be set before them: and Samuel had commanded the cook (before they sat down) not to set one dish upon the table, but keep it till he called for it.

Ver. 24. *And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it.*] The left shoulder and breast; for the right shoulder and the right breast belonged to the priest. (Lev. vii. 33, 34.)

And set it before Saul.] As the principal place was given him at the feast, so the principal dish also was set before him, to express still the great regard he had to his person.

And Samuel said, Behold that which is left!] Reserved on purpose for his entertainment.

Set it before thee, and eat.] Let it stand, as it is set before thee, and eat of it, as thy portion.

For unto this time hath it been kept for thee, since I said, I have invited the people.] The plainest translation of these words, is that of Lud. de Dieu, *Eat, because till this appointed time it hath been reserved for thee, when I said, I have invited certain persons.* That is, besides the thirty persons, he told the cook he had invited some others (which were Saul and his attendant) for whom he would have this shoulder to be reserved. For by inviting *the people*, he understands only these two persons; the word *people* sometimes signifying (as he shews) very few. He thinks, indeed, the feast was not made by Samuel, who brought along with him only these two guests: but that seems to me not to agree with the whole story.

And Saul did eat with Samuel that day.] Who entertained him very nobly; for the left shoulder was always accounted the best part of the sacrifice: being the same with that which the priest had for his portion. And therefore set before the king, if he was present at the feast, and thence called by Josephus Μερὶς Βασιλικὴ, *the royal portion:* for the arm and shoulder, as Philo discourses, were the symbols of strength and fortitude.

Ver. 25. *And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.*] Concerning his advancement to the royal dignity, and his administration of the government.

Ver. 26. *And they rose up early: and it came to pass, about the spring of the day.*] Before the people of the place were stirring.

That Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away.] According to his promise, (ver. 19.)

And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.] For Samuel intended, out of respect to him, to conduct him part of his way. But went without any of his usual attendants; that what he did, might, for the present, be kept a secret.

Ver. 27. *And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid thy servant pass on before us (and he passed on), but stand thou still awhile, that I may shew thee the word of the Lord.*] Which he would have none to hear but himself: because he now meant only to give him private satisfaction, that God had chosen him to be the king of his people; before whom afterward he was publicly chosen by lot.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *THEN Samuel took a vial of oil.*] It was the business of a prophet to anoint a king, as Abarbinel observes upon Exod. xxx. Which he proves from this example of Samuel's anointing Saul, and afterward David; and Nathan's anointing Solomon, and the prophet (which the Hebrew doctors say was Jonah) anointing Jehu, (2 Kings ix. 1. 6.) This unction seems to have been in the open fields: but that it was done at a fountain, because Solomon was there anointed, cannot be proved (as the Hebrew doctors would have it) from that single instance; which will not make a general rule. Nor can it be proved, that this was sacred oil taken from the tabernacle, but rather common: for Samuel was no priest, and therefore could not meddle with that which was kept there; nor was he now near unto that place.

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And poured it upon his head.] There is no order of God, that we read of, for the anointing of kings: but it had been an ancient custom, two hundred years before this time, as appears from the parable of Jotham. (See on Judg. ix. 8.) And it was now used by Samuel, that their king might be like the kings of other nations, as they desired. In aftertimes they were far superior to them, if we may believe the Hebrew doctors; who say the family of David had the privilege to be anointed with the same holy oil, wherewith the high-priest was anointed. For though the law appropriated it unto him, yet there was a dispensation with the law, manifested by some prophet. For certain it is, that Solomon was anointed with oil taken from the tabernacle, (1 Kings i. 39.) Only, they say, there was a difference in the form of anointing: the king being anointed in the form of a crown encircling his head; but the high-priest in the form of a cross, by one line drawn with the oil running down his forehead, and by another drawn by the oil between his eyebrows; which they call in the form of the Greek letter *chi*, having no mind to mention the name of the cross. (See Selden's Titles of Honour, p. 144. De Success. in Pontific. lib. ii. cap. 9. Schickard's Jus Regium, cap. 1. Theor. 4.)

And kissed him.] In token of subjection and reverence to him; according to the custom of ancient times, (see Gen. xli. 40.) and in those following, (Psal. ii. 12.) This the Jews call *neshikah shel gedolah, the kiss of greatness or majesty;* in our language, the kiss of homage.

And said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?] That is, doubt not, but by authority from God thou art made the ruler of his people. This was a thing not easily to be believed, and therefore he gives him three or four signs, in the following verses, to confirm his faith. But it must not be imagined, that now he was inaugurated; for that was done afterward, according to this prophetical prediction: which was kept so private, that it shewed he intended no more now, than to assure Saul he should be made king, and publicly installed their sovereign.

Ver. 2. *And when thou art departed from me to-day, thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at Zelzah: and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father,* &c.] He foretelling Saul so exactly how many persons he should meet, and the place where, and what they would say to him, was an argument that he was a prophet; and therefore was to be believed in what he said to him from God concerning the kingdom. Rachel's sepulchre was in the way to Beth-lehem, (Gen. xxxv.) which was in the tribe of Judah, but in the border of Benjamin.

Ver. 3. *Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el.*] This had been a religious place ever since the days of Jacob: as if, by God's appearance to him there, it had been consecrated for prayer and sacrifice: and the tabernacle being now without the ark, and the ark in no determined place, they sacrificed in high places (as Samuel we read did in the foregoing chapter), and particularly here at Beth-el; where Jeroboam afterward settled one of his calves. But Fortunatus Scacchus thinks it no improbable conjecture, that they had no altar, but sacrificed upon the bare ground. (Myrothec. Elæochrysm. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 5.)

One carrying three kids, and another three loaves, and another carrying a bottle of wine.] Intending to offer sacrifices of peace-offerings.

Ver. 4. *And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive at their hands.*] This may be looked upon as a third sign, or an appendix to the second. And it is the more remarkable, because this present which they made him, was a figure of that honour which the people did him when he was declared their king. And if these loaves were two of the three which they were going to offer in sacrifice (as some think they were), the present was the more noble. But though this may be justified, by supposing them to be given to one that was faint with travelling, and which they might recruit at Beth-el; yet we may as well think, as Kimchi doth, that they were two loaves which they brought along with them for their own use in their journey: which they freely imparted unto Saul; and Samuel bade him not refuse; but learn thereby, when he had abundance, to be kind to those who were in want.

Ver. 5. *After that thou shalt come to the hill of God.*] So called, because they were wont to sacrifice here; or because here was a school of the prophets, who were called *men of God*. Some take this to be Gibeah, others Kirjath-jearim.

Where is a garrison of the Philistines.] This makes it probable the hill beforementioned was Geba, or Gibeah: for there they had a garrison, (xiii. 3.) which doth not contradict what was said vii. 13. For though the Philistines were subdued, and made no invasions upon the Israelites while Samuel lived; yet they might retain some strong holds, out of which they could not drive them.

And it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets.] Here it seems was a college of prophets, settled for the instruction of youth in the knowledge of the law and of piety (who were called *the sons of the prophets)*, where, though the Philistines also had a garrison, yet in this they were better than many Christians (as Grotius observes), for they spared those places (when they conquered them) where learned men lived, and were dedicated to the study of religion. (See lib. iii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 11. sect. 10.)

Coming down from the high place.] Perhaps they came from a sacrifice, which had been offered in the high place: and now praised God for his benefits, in the following manner.

With a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them.] With variety of instrumental music; among which the *nevel* (which we translate *psaltery)* was the chief: having its name, as the Jewish doctors fancy (in the Midrasch, upon Psalm lxxxi.) from hence—that it put down all other instruments of music, as much as a wise man doth a fool. Bartoloccius, in his Kirjath-Sepher, par. ii. fol. 185, &c. gives an account of this, and the rest of the instruments here mentioned. With which I do not think fit to trouble the reader; but only note, that this music was used in prophesying, because the minds of the prophets were thereby composed, and made apt to receive soft and good impressions, as Grotius here observes from many examples.

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And they shall prophesy.] Sing the praises of God, as the word *prophesy* sometimes signifies, (Exod. xv. 21. 1 Chron. xxv. 3.) In what manner this was done, it is not so easy for us now to define or specify (as Mr. Mede speaks). But one of them seems to have been the precentor, to usher in the verse or ditty; and the rest to have answered, Τὰ ἀκροτελεύτια, *the extremes,* or *last words* of the verse. (See him, book i. discourse xvi. p. 78.)

Ver. 6. *And the Spirit of God shall come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them.*] This was the highest assurance of all the rest, that Samuel anointed him by God's authority; who vouchsafed suddenly to inspire him with such thoughts and affections, that he became like one of them, *viz.* a psalmist: able in an instant to compose hymns in the praises of God; or to accompany them in their melodies, which he had never learnt. For he was not bred in the school of the prophets.

And shalt be turned into another man.] Endued with extraordinary prudence and courage, and such-like qualities, as fitted him for the government and conduct of God's people.

Ver. 7. *And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion shall serve thee.*] As if he had said, I cannot give thee particular rules about every thing that is to be done by thee: but doubt not to undertake the government of the people: for God's Spirit shall guide thee to do that which the present occasion requires.

For God is with thee.] Be confident of good success in all thy undertakings, for God will be with thee, when thou goest out against thine enemies. The Chaldee paraphrast understands the foregoing words as if he had said, *make all things belonging to a king,* and then adds, *for the Word of the Lord will be thy help.*

Ver. 8. *And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal.*] A place which had been famous for many great things done there, when they first came to Canaan: and lay conveniently for all the tribes beyond Jordan to meet, now they dwelt there.

And, behold, I will come down to thee, to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come unto thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.] This looks like another sign, which he gave him, of God's presence with him, in future times, if he were obedient to his commands. For it cannot be understood of his going immediately to Gilgal; and staying there seven days: for the people were first to be called together to Mizpeh, where he was made king, (ver. 17.) and after the defeat of the Ammonites he was confirmed in the kingdom at Gilgal, (xi. 14, 15.) And then the next year, a war breaking out with the Philistines, all the people met at Gilgal, and Saul with them; waiting for Samuel to come, as he had appointed, to offer sacrifice; which Saul, being impatient of staying so long for him, offered himself, &c. (xii. 4. 8, 9.) and thereby forfeited God's favour; whose prophet had assured him he would not fail to come to meet him here. But then these words must not be pointed as they are now, but as the Hebrew text will bear; retaining the same words, and only altering the pause or point in this manner: *Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal: and, behold, I will come unto thee to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings, seven days.* Here is to be a pause; and then another sentence begins thus: *Thou shalt tarry till I come unto thee,* &c. As if he had said, See, in any case, that thou tarry till I come, *and shew thee what thou shalt do.* Which Samuel, perhaps, knew not himself at present: but intended to ask counsel of God; and being fully instructed in this great business, then come to consecrate him (as Dr. Jackson conjectures), and establish him in his kingdom; by a solemn sacrifice for seven days, such as Solomon used at the consecration of the temple. (See his Third Sermon on Jer. xxvi. 19.; and the very same he repeats in his book of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, chap. 17. parag. 4.)

Ver. 9. *And it was so, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all these signs came to pass that day.*] So great was the goodness of God, that he immediately fulfilled the last and chief of these signs: for he was no sooner gone from Samuel, but he felt another spirit come into him of wisdom and fortitude, to qualify him for the government of God's people. Which afterward God took away from him, because of his sins, xvi. 14. (See Psal. li. 12.)

Ver. 10. *And when he came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied among them.*] He mentions not the other signs particularly, because they were not of such general concernment unto others; but for his own satisfaction: whereas this of the prophets meeting him, and his conversion into a prophet, was of great and universal concernment; to make the people reverence him as their king, when they heard how God had honoured him with such an extraordinary gift from heaven.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?*] It begat wonder in all those who knew his education, that he should on a sudden be inspired as they were, who were bred up in the school of the prophets: for though it was in the power of God alone to bestow the gift of prophecy upon men, yet commonly he endowed none with it, but such as were trained up in those studies which might dispose them for it. For had it been usual to invest those with this spirit, who had not been educated in such a course as might fit them to receive it, we cannot think it would have been so great a marvel now, as to give rise to this proverb. Which must not be understood, as Procopius Gazæus observes, as if Saul had perpetually the gift of prophecy; but that he received such a spiritual gift, whereby he at present prophesied; and was endued with prudence also to govern the people of God. Thus the seventy elders, who were to assist Moses, prophesied; but not always. It is observed by Erasmus, That this became a proverb, when they saw, "aliquem indecenter alieno gregi admixtum," *any man indecently mingled with company that were strangers to him.* Or, when they saw a sudden change wrought in any person; as Gregory Nazianzen applied it when he was chosen a bishop: "Saul prophesied so much beyond expectation, and when nobody thought of it, that the miracle became a proverb."

Ver. 12. *And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father?*] This wonder was presently satisfied by a prudent person among them, who bade them consi-

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der who it was that made prophets: not men, nor merely good education, but God alone; who was the father of all the children of the prophets (*i. e.* of their disciples), to teach them by his Spirit. Which he could bestow when he pleased upon any man, and make him a prophet, without the help of any other master: which was the cause of Amos, vii. 14. And that is the meaning of the word *father* in this place, which signifies the same with *master* or *teacher*. (See upon Gen. iv. 20, 21.)

Ver. 13. *And when he made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.*] Herein he differed from the prophets who met him; that he prophesied but for a short time, this not being his office: and when he had done, he went up to the high place from whence they came down. Where was, I suppose, a place of worship, unto which he went up to give thanks to God for his gifts, and to pray to him to prosper him in the government he designed for him.

Ver. 14. *And Saul's uncle.*] Who met him here in the high place, or in his way home.

Said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye?] How came you to stay so long before your return?

And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were no where.] In no place where they sought them.

We came to Samuel.] To be informed by him.

Ver. 15. *And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you?*] What discourse they had with him.

Ver. 16. *And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.*] Lest he should seem to have been seeking so high a dignity: and because hitherto Samuel thought fit it should be kept a secret between them two.

Ver. 17. *And Samuel called the people together.*] How long after he departed from Samuel we are not told; but now resolved to declare God's choice of Saul to be their king more publicly.

Unto the Lord to Mizpeh.] Which was a very famous place, where they used to meet upon great occasions, (see chap. vii.) and God was pleased to be present (as hath been before observed) wheresoever there was a general assembly of his people, for the common good. (See upon Judg. xx. 1.) Yet one cannot well imagine, that every person of the whole body of all Israel were called hither unto this convention: but by *the people* we are to understand all the elders and heads of their tribes, who governed and represented the rest: and accordingly that which follows is to be interpreted.

Ver. 18. *And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hands of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, of them that oppressed you.*] He commemorates the benefits they received from him, ever since they were in Egypt; from whence he brought them; and suffered none of the kingdoms that lay in their way to Canaan to obstruct their passage: and since they came there delivered them from many heavy oppressions.

Ver. 19. *And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and tribulations.*] By raising up judges, whensoever they cried to him for help: who never failed to conquer all their enemies.

And ye have said unto him, Nay.] When he desired them to continue under his government, they refused, and would not be denied what they asked.

But set a king over us.] They would not any longer be governed by God, but have a king settled over them; to whom they might resort for help.

Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands.] Into which their tribes were divided. This was a wonderful obstinacy and stupidity, that, after God had given them time to consider what it was they desired, and what difference there was between his government, and that of the kings round about them, they should not relent; but persist to the last in their resolution; and imagine that a king could save them, though God was not with him.

Ver. 20. *And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to draw near.*] Unto the place where the lots were to be drawn, in the presence of the heads of their tribes and families, who represented all the rest.

The tribe of Benjamin was taken.] This is a phrase used in the seventh of Joshua, about the discovery of him, who had offended in the accursed thing: which all agree was by lots. And so Rasi and Ralbag understand it here: though Kimchi imagines God told him by *urim* and *thummim*, out of what tribe and family their king should be taken. Which is not probable, because the ark was not now at Mizpeh; before which the high-priest was to stand, when he consulted the Divine Majesty by *urim* and *thummim*.

Ver. 21. *When he caused the tribe of Benjamin to draw near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken.*] The holy writer shortens this account of casting lots: but it is pretty evident they were cast four times: in the first the tribe of Benjamin was taken; in the second the family of Matri in that tribe was taken: but there being several households in that family, it was cast a third time, that they might know in what house their king was, and that of Kish was taken: and in his house, by a new lottery, Saul was taken: and he took this course, as to prevent all dispute, so to give him the greater authority over them, as a person divinely appointed; according to what God had said, Deut. xix. 15. And it is very observable, that Plato himself acknowledges a government appointed by lots to be Θεοφιλῆ ἀρχήν, *a government beloved of God*, (lib. iv. de Legibus.)

Here interpreters are wont to inquire, why their first king should be chosen out of the smallest tribe, sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, and out of the smallest family in this tribe: especially since Judah all along had the preeminence among his brethren, and the great King was promised to spring from him. To which this seems to be a reasonable satisfaction; that this king being extorted by their undutiful importunities, and given them in anger (as I before observed), God was pleased to express his dislike of it by this choice: whereby he also intended to take them off, from depending on their king (whose power was small) so much as on himself.

And when they sought him, he could not be found.] Having withdrawn himself, either out of feebleness of spirit (as some think), or rather out of modesty, he declined so high an authority, unless imposed upon him: or, perhaps, being affrighted when he heard Samuel still representing God as offended with them, for asking a king: which was to reject his government.

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Ver. 22. *Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, if the man should come thither. And the Lord answered.*] From hence Abarbinel argues, that God directed them, both by lot, and by *urim* and *thummim*. Which if it be true, then, though the ark was not there, yet they inquired of the Lord in the usual way, and he was pleased to give answers any where, in great and weighty cases. As Abiathar inquired of the Lord with the ephod for David, at Keilah and at Ziklag, (xxiii. 9. xxx. 7.)

Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.] Or, among the carriages. Here the Jews observe, that *whosoever flies dominion, him dominion follows.* For when they told Saul he was chosen king, he said he was not fit for that office, and bade them inquire again by *urim* and *thummim:* which they make the meaning of the word *further.* And while they were going to make this inquiry, he went and hid himself, till the oracle discovered him. (See Buxtorf, Hist. Urim et Thummim. cap. 3. p. 307.)

Ver. 23. *And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people, from the shoulders and upwards.*] A princely person, and of a majestic aspect: as Corn. Nepos describes Iphicrates in the account he gives of his life, cap. 3. "Fuit et animo magno et corpore, imperatoriaque forma, ut ipso aspectu cuivis injiceret admirationem sui." *He was great both in mind and body, having a form so imperial, that his very aspect struck every one with admiration of him.* And thus P. Cunæus observes, that not only barbarous people, but the most polite nations did, "Majestatem corporis venerari," *look upon a majestic body with veneration,* lib. i. de Repub. Hebr. p. 85. Which appears by what Homer saith of Agamemnon, Iliad. iii. ver. 166. and Virgil of Æneas and Turnus: the latter of which he describes just like Saul, lib. vii. ver. 782.

"Ipse inter primos præstanti corpore Turnus
Vertitur, arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est."

Ver. 24. *And Samuel said unto all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen.*] Though the people were resolutely bent to have a king, yet they were sensible none could make one but God. And therefore they came, in the beginning of this business, to ask one of his prophets. But Samuel could not constitute one without Divine direction and appointment, as appears by the first verse of this chapter, where he saith, *the Lord hath anointed thee;* and the lot whereby he was publicly chosen was cast *before the Lord,* (ver. 19. 23.) And accordingly here he tells them, *the Lord hath chosen him.* Thus afterward the Lord commanded David to be anointed, (xvi. 1. 3.) and among all his sons Solomon was particularly appointed by God to succeed him, (1 Chron. xxix. 5.)

That there is none like him among all the people?] Such was his stature and his aspect, that, as Josephus expresses it, ἐξεῖχέ τε ἁπάντων, καὶ τὸ ὕψος ἦν βασιλικώτατος, *he excelled, and was most kingly in his height,* (lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 5.)

And all the people shouted.] All that were then present, except some profane fellows, who were so far from owning him for their king that they despised him.

And said, God save the king.] In the Hebrew, *let the king live,* that is, be prosperous. The same form of words was used in after-ages when they made kings, (1 Kings i. 34. 39. 2 Kings xi. 12. 2 Chron. xxiii. 11.) All this being done at Mizpeh, when Samuel set up the great stone called Ebenezer, it is not improbable that Saul was there declared their king.

Ver. 25. *Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord.*] The right of the king, which he had laid before the people, upon their first desire to have one, (viii. 11.) he now wrote in a book, and laid up before the Lord: that it might be a witness against them, that all the evils which hereafter befel them, were drawn upon them by their own desires. For what Petrus Cunæus saith, that he wrote the words mentioned Deut. xvii. 16, &c. is altogether unlikely: they being laid up before the Lord long ago, when the law was put by the side of the ark, (Deut. xxxi. 26.) Josephus said a great deal better, (lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 5.) Τὰ μέλλοντα συμβήσεσθαι κακὰ γράψαι, &c. *The prophet having written the evils that should befal them, he read them in the ears of the king, and then laid up the book in the tabernacle of God, to be a testimony unto future ages of what he had foretold.* A duplicate of this writing, it is likely, he left with the elders of the people.

And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.] The people were not dismissed by Saul, who would not presently take upon him to exercise his authority. For Samuel was there, who had been for many years their supreme governor. That is, sixteen years (as Sir J. Marsham computes) before the inauguration of Saul: and he lived eighteen years after, as Josephus saith, in the latter end of the sixth book of his Antiquities; during which time he exercised the power of a judge.

Ver. 26. *Saul also went home to Gibeah.*] In this he still shewed his humility: going to his own home, which was no princely palace.

And there went with him a band of men, whose heart God had touched.] A company of stout valiant men, of great resolution: whom God inclined to follow him, as his guard. Or, were moved, perhaps, by the authority of Samuel (who was a man of God), to go and attend him.

Ver. 27. *And the children of Belial said.*] Some very lewd men (see upon Deut. xiii. 13.) who hated all government: and being, it is probable, men of some rank and quality, were proud, and despised a person of such a small family.

How shall this man save us?] They would not vouchsafe so much as to call him by his name; but insolently contemned him, as one of no note, who had no power to deliver them.

And they despised him, and brought him no presents.] As the manner was to do unto their kings in the eastern countries, when they first tendered their service to them. Which was a token of their benevolence, subjection, and joy. Thus the Psalmist represents the people offering gifts to the Messiah, Psal. xlv. and lxxii.

Jonathan thus expresses it in this place, They did not come to wish him a happy reign.

But he held his peace.] This was an act of great prudence: which declared he was endued with an extraordinary spirit; which enabled him to dissemble his knowledge of the scorn they put upon him. For if he had taken notice of it, he must have punished it; and it had not been safe to begin his reign with any thing of severity: therefore he wisely ordered himself, as if he did not observe their neglect. Corn. Bertram thinks, in his book de Repub.

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Jud. cap. 10. that these men refusing to be governed by Saul, he retired for awhile, and led a private life: leaving Samuel to administer all affairs, as he had done for many years. But whether that be true or not, it is evident Saul, in the beginning of his reign, was endued with a spirit of singular wisdom and moderation: and was none of those princes whom Dion Prusæus describes, (Orat. de Regno, p. 5.) *μακαρίζοντας ἐξουσίαν μετ' ἀνοίας, who bless and praise power, joined with folly and want of understanding.*

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *THEN Nahash the Ammonite.*] He was either the king of the children of Ammon, or the captain of his host; who laid siege to Jabesh-Gilead, as Josephus saith, about a month after Saul was chosen king: but had levied war against them before, (xii. 12.) which was the occasion of their desiring a king.

Came up against Jabesh-Gilead.] He renewed, it is likely, their old pretensions to this country: which they had made in the time of Jephthah. For Jabesh-Gilead was in the tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan; bordering upon the Ammonites: who laid a claim to this country, which the Israelites took from Sihon and Og, as we read in Judg. xi.

And all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.] Be his subjects, but not slaves, with whom no covenant was made.

Ver. 2. *And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes.*] He would not put out both their eyes, because that would have made them unserviceable to him; but only the right, which (as many learned men have observed) was most useful in war; the left eye being covered with their shields, which they held in their left hand: so Procopius Gazæus, *the left eye is covered with the shield; with the right we see our enemies.*

And lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.] This is the only reason he gives for such insolent treatment, that all Israel might know what they were to expect, if he could prevail over them.

Ver. 3. *And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days, that we may send messengers into all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.*] It may seem strange, that either they should submit so soon to such base conditions; or that Nahash should grant them so much respite, when he saw them so abject, and inclined to yield to him. But the reason of both is visible: for Saul they thought was not able to help them; having not yet taken upon him the government, but living privately; (see ver. 5.) and Nahash, it is like, was loath to drive them to desperation, by denying them this short space to expect relief, which he thought could not possibly come to them, though Saul should appear and endeavour to levy an army; for that he imagined could not be done in so few days.

Ver. 4. *Then came messengers to Gibeah of Saul.*] So called, because Saul was there born, and bred, and dwelt.

And told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.] As men despairing of relief.

Ver. 5. *And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.*] By this it appears (as I noted in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter), that some men, not only refusing to submit to him, but despising him, he went and lived retired, and led a rustic life: exercising no authority over the people; but leaving all to Samuel's management.

Ver. 6. *Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him when he heard these tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.*] But now he resolved, by an impulse he felt from heaven, to shew that God had chosen him to be their king. Who, upon this occasion, gave him an extraordinary measure of courage, zeal, and military skill.

Ver. 7. *And he took a yoke of oxen.*] Which he had newly brought out of the field, (ver. 5.)

And hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel, by the hand of messengers, saying, Whosoever comes not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen.] He herein begins to give a proof of his resolution, by this terrible threatening; and by the representation he made of the execution he intended, if he was disobeyed. Whereby it appears, that the kings of Israel assumed such an absolute power as Samuel described chap. viii. One part of which consisted in making war, and raising soldiers, by their sole authority, and punishing those that did not come to the army at their summons. For we never read that they consulted the oracle before they went to war; nor that they are reproved by the prophets for that neglect. In like manner they made laws, which is the act of a sovereign. For though they could not alter the laws of Moses, but were to govern themselves by them; yet, in things not determined there, or were not clear and plain, they made what laws they thought good; as appears by David, and Solomon, and other of their best princes.

And the fear of the Lord fell upon the people.] They were no less affected with the cutting these oxen in pieces, than they had been with the using the Levite's concubine in like manner, (Judg. xix. 19.) as Bochartus notes: who observes something like this among heathen people, (Hierozoic. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 33.)

And they came out with one consent.] God, who put courage into Saul, possessed the people also with a fear of offending him; now that he asserted his royal authority over them. For he names himself before Samuel (the kingly dignity being superior to the prophetical), but wisely mentions him also, that they who did not reverence himself as their king, might follow the prophet, whom all reverenced.

Ver. 8. *And when they numbered them in Bezek.*] Of this place, see upon Judg. i. 6.

The children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.] It is thought by some, that the Philistines invaded them in the west, as the Ammonites did in the east, (just as they had done formerly in the time of Jephthah, Judg. x. 7, 8.) which is the reason so few of Judah came in at this summons; being engaged elsewhere against another dangerous enemy. But they would not wholly neglect to come to his assistance in this other war, but shewed their forwardness to obey him, as much as they were able. Bertram, also, Altingius, (in his Shilo, lib. iii. cap. 11.) and others, take it as an honour done to

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this tribe, which had the pre-eminence, that they were numbered by themselves. But Sir J. Marsham looks upon it as the beginning of a schism, (Secul. ix.)

Ver. 9. *And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, To-morrow, by that time the sun shall be hot, ye shall have help,* &c.] The morrow after their return, before noon.

Ver. 10. *Therefore the men of Jabesh said.*] Unto Nahash the Ammonite.

To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us that which seemeth good to you.] In case, that is, relief did not come to them by that time: of which they pretended to have no hope. Most look upon this as spoken ironically and in mockery: but Grotius takes it for a stratagem, to make them secure: according to the opinion of those times, that they might delude an enemy by deceitful words: as Elisha did the Syrians, 2 Kings vi. 18, 19, &c. (See lib. iii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 1. sect. 17.)

Ver. 11. *And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning-watch, and slew the Ammonites till the heat of the day.*] He set upon them, I suppose, on three sides, and the men of Jabesh issuing out on the other, they were so distracted that they could make little resistance: but the Israelites got into the midst of them very early, and made a great slaughter of them till noon.

And it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.] This is added to shew, with what a complete victory Saul began his reign: whereby God established his authority.

Ver. 12. *And the people said unto Samuel.*] Who, it appears from hence, accompanied Saul in this expedition, to encourage him with hopes of good success.

Who is he that said, Saul shall not reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.] Great successes make great alterations in the affections of the people; who quietly saw Saul contemned a little while ago; but now would have inquiry made after those sons of Belial, who spake opprobriously of him, (x. 27.)

Ver. 13. *And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day.*] He prudently dissembled his knowledge of their despisal of him, before the kingdom was confirmed to him: but this moderation, now that he was wonderfully victorious, argued greater wisdom and goodness. For nothing is more glorious than to be humble and meek in the height of power.

For to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.] Besides the policy he exercised in pardoning offenders (whereby he laid the strongest obligations upon them to be faithful to him), it was a piece of piety to imitate God, who had been so good to them all.

Ver. 14. *Then Samuel said unto the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, to renew the kingdom there.*] New kingdoms are not easily settled. And this place was famous upon many accounts, as Mizpeh was, where Samuel first declared him king. Particularly, Samuel was wont to judge the people here, (vii. 16.)

Ver. 15. *And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king, before the Lord in Gilgal.*] He had been anointed in Ramah; and chosen by lot in Mizpeh; but still some disdained to own him as their king: which made him content himself for a time (as I said before) with a private life. But now, after this signal token of God's presence with him, in the late victory, he was, by common consent, acknowledged by all the people for their king. Which is the meaning of these words, *they made Saul king;* for it is certain, it was neither *they* nor Samuel that could make a king; but God alone: who ordered Samuel to anoint him, and then made the lot to fall upon him; and now inclined the hearts of all the people to submit to his authority.

The LXX. here say, ἔχρισε Σαμυὴλ, &c. that *Samuel here anointed Saul king over Israel.* And Josephus, (lib. vi. cap. 6.) that he again anointed Saul, Τῷ ἁγίῳ ἐλαίῳ, *with holy oil.* But there is not a word of this anointing in the Hebrew text, no, nor in the Vulgar Latin: and the Targum very well expresses it, *they made Saul to reign, i. e.* would not let him any longer lead a private life; but prayed him to take the government upon him according to God's ordinance, and promised subjection to him. Gilgal seems to have been chosen for this purpose, rather than any other place: because there was a sanctified piece of ground, as Abarbinel speaks, where, when they entered into Canaan, the ark first stood: which now, perhaps, they brought hither, and offered sacrifice before it.

And there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the Lord.] Who was present, as I observed before, (see Judg. xx. 1.) in such great assemblies of the body of the people: with whom both they and their king made a covenant of obedience to him, by offering of the sacrifices.

And there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced together.] By feasting upon the peace-offerings: giving thanks to God for the late victory, and for settling the kingdom.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *AND Samuel said unto all Israel.*] In the presence of Saul, as appears from ver. 3. 5.

Behold, I have hearkened unto you in all that you said unto me, and have made you a king.] This speech was made before they parted from Gilgal: where they had renewed the kingdom.

Ver. 2. *And now, behold, the king walketh before you.*] To rule and govern them, (Numb. xxvii. 17.)

And I am old and grey-headed.] And therefore very willing to be discharged from the government of you.

And, behold, my sons are with you.] Reduced also to the state of private persons; being the king's subjects, no less than you.

And I have walked before you from my childhood to this day.] He appeals to them whether he had not always discharged his duty faithfully, from the very beginning; when God had made him a prophet to instruct and guide them. For now they might freely accuse him, if they had any thing to allege against him: both he and his sons being now become subjects to a more sovereign authority.

Ver. 3. *Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed.*] He offers himself to be tried, and to give a public account of his administration: being ready to answer any thing that could be objected against him.

Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken?] He desires them to testify, if he had ruled after the manner of

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the eastern kings: under which government they chose to put themselves.

Or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed?] If they knew of no open violence, he bids them mention any fraud or circumvention, of which he had been guilty.

Or of whose hands have I received any bribes to blind mine eyes? and I will restore it you.] He challenges them to prove so much as the receiving any gift, in any cause that came before him; and he would make full satisfaction.

Ver. 4. *And they said, Thou hast not defrauded, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand.*] They acknowledged him to be perfectly an upright judge: who could not be charged to have done any thing amiss.

Ver. 5. *And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.*] Of his innocence; and that they had no reason to complain of his government.

Ver. 6. *And Samuel said unto the people, It is the Lord that advanced Moses and Aaron, and brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.*] D. Kimchi refers this to the foregoing words; as if he had said, *the Lord that did such wonders by Moses and Aaron is witness*, &c.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore stand still.*] The Jews observe, that they were wont to *stand*, when they heard the word of God. Though those words, Exod. xx. 18. are but a slender proof of it.

That I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers.] He would not dismiss them, till, having obtained this honourable testimony from them, he had represented to them the great benefits they had received from God, and their ingratitude to him.

Ver. 8. *When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the Lord, then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.*] Any one may easily discern, this is but a compendious narrative of what God did for them, from their first coming out of Egypt, till they were settled in Canaan; no more than that *their fathers cried unto the Lord, when Jacob came into Egypt*, and the Lord sent these two persons to deliver them. For many things intervened between both these; till at last God settled them in their rest, in the good land he promised to give them.

Ver. 9. *And when they forgat the Lord their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them.*] This is a short history of the calamities which befel them, for their idolatry, after they came there: some few of which he only mentions; without observing exactly the order in which they came upon them: but these were the people who longest oppressed them.

Ver. 10. *And they cried unto the Lord, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.*] This they did very often. (Judg. iii. 9. 13. iv. 3. vi. 7. especially x. 10. 15, &c.)

Ver. 11. *And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwell safely.*] This is perfectly agreeable to the history of the book of Judges; which acquaints us, that as often as they repented, and besought his pardon, &c. he raised up deliverers unto them: the latest of which he only mentions. In which account there is no difficulty, but only about Bedan: of whom we no where read. But see my notes upon Judg. x. 4. unto which may be added, that the Chaldee paraphrase here hath it, *he sent Gideon and Samson*, &c. whom most take to be the person here meant, and called Ben-Dan (the son of Dan), because he was of that tribe: and by contraction called Bedan; just as instead of Saulmeel (asked of God), they called him who writes this book Samuel, for shortness' sake. Who mentions himself as one of their deliverers; because the signal overthrow he gave the Philistines, which drove them out of their country, was fresh in their memory.

Ver. 12. *And when ye saw that Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us; when the Lord your God was your king.*] They would not stay till God raised them up a deliverer, or commanded Samuel, who was their judge, to fight with him: but would have a king like other nations, always at hand to fight their battles. (See upon viii. 5.) The word *nay* seems to signify that Samuel told them, that God would be with them to deliver them; or that he offered himself to be their leader under God: but they refused his offer, and continued to demand a king.

Ver. 13. *Now therefore behold the king whom you have chosen, and whom you have desired!*] He could not upbraid them too often with this, that they would not be content with the government of God, which was peculiar to them; but chose to be like other people.

And, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you.] Though they chose to have a king like other nations, and be governed by God no longer; yet he still puts them in mind they could not make one, but he was set over them by God; as I have before observed.

Ver. 14. *If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord.*] According to the covenant they lately made with him: (xi. 15.) all virtue springs from the fear of God.

Then shall both ye, and your king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God.] That is, be defended by him; and *continue a happy people:* notwithstanding they had thus rejected him. This appears to be the meaning, by what is opposed to it in the following verse.

Ver. 15. *But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord; then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers.*] He would suffer their enemies to oppress them, as they did in the days of the Judges: or send other plagues upon them.

Ver. 16. *Now therefore stand and see the great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes.*] For a visible demonstration of the truth of all that Samuel had said.

Ver. 17. *Is it not wheat-harvest to-day?*] A very clear day, and in no disposition to rain. Which was not wont to fall in harvest-time; but in the autumn, and in the spring: called the later and the former rain.

I will call upon the Lord, and he shall send thunder and

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rain; that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.] By this he shewed how he could in an instant deprive them of all the comforts of life; as they deserved, for their rejecting him and his prophet: who was so powerful, as by his prayers to produce such wonders.

Ver. 18. *So Samuel called upon the Lord; and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day.*] A very horrible tempest, accompanied, it is likely, with lightning; when all was serene, and no sign appeared of it.

And all the people feared the Lord and Samuel.] This struck such a terror into them, that they were afraid God would destroy them, as he did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and that Samuel would not intercede for them.

Ver. 19. *And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.*] Till now they seem not to have been sensible of their sin, in desiring an alteration in the form of their government: therefore it was a miraculous storm, full of horror, which extorted this confession from them; not only of this, but all their former sins.

Ver. 20. *And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve him with all your heart.*] He would not have them despair of recovering God's favour; and directs them the best way to it: by continuing so sensible of their wickedness, as to be moved to true repentance and steadfast obedience.

Ver. 21. *And turn ye not aside: for then shall ye go after vain things, which cannot profit.*] He warns them above all things against worshipping other gods, whom he calls *vain things which cannot profit;* by a scheme of speech in the Hebrew language, signifying, *they do a great deal of mischief.* Thus in Prov. xx. 23. the wise man saith, *a false balance is not good;* that is, is very bad and hateful to God; as it goes before, of *divers weights.* And thus heathen writers speak, particularly Homer, Odyss. ξ. ver. 85.

Οὐ γὰρ σχέτλια ἔργα θεοὶ μάκαρες φιλέουσι.

The blessed gods do not love wicked actions; i. e. they hate and detest them.

Nor deliver, for they are vain.] He presses them to persist in the worship of God alone; whom if they forsook and went after other gods, in vain did they expect help and deliverance from them, for they were void of all power.

Ver. 22. *For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.*] The steadfastness of God in his affection to them, notwithstanding their provocations, was a mighty motive to faithful obedience.

Ver. 23. *Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will instruct you in the good and right way.*] Not only pray for them, but teach and instruct them: which were the two great offices of a prophet. They had highly disobliged him; but he imitated God, who pardoned them, and so did he.

Ver. 24. *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.*] All his prayers and instructions would not do the business, without their serious considerations. And what more worthy their constant thoughts than the great benefits they had received from God: particularly his tender mercy in not casting them off when they shaked off his government.

Ver. 25. *But if you will still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both you and your king.*] As it proved, not only in this, but in several future reigns.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *AND Saul reigned one year.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *the son of one year in his reign or kingdom.* A very learned prelate of our own (in his Demonstration of the Messiah, par. ii. p. 240.) takes the meaning to be, that *after the Philistines were subdued by Samuel, a year passed, when Saul began to reign; and after this he reigned two years free from their yoke.* As for his being called *the son of one year* in the Hebrew, it is well translated by us *reigned one year;* because he was *born,* when he was made king, and changed into another man: for thus (as Bochartus hath observed) the day of an emperor's inauguration among the gentiles was called his *birth-day,* viz. *natalis regni, the day when he began his reign.*

And when he had reigned two years over Israel.] So Ralbag interprets the Hebrew words; and thereby confutes the strange fancy in Seder Olam Rabba, that Saul reigned but two years in all. Whereas the meaning is, after this he reigned two years free from the oppression of the Philistines: but when they were ended, the Philistines got the upper hand again, and enslaved the Israelites, as appears by this chapter.

Ver. 2. *Saul chose him three thousand men.*] In the first year of his reign he performed those things mentioned in the foregoing chapter: and when he had reigned two years, these things fell out which we read in this chapter. Which is much better than Dr. Lightfoot's exposition, that he had been king one year from his first anointing at Ramah, to his second at Gibeah: and after that he reigned two years more before the Lord cast him off, and anointed David. Symmachus and Procopius Gazæus, not much otherwise. Who by *son of one year* think the simplicity of his mind is denoted: which he preserved for some time, *i. e.* till he had reigned two years over Israel, and then he began to be depraved and forsaken of God.

Whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash, and in Mount Beth-el, and one thousand men with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin.] There was another Gibeah in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 57.)

And the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.] The forementioned number being sufficient for his guard, and to preserve the country in peace, and to oppose any sudden inroad of their enemies: he would not be burdensome to his people, by keeping great forces.

Ver. 3. *And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines.*] Who, though subdued by Samuel at Eben-ezer, and driven out of the country; yet kept some strong holds, as I observed, x. 5.

That was in Geba.] This was a distinct place from Gibeah, though both in the tribe of Benjamin: as is evident from Josh. xviii. 24. 28.

And the Philistines heard it.] And thereupon (as the following words import) denounced war against Israel.

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And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land of Israel, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.] He gave them notice by a proclamation, what Jonathan had done, and what was the effect of it: and thereupon summoned them to come to Gilgal.

Ver. 4. *And all Israel heard say, that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines.*] This shews that Jonathan acted by Saul's order: who was desirous to free his own tribe from such intruders.

And that Israel also was an abomination with the Philistines.] Who were highly incensed to take revenge.

And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.] Where Samuel had appointed to meet him, (x. 8.)

Ver. 5. *The Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand of the sea-shore for multitude; and they came up and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.*] A prodigious army, and very formidable, by reason of their chariots and horsemen, which were also very numerous, (see Josh. xi. 4.) But it is not likely the Philistines alone could bring so many into the field: no, nor after other nations thereabout were associated with them, it is credible that they should make up thirty thousand chariots of war. For none ever had so many; Pharaoh himself pursuing the Israelites only with six hundred, (Exod. xiv. 7.) Therefore most of them were no more than carriages, which were necessary for the baggage of such vast multitudes of people: which is a better account, in my judgment, than to say there is a mistake made by transcribers in later times: as Bochartus himself thinks, (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 9.) because in the Syriac and Arabic copies there are only found three thousand. Which is too great a number, without the help of the foregoing exposition; for in the vast army of Mithridates there were but a hundred chariots, and in Darius's two hundred, and in Antiochus Epiphanes' (of which we read 2 Macc. xiii. 2.) but three hundred.

Ver. 6. *When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were distressed).* Though their wonderful success against the Ammonites had encouraged them to obey the summons of such a prosperous leader, as Saul had been; yet when they saw the vast army of the Philistines, how well they were appointed, and themselves unprovided, their hearts failed them, and they slunk from him as fast as they had flocked to him.

Then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.] One part of the people endeavoured to secure themselves in lurking places: where it was not easy to find them.

Ver. 7. *And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.*] Another part of them fled as far as they could from present danger, into the country of the two tribes and a half.

As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.] All that were left with him were in great fear, seeing so many of their brethren desert him.

Ver. 8. *And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel appointed.*] He mistook Samuel's meaning, (as I shewed upon x. 8.) who told him he would come and offer sacrifice seven days: and then adds, *thou shalt tarry till I come.* So two interpreters, who are ancient in respect of our times (Rupertus and Angelomus), have observed an amphibologia in Samuel's words in that place, which may be construed two ways; and it was Saul's folly to make choice of the wrong sense. For the last words there are as much as if he had said, *be sure to tarry till I come, and shew thee what thou shalt do.* And indeed common reason might have taught him, that if the war was to be undertaken, it was to be managed likewise by the counsel of the Lord: and therefore he ought not to have sacrificed, or done any other solemn act, before the prophet, who was God's ambassador in this business, came to instruct him.

But Samuel came not to Gilgal.] So soon as Saul expected him.

And the people were scattered from him.] That third part of the people who were left began to go away, when they saw Samuel did not come to advise and assist him in this dangerous condition.

Ver. 9. *And Saul said, Bring hither the burnt-offering unto me, and peace-offerings. And he offered the burnt-offering.*] And would have proceeded to offer the peace-offerings, if Samuel's coming had not prevented him.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass, that, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.*] Welcome him thither: which he did in honour of the prophet.

Ver. 11. *And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together to Michmash.*] These looked like weighty reasons; but could not excuse his presumption in not waiting for Samuel, who assured him he would come thither.

Ver. 12. *Therefore, said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.*] He pretends it was much against his inclination: but pleads necessity for what he did, least his enemies should have set upon him before he had commended himself to God and begged his blessing. By which it appears, that burnt-offerings were of the nature of a prayer to God: whom they acknowledged hereby to be the Lord of all. Whence it is that we read so often of Abraham and Isaac, that they "built altars (which were for sacrifice) and called upon the name of the Lord." The gentiles also, as well as the Jews, invoked God by their sacrifices, as Mr. Mede hath shewn from Homer and other authors, book ii. p. 464.

Ver. 13. *And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee.*] When God advanced Saul to be king, he was little in his own eyes, and then a great man in the sight of God. But now he began to take upon him, and thought it was fit the prophet should wait for the king rather than the king for the prophet: and distrusted Samuel's word, who bade him tarry till he came. And so intruded upon the priest's office; or, at least, caused the priest to do that unseasonably which was reserved for Samuel to do, when God thought fit to send him: who had all along transacted all matters between God and Saul. In short, his folly and disobedience consisted in this, that he intrenched upon the priest's office, or upon the prophet's,

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or upon both: and would not wait Samuel's coming, nor confess his fault to him when he came; but made excuses, and laid the fault upon all but himself, (ver. 11.)

Abarbinel hath expounded this a little more distinctly, by observing the command which Samuel gave him, when he anointed him, x. 8. where he tells him, first, he would come and offer sacrifice; secondly, he bids him wait for him seven days; and, lastly, saith he would direct him what to do. Now Saul transgressed every part of this command: for he offered sacrifice himself, which God intended should be offered only by the prophet; and he did not stay till the end of the seventh day, but offered on the seventh day in the morning; and he intended to begin the war without any direction from Samuel what he should do. He thinks, also, that those words, *seven days* (in that place), may refer to the words going before, *viz. peace-offerings* so many days. For Saul was bound, as it follows, to tarry till Samuel came, though he stayed more than seven days before he came.

For now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.] This suggests that the intention of Samuel's coming to offer sacrifice at Gilgal for seven days, was to confirm Saul in the kingdom, (as I observed upon x. 8.) if he had not foolishly deprived himself of that blessing: but here the Hebrew doctors take notice of a difficulty, which is, how God could intend to establish the kingdom upon him *for ever*, without contradicting the prophecy of Jacob, who had promised the sceptre to the tribe of Judah. Which Ralbag thinks is sufficiently answered, by saying that *for ever* signifies no more than a long time; as it doth in the words of Hannah in the beginning of this book, chap. i. 22. and in Exod. xxi. 9. and many more places. And so others interpret these words, *as long as his posterity lasted.*

Ver. 14. *But now the kingdom shall not continue.*] He predicts that God would not let his family enjoy the kingdom: because of other sins which he foresaw he would commit.

The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.] God had not yet commanded David to lead his people, but he fully intended to do it, if Saul did not repent, and obtain a pardon of him for his offence. Whereby he had not provoked him so far, as to have an irreversible sentence passed upon him (as many great men have thought), but it might have been revoked if he had not persisted in his folly, and committed a much greater offence against the Divine Majesty, in the war against Amalek. Then Samuel tells him, the Lord *would not repent:* which not being added here, it makes it probable he was capable of a pardon, notwithstanding this denunciation: if he had begged it with repentance, and better obedience for the time to come.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin.*] The place of Saul's birth, and where he lived; which I look upon as a sign that Samuel did not intend to desert him, as he did afterward, nor looked upon him yet as forsaken by God.

And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men.] A strange alteration since the last year, when against the Ammonites he had three hundred thousand men with him, besides those of Judah, (xi. 6.)

Ver. 16. *And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people who were present with him, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin.*] They followed Samuel; and it was a strong place, where they could defend themselves better than in the open field: and here, it is likely, he hoped to increase his forces, being in his own tribe.

But the Philistines encamped in Michmash.] A place not very remote from Gibeah; but in the tribe of Ephraim.

Ver. 17. *And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines, in three companies.*] They sent out parties *three* several ways, to ravage the country, there being none to oppose them.

One company turned the way that leadeth to Ophrah.] There was a city of this name in the tribe of Benjamin, (Josh. xviii. 23.) but many take this rather to be that in the tribe of Manasseh, where Gideon was born, (Judg. vi. 11.)

Unto the land of Shual.] So called, because it abounded with foxes, as Bochart observes.

Ver. 18. *And another company turned the way of Beth-horon.*] Both the upper and the nether cities of this name were in the tribe of Ephraim, (1 Chron. vii. 24.)

And another company turned to the way of the border that looks to the valley of Zeboim, towards the wilderness.] The Chaldee paraphrast translates these words, *the valley of vipers;* for *tzeboa* signifies a sort of speckled serpent, wherewith this valley abounded, and lay towards the wilderness of Jericho in the tribe of Benjamin. Thus also a great number of the Hebrew writers translate *Zeboim;* which Junius takes for a city in this tribe. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iii. cap. 7.)

Ver. 19. *Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords and spears.*] To this miserable condition the Philistines had reduced them during the forty years' tyranny over them, of which we read, Judg. xiii. 1. But after Samuel had put an end to it, by the great overthrow he gave the Philistines at Eben-ezer, it seems something strange they had not restored their artificers. But the sloth of the Israelites appears in their whole story; and it was not easy, in so short a time, for men to learn this trade, which the Philistines wisely destroyed, as the Chaldeans, when they destroyed Jerusalem, carried away all the smiths to Babylon, that they who remained in the land might not arm themselves again, (2 Kings xxiv. 14.)

Ver. 20. *But all the men of Israel went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.*] Not to the country of the Philistines, for that was too far off from some parts of the land of Israel; but to their garrisons, which they held among them, even after Samuel had driven the main body of them out of the country, as I observed upon x. 5.

Ver. 21. *Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.*] Thus Pliny tells us in his Natural History, lib. xxxi. cap. 14. that in the league which Porsanna made with the Roman people, after the expulsion of their kings, it was expressly covenanted, "Ne ferro, nisi in agricultura uterentur;" *that they should not make use of iron, but only in the tilling of their fields.*

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Ver. 22. *So it came to pass, that in the day of battle, there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul, and Jonathan his son, was there found.*] The Jews being very much addicted to feeding cattle, very much neglected mechanical arts, as appeared when Solomon built the temple. For there were so few skilled in architecture among the Israelites, that he was constrained to send to another nation for them. And so Rasi thinks it was in the trade of smiths; there being no iron mines in the land. But that was not the true reason, as Kimchi observes; for the Philistines, as was said before, had transplanted the smiths, when the Israelites were under their dominion. In their oppressions also, which they lay under, their enemies were wont to disarm them, as appears by the song of Deborah, (Judg. v. 8.) But though they had no sword nor spear, yet they had bows and arrows, and slings; which the men of Gibeah could anciently manage to a wonderful advantage, as we read, Judg. xx. 16. And besides these, they anciently used clubs to beat down their enemies; and before the invention of spears with iron points, they had sharp stakes hardened in the fire, as many authors inform us.

Ver. 23. *And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.*] Some refer this to the garrison mentioned ver. 3. which Jonathan having smitten, they that escaped joined with the army at Michmash. But it refers rather to the garrison mentioned in the beginning of the next chapter, (ver. 1.) and the last word relates not to *the passage*, but to the *garrison*. As if he had said, *The garrison of the Philistines in Michmash went out to the passage*. For Michmash, as Rasi observes, was upon a high hill, as Gibeah was; between which was a valley, called here *a passage*. Into which the garrison descended, to invite the Israelites to battle; or, as the Targum translates the first word, the *captain-general* of the Philistines went out into the valley; to view the ground, we may suppose, and form a camp there.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the garrison of the Philistines that is on the other side.*] Of the valley, mentioned in the foregoing verse. This had been a very rash attempt, and very criminal (he having no order from his father, who commanded in chief), if he had not had a Divine incitation to it. Which he felt upon the sight of the Philistines appearing, as if they intended to assault Gibeah; and upon the information he received of the great spoil which the three parties made of the poor people in the country, (xiii. 17.)

But he told not his father.] Lest he should have hindered him from this enterprise, into which he felt himself moved by God.

Ver. 2. *And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah.*] In some intrenchments he had made without the city.

Under a pomegranate-tree, which is in Migron.] Where he pitched his tent.

And the people that were with him were about six hundred men.] His forces were not augmented since he came to Gibeah, as might have been expected, (xiii. 15, 16.) But, as Vegetius observes, (lib. i. de Re Militari, cap. 8.) "in omni conflictu non tam prodest multitudo, quam virtus:" *in all conflicts valour doth more service than multitude.*

Ver. 3. *And Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas.*] It seems Phinehas (who was slain with Hophni) left two sons; Ichabod, who was born after his death; and Ahitub, who was born before: and left a son, who is here called Ahijah, and in xxii. 9. Ahimelech; who left a son called Abiathar, xxiii. 6.

The son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh.] These last words, *the Lord's priest in Shiloh*, manifestly belong to Eli, who was the high-priest while the tabernacle was in Shiloh.

Wearing an ephod.] Or rather, *the ephod;* which comprehends the breast-plate, with *urim* and *thummim*, for they were inseparable from it. These Ahijah, being high-priest, now wore: for these words, as Ralbag observes, belong to him. (See Selden, lib. i. de Success. ad Pontif. cap. 3.) Saul being now in great distress sent for Ahijah, to consult God for him, as there should be occasion: and, as appears by the eighteenth verse of this chapter, had commanded him to bring the ark with him from Kirjath-jearim.

And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.] This makes Josephus's opinion probable, that he went away in the night: which was prudent upon another account; that he might not be spied presently by the Philistines.

Ver. 4. *And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on one side, and a sharp rock on the other.*] So that there was no way to come at the Philistines, but by climbing up one of these rocks, (ver. 12.) which were thought inaccessible: and therefore not fortified, as the other passages to Michmash were, with such strong guards as Jonathan could not encounter.

The name of the one was Bozez, the name of the other Seneh.] Which were such famous precipices, that they had names bestowed on them: the original of which will not be worth our inquiry; but the latter seems to have taken its name from the thorns that grew upon it.

Ver. 5. *The fore-front of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah.*] By this we understand how these two places lay, towards which these rocks pointed.

Ver. 6. *And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, let us go over to the garrison of the uncircumcised.*] He speaks of them with contempt, as strangers to the covenant of God.

It may be the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.] He speaks with some diffidence to his servant; but was inwardly persuaded of a certain victory, by the Divine assistance.

Ver. 7. *And his armour-bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee.*] Which way thou wilt.

Behold, I am with thee according to thy heart.] He resolved not to forsake his master in any undertaking, though ever so dangerous: being such a servant as Gideon had, (Judg. vii. 10.)

Ver. 8. *Then said Jonathan, Behold, I will pass over to these men.*] He resolves to lead the way.

And we will discover ourselves unto them.] At break of day.

Ver. 9. *If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come*

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unto you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.

Ver. 10. *But if they say thus, Come up to us; then we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand; and this shall be a sign unto us.*] Which he could not have known without an instinct from God, who often suggested such thoughts unto good men: as we see in the example of Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 14, &c. And there is something like this in the beginning of Herodotus's fifth book concerning the Pæones, and the Perinthians: where he saith, the Pœonians went to war by a Divine direction with the Perinthians; and were ordered, if the Perinthians, being opposed to them, provoked them by name to fight, then they should invade them; but if they did not, they should abstain from fighting. Now while they faced one another there happened a threefold single combat: and the Perinthians being victors in two of them, began to sing a song of triumph, and insult over the Pœonians; who thereupon said one to another, νῦν ἂν εἴη ὁ χρησμὸς ἐπιτελεσμένος ἡμῖν, νῦν ἡμέτερον τὸ ἔργον. *Now is the oracle fulfilled to us, now is our business:* and so shouting, and falling upon the Perinthians, they vanquished them, and left few of them remaining.

Ver. 11. *And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines.*] At the bottom of the rocks.

And the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of their holes where they had hid themselves.] See xiii. 6. They imagined it was not courage, but necessity, which forced them to come within their view, as they sought for food.

Ver. 12. *And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing.*] They mocked at them, thinking they durst not attempt to climb up to them.

And Jonathan said to his armour-bearer, Come up after me; for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel.] Now he gives him the same assurance which he had before in his own mind.

Ver. 13. *And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and his feet, and his armour-bearer after him.*] Not in the view of the Philistines, but by some difficult way, which none was ever known to go: and so, perhaps, they came behind them and surprised them.

And they fell before Jonathan; and his armour-bearer slew after him.] The first onset was made by Jonathan (as he led the way up the precipice), who rushed upon them with such a fury, that he threw them down to the ground, and then his armour-bearer killed them. So some understand this: which was a more wonderful action than that of Horatius Cochlites (as Victorinus Strigelius observes), who alone maintained a passage at a bridge, against all the forces of the enemy: and caused the bridge to be broken down behind him. But that shews, since natural courage made a man so daring, it is not incredible that Jonathan made such an attempt by Divine incitation.

Ver. 14. *The first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough.*] *viz.* In one day. That is, saith Kimchi, in a very small space of ground: which De Dieu will have to be half a furrow in length. (See him.)

Ver. 15. *And there was a trembling in the host, in the field, and among the people; the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled.*] News being brought of this slaughter to the host of the Philistines which lay in the field, it put them into a great consternation: for they were asleep (it is likely), this being done very early in the morning, as Josephus thinks, (lib. vi. cap. 7.) And all the people that attended the host, as well as the garrison, and spoilers who had been ravaging the country, (xiii. 17.) were very much affrighted: imagining a great army had been at hand to fall upon them; of which these two were but the scouts. Whose exploits, perhaps, were also magnified beyond the truth.

And the earth quaked.] Some think there was a real earthquake, which increased their fear: but it may be no more than a metaphorical expression, for the great tumult they were in.

So it was a great trembling.] In the Hebrew, *a trembling of God;* that is, which God sent upon them: called by the heathen a *panic fear,* which they thought came from their gods; and made the stoutest men quake. So Pindar excellently expresses it in his Nemea, ix. ver. 63.

——— Ἐν γὰρ
Δαιμονίοισι φόβοις
Φεύγονται καὶ Παῖδες Θεῶν.

When men are struck with Divine terrors, even the children of the gods (i. e. the most heroic spirits) *betake themselves to flight.* And the army of the Philistines consisting (as I observed on xiii. 5.) of different nations, it made the confusion and trembling the greater: because they either did not understand, or suspected one another.

Ver. 16. *And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked.*] For it was seated on a high hill, which overlooked the country about it.

And behold the multitude melted away.] Were scattered; so that fewer and fewer were seen in a company together.

And they went on beating down one another.] Not being able, in this confusion, to distinguish their friends from their enemies.

Ver. 17. *Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who are gone from us. And when they were numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armour-bearer were not there.*] He easily missed Jonathan, I suppose, but could not imagine he would fall upon the Philistines, without a good number of men to assist him: which he knew he had not. This made him call the high-priest, to inquire of God, that he might be informed what was the matter, and what he should do.

Ver. 18. *And Saul said to Ahijah, Bring hither the ark of God: for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.*] How could he bid him bring the ark, when it was at Kirjath-jearim, in the house of Abinadab? To this Abarbinel answers, that he doth not speak of the ark in which the tables of the law were kept (for he doth not say, *bring the ark of the covenant hither*), but a little coffer, wherein the ephod was kept; that is, the breast-plate with *urim* and *thummim.* These the priest brought along with him, that Saul might consult God upon occasion, as David did, 1 Sam. xxx. 8. Therefore the LXX. translate it, προσάγαγε τὸ Ἐφοὺδ, *bring hither the ephod.* And so Rasi and Kimchi. (See Buxtorf. Hist. Arcæ, cap. 3. and our learned Dr. Spencer, de Leg. et Rit. Heb. fol. 859.) But this doth not seem a solid interpretation, there being but one ark men-

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tioned in Scripture, which is not always called the *ark of the covenant*, but the *ark of the Lord*, or the *ark of God*, as it is called when it came into the camp of Israel, and was taken by the Philistines, (chap. iv. ver. 6. 11. 17, 18, &c.) Therefore here, I suppose, Saul commanded the ark itself to attend him; when he wanted the advice and assistance of Samuel.

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, that while Saul talked with the priest.*] Desiring him to inquire of God what was become of Jonathan and his armour-bearer; and what was the meaning of that tumult in the host of the Philistines.

That the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said to the priest, Withdraw thine hand.] He was going to take the *urim* and *thummim*, as the forenamed authors understand it, when Saul, hearing the tumult grow greater and greater among the Philistines, bade him forbear: there being no need, for he concluded they were routed; and therefore resolved, without any further deliberation, to go and pursue them. Or, as others understand it, the priest having stretched forth his hand to God in prayer for his advice, Saul called upon him to desist: for it was plain what they had to do without any inquiry.

Ver. 20. *And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled, and came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture.*] This Josephus thinks fell out (as I noted above) because their army consisted of divers nations, who did not know one another, and so fell into great confusion.

Ver. 21. *Moreover, the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about.*] As some, it seems, did; either out of fear, compulsion, or design.

Even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.] And helped to destroy the Philistines.

Ver. 22. *Likewise all the men of Israel that had hid themselves in Mount Ephraim.*] And other places mentioned xiii. 6.

When they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle.] Pursued them closely.

Ver. 23. *So the Lord saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven.*] These words seem to imply, that the fight continued till they came to this place, which lay westward from Michmash, (xiii. 5.) and there the Philistines threw down their arms; and fled as fast as they could towards their own country.

Ver. 24. *And the men of Israel were distressed that day.*] When they should have been full of joy and triumph.

For Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until the evening, that I may be avenged of my enemies. So none of the people tasted any food.] That they might not lose time, nor make the least stay in the pursuit of their enemies, who fled before them. The king had the same power that the great Sanhedrin had, who, the Jews say, might devote those to destruction, who did not obey the charge that was given them in war. (See Selden, lib. iv. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 6.) But this was a very indiscreet act of Saul, unbecoming an excellent captain; for instead of pursuing the Philistines with vigour, they fainted for want of refreshment. Therefore great commanders always took care their soldiers should be moderately fed, that they might not be tired in a long conflict. So Vegetius informs us: (lib. iii. de Re Militari, cap. 9.) "Veteribus seculis mos fuit, parco cibo curatos milites ad certamen educere, ut citatiores sumpta esca redderet et longiore conflictu non fatigerentur inedia." And there was the same need of taking a little refreshment if they could get it, when they were engaged in a long pursuit of their enemy.

Ver. 25. *And all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground.*] Which dropped from the hollow trees, or the clefts of rocks, where bees made their combs in that country; and sometimes upon the very ground; as Bochart hath shewn in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 12. where he observes this was not peculiar to Judea, but usual in other countries.

Ver. 26. *And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.*] Wild honey was so copious in those countries, and flowed so plentifully, that it gave occasion to that hyperbolical speech in the book of Job, xx. 17. where we read of *brooks*, or *torrents, of honey and butter.*

Ver. 27. *And Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath.*] He and his armour-bearer being engaged in fight, (with whom some others joined, ver. 21.) long before Saul and his small army came to join him.

Wherefore he put forth the end of his rod, and dipped it in a honey-comb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.] That is, his spirits and strength, which were quite spent by long abstinence from meat, so that he could scarce see, were restored to him, and he was made fresh and lively to proceed in pursuit of the enemy. For, as Gerh. Vossius observes, (lib. iv. de Orig. et Progr. Idol. cap. 79.) the eyes are wont to grow dim with long hunger: and as all meat and drink refreshes and enlivens, so wine and honey do it above all other more speedily: for their spirits are both very subtile, and soon diffuse their strength through the body. It is also observed by learned men, that honey is an excellent medicine for sore and weak eyes: but that is nothing to this purpose; such cures being not performed by eating of it, but by anointing the eyes with it.

Ver. 28. *Then answered one of the people.*] That came with Saul to the pursuit.

And said, Thy father charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food to-day. And the people were faint.] And yet forbore to take any refreshment, for fear of the curse.

Ver. 29. *Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.*] Which did not cause so long a stay, as to hinder the pursuit of the enemy.

Ver. 30. *How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely this day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?*] They would have been able to pursue them more swiftly, and to have done greater execution upon them, than they could when they were faint. Thus men, by their rashness, hinder what they would have.

Ver. 31. *And they smote the Philistines that day from*

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Michmash to Ajalon.] A city in the tribe of Dan, (Josh. xix. 42.) which bordered upon the country of the Philistines.

And the people were very faint.] Otherwise they might have pursued further.

Ver. 32. *And the people flew upon the spoil.*] Like a ravenous bird, which wanted food.

And took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood.] Raw, or but half roasted or boiled, their hunger being so sharp, that it made them forget their duty.

Ver. 33. *Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood.*] All the people were not so profane, but only some part of them.

And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me.] Our learned Dr. Spencer thinks, they did not *eat with the blood*, as we translate it, but *upon*, or *by the blood;* which was an idolatrous custom in the east, to invite the familiarity of demons, as hath been noted on Lev. xix. 26. And therefore Saul, to keep the people from thus defiling themselves, commanded a great stone to be brought to him, that there they might kill their beasts at that one place, and then feed upon them. (See de Leg. et Rit. Hebr. p. 334.) But this doth not seem probable that they should now practise those idolatrous rites, when God had wrought such a wonderful deliverance for them; and they were so impatient to eat, that they had not time to think of such ceremonies.

Ver. 34. *And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people.*] He speaks unto his officers.

And say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep.] This is a sign they had not all offended; having not yet killed their beasts.

And slay them here, and eat; and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood. And all the men brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there.] As many as they had occasion to use.

Ver. 35. *And Saul built an altar unto the Lord.*] To offer sacrifices of peace-offerings, and give thanks to God for this great victory. Though others think it was not for sacrifice, but only a monument of God's mercy, in this late deliverance.

The same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord.] In the Hebrew the words are (as is observed in the margin of our Bibles), *that altar he began to build unto the Lord; i. e.* he laid the first stone himself. We read of his offering before in Gilgal; but that, perhaps, was not upon an altar erected by himself, but was built before by others.

Ver. 36. *And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning, and let us not leave a man of them.*] Having thus refreshed themselves, in the evening Saul propounded to them to renew the pursuit: hoping to cut off their whole army, when they were asleep in the night.

And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee.] Their good success made them as forward, as before they were backward to follow him.

Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.] It is likely he stood before the altar (if it were for sacrifice) and put them in mind, that it was dangerous to undertake any thing without God's advice: which he was there ready to ask for them: in the Targum it is, *Let us inquire by the Word of the Lord.*

Ver. 37. *And Saul asked counsel of God.*] By *urim* and *thummim.*

Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel?] Hitherto Saul had some goodness left in him: for he hearkened to the priest, when he admonished him of his duty, which he neglected. The Targum here again hath it, *Saul asked by the Word of the Lord.*

But he answered him not that day.] Though perhaps the priest had often begged an answer, yet he received none.

Ver. 38. *And Saul said, Draw near hither all the chief of the people; and see wherein this sin hath been this day.*] He concluded some sin had provoked God, not to regard his supplication: which he desired might be found out and punished.

Ver. 39. *For, as the Lord liveth, that saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among the people that answered him.*] Though many knew that Jonathan had transgressed his father's charge, (ver. 28.) yet none would discover it.

Ver. 40. *Then said he unto all Israel, Be you on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said, Do what seemeth good unto thee.*] He had gained great authority among the people (it appears by this, and by ver. 36.) since his wonderful success.

Ver. 41. *Therefore Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: and the people escaped.*] The word *lot* is not in the original, but only *give perfect*, that is, declare who is innocent. So the word *give* sometimes signifies to *pronounce*, (Deut. xiii. 1, 2.)

Ver. 42. *And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.*] This looks like virtue in him, that, for good example's sake, he would not exempt himself, though a king, from the same trial to which he exposed all the people.

Ver. 43. *Then said Saul to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey, that was in my hand, and, lo, I must die.*] This shews a very great mind, that he neither denied what he had done, nor excused it by his ignorance, nor refused to die: though he looked upon it as very hard. So Josephus represents it, εὐγενῶς καὶ μεγαλοφρόνως, &c. *with a generous and great mind*, he told his father the truth; and desired not to be spared, (lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 7.)

Ver. 44. *And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.*] This demonstrates Saul to have been of a rash and of a rigorous temper. With whom learned men are wont to compare Titus Manlius; who caused his son's head to be cut off, for fighting the enemy, when he had a fair advantage, contrary to order, as A. Gellius tells us, (lib. ix. cap. 13.) But in this regard Saul was to be commended, as Josephus also observes, that he had a greater regard to his oath, than to his kindred and natural affection.

Ver. 45. *And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.*] They did not rescue him by force and violence, but by their petition to Saul, and the reason they gave for it. Jo-

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sephus saith, that " by their prayers and vows to God they delivered him:" who, perhaps, signified by the priest, that he approved the people's desire. They were too forward indeed to swear directly against Saul's oath: but of the two, his being the most rash, God was pleased to annul it, and absolve him from it. Thus Josephus understands it, *They rescued him from the anger of his father,* καὶ εὐχὰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ νεανίσκου ποιοῦνται τῷ Θεῷ, ὡς τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπολύσαι τοῦ ἁμαρτήματος, *and made their prayer to God for the young man, that he would loose him from his sin.*

How that phrase, *not a hair of his head,* &c. was used, appears from 2 Sam. xiv. 11. 1 Kings i. 51.

Ver. 46. *Then Saul went up from following the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own country.*] He pursued them no further, but let them go quietly to their own homes.

Ver. 47. *And Saul took the kingdom over Israel.*] Ruled with greater authority over his people after this victory: for the Philistines had enslaved them, (as I observed xiii. 2.) But by this deliverance they were freed from their yoke, and Saul recovered his kingdom.

And fought against all his enemies on every side.] He did not invade them (as may be gathered from the next verse), but repelled them, and kept them within their own limits.

Against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines.] These were the principal enemies wherewith they were encompassed. And by the *kings of Zobah* are meant those that ruled in that part of Syria, which is called *Aram-Zobah;* which lay towards Euphrates: having that river for its eastern bounds, and Damascus and the land of Canaan for its western. For it appears to be near to the Israelites, by the frequent wars which David and Solomon had with the kings of this country, (2 Sam. viii. 3. x. 6. 2 Chron. vii. 3.) and the aid which the Syrians of Damascus sent them, (2 Sam. viii. 5.) and their flying thither when they were routed. (1 Kings xi. 24.) And the cities which Solomon built in the wilderness, (1 Kings ix. 17, 18.) are said to be in Hamath-Zobah, 2 Chron. viii. 34. which demonstrates it was upon the confines of Judea.

And whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them.] He got the better of them. And in his days the Reubenites also made war with the Hagarites, and possessed their land, till the time of the captivity, (1 Chron. v. 10. 18—20.)

Ver. 48. *And he gathered a host, and smote Amalek.*] Which war is at large described in the next chapter.

And delivered Israel out of the hand of them that spoiled them.] The six forementioned nations.

Ver. 49. *And the sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishui, and Melchi-shua,* &c.] These were only fit to accompany him in his wars, and upon that account are only mentioned here, and xxxi. 2. though he had another son (Ish-bosheth), who is mentioned in 1 Chron. viii. 33. under the name of Esh-baal.

Ver. 50. *And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.*] For Ner was brother to Saul's father, as the next verse tells us. It seems to me observable, that we never read of more than one wife that Saul had, though David had many. It is possible he did not think it prudent, in a new-erected kingdom, to follow the example of the eastern kings in every thing.

Ver. 51. *And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner, he father of Abner, was the son of Abiel.*] As Kish also was, (xi. 1.)

Ver. 52. *And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul.*] Who could not perfectly subdue them; as appears from their renewing the war, (chap. xvii. &c.)

And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man.] Who behaved himself with vigour and courage in the wars.

He took him unto him.] To be one of his guard, or to be preferred in the army.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *SAMUEL also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken unto the voice of the words of the Lord.*] Being so highly obliged to God, above all other men in the nation, it highly concerned him to be very careful to observe his commands; especially having lately been disobedient, (xiii. 13.)

Ver. 2. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.*] See my notes upon Deut. xxv. 17, 18.

Ver. 3. *Now go, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.*] This heavy sentence was pronounced against them long ago, (Exod. xvii. 14.) and renewed at their entrance into Canaan, with a charge not to forget it, (Deut. xxv. 19.) and now ordered to be put in execution.

Ver. 4. *And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.*] The word *Telaim* signifying lambs (which it is likely were very plentiful in this place), the Targum translates it, *he numbered them by paschal lambs:* as if the Passover was kept at this time. And so Rasi fancies that it being unlawful to number the people, he commanded every man to take a lamb out of the flock, and numbered them. But David Kimchi, and others, take this as we do, for the name of a place called Telem, in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 24.) For there is no place mentioned in Scripture called Telaim; nor any so near it in sound as this. (See Selden, lib. iii. de Synedr. cap. 11. n. 5. and Bochart's Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 43.) I have often observed that their armies consisted of footmen, they having no horses in Judea. And in two regards they were more useful than horsemen, as Vegetius observes, (lib. ii. de Re Militari, cap. 1.) first, because " possunt ubique prodesse," *they may be serviceable every where,* which horsemen cannot. And, secondly, a great number of them, " sumptu et expensa minore nutritur," *is maintained at less expense and charge.*

Ver. 5. *And Saul came to a city of Amalek.*] To the metropolis of the kingdom, whose name, perhaps, was Amalek. For so the words may be understood, *he came to the city Amalek.*

And laid wait in the valley.] Or *fought them in the valley,* as we translate it in the margin: for they came out to give him battle.

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Ver. 6. *And Saul said to the Kenites.*] Who were of the posterity of Jethro: some of which were of the tribe of Judah, others in Naphtali; and some, it seems, dwelt among the Amalekites in the rocky part of that country, (Numb. xxiv. 21.)

Go, depart, get ye down.] For they dwelt on high.

From among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them.] For some of the Amalekites, it is likely, would flee to them for shelter.

For you shewed kindness to the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt.] Some of their ancestors did, which the Israelites did not forget, (Exod. xviii. 12. Numb. x. 31.)

And the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.] And went, it is likely, into the land of Judah.

Ver. 7. *And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.*] That is, their whole country, of which this was the extent; from Havilah in the north-east, to Shur in the south-west. These two, Havilah and Shur, are constantly opposed, as the most opposite terms of Arabia, as Bochartus hath observed, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 6.

Ver. 8. *And Saul took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.*] That is, all that could be met with: but some fled, no doubt, as soon as they saw him victorious; and saved themselves in other countries. Accordingly we read of good numbers of this people afterward.

Ver. 9. *But Saul and the people spared Agag.*] Whosoever proposed it, they all agreed in it, not to kill Agag: and Saul, it is most likely, was the chief author of this counsel. Who, Θαυμάσας τὸ κάλλος καὶ τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ σώματος (as Josephus speaks), *being struck with admiration of him as a very goodly and proper person, thought fit to save him.* Not following herein the command of God, but his own private fancy and affection, (lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 8.) Others think he intended to lead him in triumph. (See ver. 12.)

And the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and of the lambs.] Interpreters wonderfully vary about the sense of the word *hamisnim*, which we translate *fatlings:* as may be seen in Bochartus's Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 43. fol. 430. where he shews it signifies cattle in their full strength.

All that was good.] Of their household goods (I suppose), apparel, and such-like things.

And would not utterly destroy them.] As they had been commanded by God; but took them as a prey unto themselves.

But every thing that was vile and refuse, that destroyed they utterly.] All that was not worth the keeping. Which is a wonderful instance of the baseness of human nature, when governed by covetousness, or any such-like affection.

Ver. 10. *Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying.*] Immediately before Saul returned from his expedition.

Ver. 11. *It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king.*] Whom he resolved now to throw down from his throne. (See ver. 29.) For repentance in God, imports only the will of a change, and not of every change, but of the Divine sentence pronounced, which the Scripture calls repentance. So Procopius Gazæus, "Pœnitentia Dei, est dispensationis ipsius mutatio," *God's repentance is the change of his own dispensation.*

For he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandment. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night.] Beseeching him to pardon Saul.

Ver. 12. *And when Samuel rose up early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel.*] A city in the mountains of the tribe of Judah, where Nabal dwelt, who is called the Carmelite, xxvii. 3. (See Josh. xv. 55.)

And, behold, he set him up a place.] Either for the dividing of the spoil, as the Targum understands it; or marking out a camp, as Kimchi; or he erected a triumphal arch, as St. Jerome: having brought Agag with him, to make his triumph greater. Which arch, it may be thought, was in the form of a hand: for in the Hebrew the word we translate *place* is *jad*, which signifies a *hand.* Or, as Rasi will have it, he here built an altar: which Elijah in future times repaired, (1 Kings xviii. 30.) But this is a very gross mistake: for this Carmel was very remote from that mount which Elijah frequented, as Bochartus hath observed, (par. i. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 48.) It may be rather thought, to be some building erected in the form beforementioned, to signify that they overcame the Amalekites with a strong hand.

And is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.] In a long pomp, I suppose, as a mighty conqueror.

Ver. 13. *And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said to him, Blessed be thou of the Lord.*] A form of salutation, wishing him all happiness from God: who had ordered him to undertake such a piece of service, as he had done him.

I have performed the commandment of the Lord.] He was so insensible of any fault he had committed, that he boasts of his performance.

Ver. 14. *And Samuel said, What means then this bleating of the sheep,* &c.] Which he had commanded him utterly to destroy, (ver. 3.)

Ver. 15. *And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites.*] He lays the blame upon the people, when it is evident he himself was principally in fault, (ver. 9.)

And the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.] This was a plausible pretence, it being the custom all the world over, to give part of their spoils in war unto their gods; if there had not been an express command for destroying every thing in this war: so that nothing should be spared, either for himself, or for them.

Ver. 16. *And Samuel said unto Saul, Stay.*] This sounds as if Saul was going away: being abundantly satisfied in his noble achievements.

And I will tell thee what the Lord hath said unto me this night.] When he cried to him without ceasing, (ver. 11.) Though Samuel was a prophet, saith Procopius Gazæus, yet speaking to a king, he begs leave he may do it freely.

And he said, Say on.] He hoped, it is likely, to hear himself commended for his piety.

Ver. 17. *Then Samuel said unto Saul, When thou wast little in thy own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Is-*

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rael?] It is of great use for men to remember what they were: as Placilla the wife of Theodosius (Strigelius here observes) said to her husband, Αεί σε προσήκει λογίζεσθαι, τί μὲν ἦσθα πάλαι, τί δὲ γέγονας νῦν, &c. *It behoves thee always to think what thou wast heretofore, and what thou art now. For calling these things to mind, thou wilt not be ungrateful to thy benefactor: but govern the kingdom thou hast received according to the laws; and by that means honour him that bestowed it upon thee.*

Ver. 18. *And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amakelites.*] He was employed in a very honourable expedition, to destroy the declared enemies of the Lord.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst flee upon the spoil.*] With great greediness, as a hungry bird or beast doth upon his prey.

And didst evil in the sight of the Lord?] The command was as plain as words could make it: so that there was no reason but his own base covetousness, why it was not obeyed.

Ver. 20. *And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of the Amalekites, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.*] A strange stupidity! to imagine such a partial obedience could be pleasing unto God.

Ver. 21. *But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief things that should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal.*] This was a mean thing, to throw all the blame on the people, whom he should have governed better: and it was worst of all, to let them pretend religion for their disobedience.

Ver. 22. *And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*] This most Divine admonition is inculcated by all following inspired writers, David, Solomon, and the prophets. (See Psal. l. 13, 14. li. 16, 17. Eccles. v. 1. Isa. i. 11, 12, &c. lxvi. 3. Jer. vii. 21, 22, &c. Hos. vi. 6. Micah vi. 6—8. Zach. viii. 16.) And some of the heathen have said excellent things to this purpose.

Ver. 23. *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.*] Or, *following after divination:* which is opposed to prophecy, as idols are to God.

And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.] The words *aven* and *teraphim* signify all manner of idolatry. From which though Saul was free, yet his obstinate disobedience made him liable to such punishment as idolaters deserved. For as they were to be cut off, so he was to be dethroned, as it here follows.

Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he also hath rejected thee from being king.] As idolaters were to lose their lives, so he and his posterity lost the kingdom. And it is observable, that he was at last slain by the hand of an Amalekite, (2 Sam. i. 8.)

Ver. 24. *And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy word; because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.*] It is not certain whether he led the people into this sin, or they led him. I look upon this only as an excuse (he having no reason to fear the people, who were all at his command), and that he was not yet thoroughly sensible of his guilt.

Ver. 25. *Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin.*] By deprecating God's displeasure.

And turn again with me.] To Gilgal; from whence he came forth to meet Samuel.

That I may worship the Lord.] And by Samuel's prayers obtain a pardon.

Ver. 26. *And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.*] The prophet looked upon God's sentence as peremptory; and therefore peremptorily denied his request.

Ver. 27. *And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle.*] It was a four-square garment covering the breast and the back; knit at the shoulder, but open on the sides, as Jo. Braunius hath shewn, lib. ii. de Vestitu Sacerd. Hebr. cap. 5. n. 8. On this Saul laid hold, that he might stop Samuel from going away.

And it rent.] A sign the motion of Samuel was violent; he being full of indignation against Saul.

Ver. 28. *And Samuel said, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.*] That casual rent, he took to be an apt representation of his destiny.

Ver. 29. *And also the Strength of Israel.*] The word we translate *Strength* imports *victory* (as is observed in the margin), and therefore these words should be translated, *He that gives victory,* and disposes kingdoms, or *the triumphant King of Israel.*

Will not lie, nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.] Sometimes, God is said *to repent of the evil, i. e.* to alter his intentions of inflicting punishment. But in this case there was no room for it, because of the oath of God, that Amalek should be cut off. This made Saul's sin unpardonable; it being of the like nature (to use the words of Dr. Jackson) as if a judge or inferior magistrate, being entrusted to do justice in a matter, unto which his sovereign lord had peremptorily and determinately sworn, should upon a bribe, or other sinister respect, neglect his duty, and (as much as in him lay) make his master forsworn. For an inferior judge to do this, deserves more bodily deaths than one. And therefore though God did repent that he had made Saul king (for he had the kingdom only by mere promise, not by a promise confirmed by an oath), yet he would not repent his deposition, nor reverse the sentence against him; because, by his preposterous indulgence unto Amalek (God's sworn enemy), he did by this fact incur the sentence of deposition by oath.

Ver. 30. *And he said, I have sinned.*] Now he makes a downright acknowledgment of his guilt; without any alleviations of it, from the fear he was in of the people, or any other thing, (ver. 24.)

Yet honour me, I pray thee, before my people, and before Israel.] He submitted to the sentence, and only desired while he was king he might not lose his honour with those that waited on him, and with the rest of his subjects.

And turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God.] He speaks as if he thought, that, unless it were for Samuel's sake, he was afraid God would not regard him.

Ver. 31. *And Samuel turned again with Saul.*] He said before he would not: (ver. 26.) but upon his importunity (and ordered perhaps by God), he altered his mind. For

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he spake before only his present thoughts, which upon further reason he might change.

And Saul worshipped the Lord.] In the company of Samuel, that the people might not despise his authority while he held it.

Ver. 32. *Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither unto me Agag the king of the Amalekites.*] This he spake to the people, in the presence of Saul, that he might see what he ought to have done himself.

And Agag came unto him delicately.] Or, walking in state; for though he was at the point of death, saith Kimchi, he could not forbear to come to Samuel in a haughty manner: but this word seems to relate to *softness*, rather than *pride*; and signifies that he came to him with a soft pace, treading gingerly (as we speak) after a nice and delicate manner.

And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.] Being spared by Saul and his soldiers, he feared no hurt from a prophet.

Ver. 33. *And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women.*] This shews he had been a bloody tyrant, and was now cut off, not merely for the sins of his ancestors four hundred years ago, but for his own merciless cruelty.

And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces.] He commanded it to be done by the public executioner of justice: or, perhaps, did it himself. (See Judg. viii. 20.) This doth not prove that Samuel continued a judge after Saul was anointed: but he was authorized to do this by a special command from God.

Before the Lord in Gilgal.] For here they had been praying, and offering sacrifice: and God was present in all the great assemblies of his people. (See Judg. xx. 1.)

Ver. 34. *Then Samuel went to Ramah.*] Where he commonly lived, (vii. *ult.*)

And Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul.] Which was the place of his birth, and constant abode, (x. 26. xiv. 2.)

Ver. 35. *And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death.*] He was wont, it is likely, to make him frequent visits: but now he forsook him, as a man abandoned by God.

Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul.] Yet he had still so much love to him, or to his country, as to lament the sad condition into which he was fallen.

And the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.] In testimony whereof he utterly cast him off; and all Samuel's tears could not procure a reversal of the sentence pronounced against him.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *AND the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel?*] Since God had told him so plainly, and positively, that the sentence against him was irreversible, it was in vain to mourn and to pray (as some think he did) for his restitution to God's favour.

Fill thy horn with oil, and go to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.] It might increase his sorrow, perhaps, to think that if Saul should die suddenly, there was none yet appointed by God to succeed him. Which might be one reason why now God declared his pleasure about that matter.

Ver. 2. *And Samuel said, How can I go?*] That is, with safety.

If Saul hear it, he will kill me.] For he was enraged at the sentence passed upon him, though at that present he seemed to submit unto it.

And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord.] Which he, being a prophet, might do any where: all the ritual laws being subject to the prophets.

Ver. 3. *And call Jesse to the sacrifice.*] To an eucharistical feast upon the sacrifice: unto which they might invite their neighbours and friends.

And I will shew thee what thou shalt do; and thou shalt anoint him whom I will name unto thee.] God promises to direct him so to manage the business, that he should come into no danger. From whence it may be gathered, that it was not the holy oil wherewith he anointed him, for that was kept in the sanctuary: unto which place he could not have gone to fetch it, but it would have been known, and raised suspicions of what he was going to do. (See Fort. Scacchus, in his Myrothecium, lib. iii. cap. 46.)

Ver. 4. *And Samuel did that which the Lord spake.*] Took a horn of oil, and an heifer.

And came to Beth-lehem: and the elders of the town trembled at his coming.] They went out, I suppose, to meet him, but trembled when they saw him.

And said, Comest thou peaceably?] They were afraid that he came to reprove them for some sin that was in their city; or that he fled to them for security against Saul's anger, which might bring them into danger.

Ver. 5. *And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord.*] That was one intention of his coming; and though there was another (to anoint David) he was not bound to declare it: for where there are two ends of any action, one may without any injury to truth declare the one, and conceal the other. As Moses did, when he told Pharaoh they must go and sacrifice to God in the wilderness; but suppressed their intention to march to the land of Canaan.

Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.] See upon Exod. xix. 10.

And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.] It is likely Jesse might be an elder; but if he were, his sons were not: but he gave them a particular invitation, and took care they should come prepared. Samuel was not a priest, but being a prophet he had authority from God, in extraordinary cases, to perform the office of a priest, in offering sacrifice.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, when they were come.*] After the sacrifice was over, while they were making ready the feast, that was to follow upon it, Samuel took Jesse privately into a room, and there, it is likely, acquainted him with his commission: whereupon he called for his eldest son to come to him.

That he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the anointed of the Lord is before me.] Beholding a goodly person, handsome and tall (as appears by the following verse), he concluded within himself, that this was the person God designed for his anointed.

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Ver. 7. *And the Lord said unto Samuel.*] By a secret, inward suggestion.

Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.] All have not a noble spirit, who have a noble aspect; as appeared by Saul. Which should have made Samuel not conclude so hastily, from a goodly appearance.

Ver. 8. *Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel.*] That he might have a full view of him.

And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.] God had suggested to him, as he did concerning the former, that he did not approve him.

Ver. 9. *Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.*] He is called Shimeah, 2 Sam. xiii. 3. and Shimma, 1 Chron. ii. 13.

Ver. 10. *Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel.*] Not all at once; but seven in all, one after another in order; David being the eighth.

And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these.] These words shew that he had acquainted Jesse with his business: but these four of his sons, among whom he was to anoint one to be king, were no more qualified for it, than the three first: for he had eight sons in all, (xvii. 12.)

Ver. 11. *And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest; and, behold, he keeps the sheep.*] And so was not at home. The most excellent commanders were anciently taken from the plough, or from feeding sheep, as Pliny observes, lib. xviii. Nat. Hist. cap. 5. "Fortissimi viri, et milites strenuissimi ex agricolis gignuntur." And so Vegetius, lib. i. cap. 3. de Re Militari, discusses this point, whether the best soldiers came out of the city or country: and resolves, "aptiorem armis rusticam plebem," &c. *that the country people are most fit for arms;* who live in the open air, and are bred up to labour, and endure heat, and neglect the shade; being unacquainted with baths, ignorant of delights, of a simple mind, contented with a little; having their bodies hardened to the enduring all labour; who are used by the country life to carry burdens, dig trenches, and such-like labour. And therefore he concludes, that the strength of an army is to be supplied out of the field, for so it is, that the less men are acquainted with the delights of life, the less they fear death. Moses was thus bred a long time in the service of Jethro: and Saul looked after his father's cattle.

And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.] By this it appears, all this was transacted between the sacrifice and the dressing of the feast upon it.

Ver. 12. *And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy.*] His hair was red, which in ancient times was accounted beautiful, as Bochartus observes from this place. With which agree the words of Festus, who having said that *rutilus* signifies *red,* adds, "cujus coloris studiosæ etiam antiquæ mulieres erant;" *of which colour women also were studious in ancient times.* (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 34.) But it must be confessed, that the Hebrew word *admoni* doth not signify only *red,* but also *bright* and *shining;* as Bochartus himself acknowledges those words, Lament. iv. 7. are to be understood, where he saith of the Nazarites, *ademu azem mippinim, they were more shining in body than pearls.* And I think these words are so to be interpreted concerning David, that he had a clear complexion; or was very fair (as we speak) and lovely.

And withal of a beautiful countenance.] Or, had *beautiful eyes,* as the words are in the Hebrew, "Oculis speculis et liberalibus," as Conradus Pellicanus here glosses.

And goodly to look to.] Of a pleasant aspect; full of sweetness and clemency, as the same author understands it. All this is said to signify that he was a goodly person, and had greatness in his countenance.

And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.] The Jews observe upon these words, that it was necessary to anoint the first of a family, that was advanced to the kingdom; but it was not necessary to anoint his children that succeeded him: unless upon occasion of a dispute, by a contrary faction. (See Selden, de Success. in Pontificat. lib. ii. cap. 9.)

Ver. 13. *Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him.*] He did not hereby invest him actually with the kingly power: but this anointing was only a designation of him to succeed Saul after his death. So David always understood it; looking upon Saul as the Lord's anointed as long as he lived; that is, as the king of Israel. (See Judg. ix. 8.)

In the midst of his brethren.] It had better have been translated, *from the midst of his brethren;* that is, he singled him out from the rest, and privately anointed him. For it is manifest by what is said before, that Samuel was afraid to have it known, and therefore did not anoint him publicly in the midst of his brethren. And by Eliab's treatment of David after this, (xvii. 28.) it plainly enough appears he did not know him to be the king elect of God's people.

The Jews in Seder Olam Rabba (cap. 13.) say, David was twenty-nine years old when he was anointed: which certainly is false, if it be understood of this first unction by Samuel (whereby God elected him, as in the two following Judah and Israel received him for their king); for after Saul's death he reigned forty years, and lived till he was seventy. So that he was thirty years old when he began to reign: part of which time he spent in the service of Saul; and after that was sorely persecuted by him. How long that persecution lasted is uncertain: but it continued so long, that it makes the opinion of Abarbinel probable, that David could not be above twenty years old, if so much, when Samuel anointed him.

And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.] A spirit of prudence to behave himself wisely upon all occasions; with a spirit of courage, so that he durst grapple with a lion and a bear: and the spirit of prophecy, in which he was very eminent afterward. In short, a spirit fit for a prince.

And Samuel went up, and went to Ramah.] Having no further commission from God at Beth-lehem.

Ver. 14. *But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul.*] Which came upon him when he was first made king, and continued with him till this time; (x. 11. xi. 6.) yet he did not lose his courage, but his prudence and skill in government.

And an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.] He grew melancholy, timorous, and suspicious: so that he started where there was no danger, as the Hebrew word seems to

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import; and thereby became very unfit for business, being sometimes furious and distracted; always full of anxiety and solicitude of mind: sighing and trembling like a man in the dark, as Abarbinel explains it. For his blood and spirits were thick and heavy, having lost their usual purity and splendour.

Ver. 15. *And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.*] His courtiers could not but observe a strange disturbance in him: which they looked upon as so unusual, that they ascribed it to the hand of God.

Ver. 16. *Let our lord now command thy servants, that are before thee, to seek out a man who is a cunning player upon the harp.*] An instrument always highly esteemed; as those were who could play well upon it. It is called *cinnor* in the Hebrew, from whence, no doubt, the Greek Κιννύρα is derived.

And it shall come to pass, that when the evil spirit from God is upon thee.] When a melancholy fit seized him.

That he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.] It being a bodily disease, they hoped by this means he might receive some relief: and, perhaps, they had seen some experiment made of it upon men in the like condition; for music wonderfully alters the spirits, and consequently the blood: and hath a peculiar virtue in it to cheer and delight those that are sad, and compose those that are furious, as Saul sometimes was.

Ver. 17. *And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now one that can play well, and bring him to me.*] For none durst deny his attendance on him, as Samuel had described the manner of the kingdom, (viii. 11, 12, &c.)

Ver. 18. *Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen the son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person.*] It is likely this was some friend or acquaintance of David's, who had a mind to bring him to court: and therefore reckons up all his good qualities, as well as his skill in music; together with his success in all affairs. Which though he managed with great prudence, yet he could not have been so constantly prosperous if God had not blessed him.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, saying, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.*] This message, it is likely, might possess Jesse with some fear that the secret was discovered.

Ver. 20. *And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul.*] But by this present he hoped to ingratiate his son in his princely favour. The word *laden* is not in the Hebrew, but only *an ass of bread.* Which is a phrase used in other authors, as Bochartus hath observed out of Athenæus: who mentions this phrase in Sosibius, ἄρτων τρεῖς ὄνους κανθηλίνους, *three great asses of loaves,* (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 34.)

Ver. 21. *And David came to Saul, and stood before him.*] Ministered unto him among the rest of his servants.

And he loved him greatly; and he made him his armour-bearer.] Which was an honourable preferment.

Ver. 22. *And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.*] This was an extraordinary token of his kindness, that he would not keep his son to wait upon him without his consent.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand.*] Josephus seems to have thought that he also sung hymns and psalms to the harp; for his words are, (lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 9.) λέγων τε τοὺς ὕμνους καὶ ψάλλων ἐν τῇ κιννύρᾳ, &c. But the illustrious Spanheim shews that the word ψαλμὸς is often used for the sound of the harp. So the scholiast upon Aristophanes's Aves, ψαλμὸς κυρίως ὁ τῆς καθάρας ἦχος. (See his observation on Callimachus's hymn in Apollinem, ver. 12.) And so Nero truly said, (which Tacitus mentions in his Annals, lib. xiv. cap. 14.) "Antiqui duces cithara cecinerunt," *the ancient great commanders sang to the harp.* So Cornelius Nepos reports of Epaminondas, that he was an excellent musician.

And Saul was refreshed, and was well.] All authors are full of the power of music, both to stir up passions, and to allay them; according to the several kinds of it. Athenæus (lib. xiv.) praises it for the virtue that is in it, καὶ τὰ ἤθη παιδεύειν, καὶ τοὺς θυμοειδεῖς καὶ τὰς γνώμας διαφόρους καταπραΰνειν, *to regulate men's manners, and to allay and soften those that are furious, and disturbed in their minds.* Such songs Aristotle calls μέλη καθαρκτικὰ, *purgative songs;* apt to cleanse the mind from turbid motions, (lib. viii. Polit.) See Gerh. Vossius concerning this in his book de Artibus Popularibus, cap. 3. sect. 13. where he shews how diseases of the body have been cured by music, as well as of the mind: and sect. 45, 46. he shews the power of it over brute creatures. Bochartus also enumerates many famous artists among the ancients, besides Orpheus and Amphion (whose history is dressed up fabulously), that are celebrated, not by poets, but by good historians, for their wonderful skill in moving men's passions by music. (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 44. p. 461, &c.) And long before these, the great Erasmus hath observed the force of music in curing diseases, and quite altering the passions of men's minds, in his preface to Arnobius upon the Psalms. Which may be found among his epistles, lib. xxviii. p. 1655.

And the evil spirit departed from him.] For a time: there being lucid intervals in such distempers as his was; which frequently returned again.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *AND the Philistines gathered their armies together unto battle.*] In what year of Saul's reign this was, we are not told: but Josephus thinks it was not long after the things related in the foregoing chapter. For so his words are, χρόνοις δὲ ὕστερον οὐ πολλοῖς, *not many years after,* &c. For the Philistines having received a great defeat (chap. xiv.) resolved to be revenged, and thought they had a fair opportunity, when they heard that Saul was distracted.

And were gathered together at Shochoh which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.] See Josh. xv. 35. By this it appears, that the Philistines invaded the country of the Israelites, and possessed themselves of some parts of it. That place here called *Ephes-dammim,* by taking away the letter *aleph,* is called *Pas-dammim,* 1 Chron. xi. 13.

Ver. 2. *And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah.*] A place, I sup-

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pose, in the same tribe, for their armies were not far one from another.

And set the battle in array against the Philistines.] As ready, and desirous to fight them.

Ver. 3. *And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and the Israelites on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.*] After they had faced one another some time, and neither side thought fit to engage and begin to fight, they drew up their armies upon two opposite mountains, which were parted by a valley.

Ver. 4. *And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath.*] For to this city the Anakims fled when Joshua rooted them out of the land of Canaan, (Josh. xi. 22, 23.) And here they propagated a race of *giants*; that is, people of great stature and strength.

Whose height was six cubits and a span.] A great number of authors write of such men of vast stature in ancient times. See Magius de Gigantibus, and Casp. Schottus; but especially Hermannus Conringius, in his book de Antiquo Statu Holmstadii, and in another book, de Habitu Corporum Germanorum; where he shews the ancient Germans were of a vast size, as Cæsar relates in his book de Bello Gal. where he calls them "immani corporum magnitudine homines," *men of a huge greatness of body.* And Pomponius Mela and others say the same. In short, they were generally seven feet high. And now at this day, there is a whole nation on the north side of the strait of Magellan, "immani corporum vastitate," as he there observes, p. 37.

Ver. 5. *And he had a helmet of brass upon his head; and he was armed with a coat of mail.*] With plates of brass, laid one upon another like fishes' scales. So Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. iii. cap. 13.

And the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.] This shews he was a man of vast strength: who was able to walk and to fight with such prodigious armour: which was impenetrable. Yet this is not to be understood, as Fortunatus Scacchus thinks, as if the coat weighed so much, for it would have been insupportable; but that it cost so much, or was valued at five thousand shekels of brass, (Myrothec. vol. ii. p. 33.)

Ver. 6. *And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.*] That he might be no where vulnerable. For the target defended his neck as well as his shoulders.

Ver. 7. *And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron.*] This was one of his offensive weapons: by which the largeness of his sword may be measured.

And one bearing a shield went before him.] Which was proportionable, no doubt, to his bulk: and was carried before him when he made his challenge, for the greater state's sake; but, when he fought, I suppose, was used by himself.

Ver. 8. *And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel.*] They were divided, it seems, into several bodies, called here *armies:* and they could hear one another from the mountains on which they were encamped; and Goliath came down into the valley, and there challenged any body to come and fight with him in the sight of both armies.

Why are ye come out to set your battle in array?] He charges them with presumption, in offering to make war with the Philistines, who were so much superior to them.

Am not I a Philistine, and you servants of Saul?] Who doubted of this, that he was a Philistine, and they Saul's subjects? The meaning thereof is, as Abarbinel explains it, that he was one of the lords of the Philistines, a chief ruler in Gath, subject to none; and yet would condescend to fight with any of Saul's servants: who, in comparison with him, he looked upon as no better than slaves. The Targum will have it, that he brags of his great deeds: particularly that he had killed Hophni and Phinchas with his own hand, and taken the ark of God captive; and therefore wonders at their presumption, that they should come to fight with those who had gained such victories over them. Which is not likely, for they had since that been beaten twice by the Israelites.

Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.] He propounds the deciding of their quarrel by a single combat: which seems to have been done out of a bravado, rather than from any examples of those ancient times, of ending quarrels in this manner: for though it looks like a charitable design to prevent much bloodshed; yet no nation sure was willing to venture its whole well-being upon one single man's good success. We read, indeed, as I observed upon xiv. 10. of two or three single combats, before the armies of the two nations engaged, but they were not intended to be decisive of the quarrel between them. This therefore was, as I said before, a high rant of Goliath's, proceeding from the high opinion he had of his matchless strength: which made him brag, as if he was the support of the whole nation: which must stand or fall together with him.

Ver. 9. *If he be able to fight with me and kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.*] These conditions were never accepted, though Saul sought for a man to fight: but quite contrary, they were so far from being agreed on by either side, that the Philistines did not yield themselves slaves to the Israelites upon the death of Goliath; but fled to their own country, and there defended themselves against them, and fought many battles with them.

Ver. 10. *And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together.*] He expresses the utmost contempt of their whole army: in which he signifies there was not a man that durst look him in the face.

Ver. 11. *When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.*] For though Saul had not quite lost his courage, but gathered an army to fight the Philistines; yet it was not so undaunted as it had been before the Spirit of God forsook him: and the people's spirits sink, when their leaders flag and are dismayed.

Ver. 12. *Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem of Judah, whose name was Jesse.*] He being chosen by God to combat with Goliath, the Divine writer gives an account who he was, and what relations he had.

He had eight sons.] In the first book of the Chronicles (ii. 13—15.) there are but seven mentioned: one being dead without children, as R. Solomon thinks; or being only an adopted son.

And the man was accounted an old man in the days of Saul.] And therefore excused from going to the war.

Ver. 13. *And the three eldest sons went and followed Saul*

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to battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the war were Eliab the first-born, &c.] These, I suppose, were men of the greatest experience and strength; and therefore fittest for the service.

Ver. 14. *And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.*] David being young, was not put to the hardships of war: but the eldest only undertook to serve their prince and their country in this time of common danger.

Ver. 15. *But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.*] In the beginning of this war, as Josephus thinks, Saul sent David home to his father, ἀρκούμενος αὐτοῦ τοῖς τρισὶ υἱοῖς, &c. *contenting himself with three of his sons,* who came to his assistance, with the hazard of their lives.

Ver. 16. *And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.*] This is an argument the Philistines could not force the camp of the Israelites: otherwise they would not have spent so much time in this bravado. Unless we suppose, as Abarbinel doth, that all this time more forces were marching to this place, as their general rendezvous, both from the country of the Philistines, and from the land of Israel: for such great armies could not suddenly be got together. Or some wise men on both sides were treating all this time, to see if they could bring matters to an accommodation. It is a mere fancy of R. Jonathan, in the Gemara of the Mischna, title Sota, that Goliath drew near morning and evening, that he might disturb the Israelites at their morning and evening prayers, and hinder them from reciting them.

Ver. 17. *And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to thy brethren.*] For he did not know but provision might be scarce with them; or, as some will have it, he was informed they were under some hardship, and desired to know how they did. But having other sons at home with him, it was by a Divine direction that he sent David from the sheep upon this errand.

Ver. 18. *And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand.*] Whose favour might be very serviceable to them.

And look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.] Some think that they went to war, in those days, at their own charge, and were not paid by the king. Provision therefore beginning to fail, Jesse's sons had sent to him for a supply, and by a certain token. Which their father bids David take with him, to know if it were theirs. So some expound the word *pledge.* But others think that if they had borrowed money, or pawned any thing for it, he ordered David to redeem it: or that he should bring something from them, that might certify him of their health. Others translate the word not *pledge* but *business:* and take the sense to be, Bring me word what they do; how they behave themselves; what company they keep, and whom they associate themselves withal.

Ver. 19. *And Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.*] They were now drawn up in battalia (as we speak) ready to engage: not in the valley, but hard by it, on the side of the mountain, where they faced the Philistines, and shewed themselves resolved to fight, if they came down from the other mountain.

Ver. 20. *And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him: and he came to the trench as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.*] By the *trench,* may be meant the *carriages* (as we translate the word in the margin), wherewith the host was surrounded, instead of a trench made about it.

Ver. 21. *For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.*] This is the reason of what follows.

Ver. 22. *And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage.*] He left the provision which his father had sent his brethren with his servant, it being no time to present it to them, when they were just going to engage.

And ran unto the army, and came and saluted his brethren.] Acquainting them, no doubt, with their father's care of them.

Ver. 23. *And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion (the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name) out of the army of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.*] Though the armies stood ready to engage, yet the vanity of Goliath made him once more desire the matter might be determined by a single combat.

Ver. 24. *And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.*] They that could look the whole army of the Philistines in the face (among whom they knew Goliath was), one would think should not flee at the sight of one man. But the meaning is (as the next words shew), they could not endure to hear his opprobrious words against them, and his blasphemous words against God.

Ver. 25. *And the men of Israel said, Have you seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up.*] They bewailed among themselves their sad condition; that all the people of Israel should be set at nought, and vilified by one man; who despised both them and their God, (ver. 45.)

And it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.] To make his family *free in Israel,* was to make them noble. And the Targum translates it, make them *free princes in Israel:* particularly free from paying any tribute or taxes, which was a royal privilege; of which see Selden, lib. vi. de Jure Nat. et Gentium, cap. 14. fol. 740. Here some observe, that Saul had lost his wonted *piety;* for he sent not to Samuel, nor consulted the high-priest, nor offered sacrifice: but only proclaimed a great reward to him that should fight with Goliath, and kill him. Which shewed he had not lost all *prudence:* for thus Caleb won Kirjath-sepher, by offering his daughter in marriage to him that should take it. And David himself afterward encouraged his soldiers to assault the strong fort of Zion, by promising to make him commander-in-chief of all his forces, who should first enter it. Thus Mathias Hostius observes, the Athenians offered a hundred talents to him that should bring Xerxes to them alive or dead: many more instances of this way of exciting men to valiant exploits he gives in his history of this monomachia.

Ver. 26. *And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel?*] He de-

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sired them to repeat the king's promise; signifying that he would undertake to encounter Goliath.

For who is this uncircumcised, that he should defy the armies of the living God?] He would not have them think he was moved by the hope of the reward (which was not to be despised) so much as by zeal for God, and for his country: which suffered by the reproaches of one, who was not in covenant with God: and therefore he did not fear him, nor would suffer him any longer to make such proud boasting.

Ver. 27. *And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done unto the man that killeth him.*] They all confirmed what was before said.

Ver. 28. *And Eliab his elder brother heard when he spake unto the men: and his anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither?*] His passion made him forget that he came by his father's order, to see how they did, &c.

And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?] This intimates, that he was fitter to look after sheep, than to fight a giant.

I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down to see the battle.] Vain-glory he thought brought him to the battle: and now made him offer to run such a desperate adventure.

Ver. 29. *And David said, What have I done? Is there not a cause?*] He justifies his discourse; since no man, no, not Eliab himself, had the courage to wipe off the reproach which Goliath cast upon them all.

Ver. 30. *And he turned from him to another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the same manner.*] He told them he would undertake to fight Goliath; and they told him what would be his reward if he killed him.

Ver. 31. *And when the words were heard that David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he sent for him.*] They had been spoken to so many, that at last they came to Saul's ear: who desired to hear himself what he said.

Ver. 32. *And David said unto Saul.*] Who had told him what he heard reported of his resolution.

Let no man's heart faint because of him; for thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.] In assured hope of victory.

Ver. 33. *And Saul said unto David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.*] This Saul spake out of kindness to David, whom he would not have to hazard himself against an old soldier, when he was inexperienced in war.

Ver. 34. *And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep; and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock.*] Not both together (as Castalio supposes in his translation), but at several times; and it is likely more than once.

Ver. 35. *And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered him out of his mouth: and when he rose up against me, I caught him by the beard, and smote him, and slew him.*] Sometimes he pursued the lion and killed him in his flight: or, if he turned again to devour him, he boldly caught him by the beard and killed him. And in like manner we are to understand he encountered the bear.

Ver. 36. *Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear.*] The author of Halicoth Olam, by a strange fetch, concludes from hence, that he killed a lion with two of her whelps, and a bear with one of her cubs. (Par. iv. cap. 3.)

And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.] He encourages himself by three arguments. His mastery over such terrible creatures as a lion and a bear: which made him not fear this great beast, Goliath. Who was not one of God's people: whom he had insolently set at nought as varlets and slaves, (ver. 8.) though they were the servants of the living God.

Ver. 37. *David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear.*] In the Hebrew it is, *out of the hand of the lion, and out of the hand of the bear.* And Aristotle observes, that bears have paws, Χερσὶν ὁμοίους, *resembling hands.*

He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.] To silence all objections, he declares that he was possessed with a full persuasion, that God would deliver this Philistine into his hands, as he had done the lion and the bear: for he felt himself full of that spirit which then assisted him. Abarbinel thinks, that he repeats this so often, because Saul did not seem to believe it, or did not attend to it: and therefore he saith over again, ver. 37. what he had said, ver. 36. And tells him it was not by his own strength, but by the mighty power of God, that he overcame those furious beasts: as he doubted not he should do this Philistine by the same power. Whereupon Saul prayed God to prosper him.

And Saul said, Go, and the Lord be with thee.] As he believed he would.

Ver. 38. *And Saul armed David with his armour,* &c.] Not that which he was wont to wear himself (for he was so tall it would not have fitted David), but he ordered them to bring out of his armoury a helmet and a coat of mail, as it here follows.

Ver. 39. *And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.*] He was not accustomed to wear such things, not being used to go armed: and, therefore, begged leave to lay them aside; as likely rather to encumber him, than facilitate his enterprise. Which Machiavel, in his Princeps, cap. 13. applies to the danger of employing mercenary soldiers: for "aliena arma aut ex humeris decidunt, aut sunt tibi oneri, aut te constrictum tenent."

Ver. 40. *And he took his staff in his hand.*] His shepherd's staff.

And chose him five smooth stones out of the brook.] Or rather *five cleft stones:* not whole and entire, but broken. For the word signifies *partitions;* and, therefore, denotes the stones to have been ragged; and sharp pointed were most fit for his purpose. (See De Dieu.)

And put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip.] Which hung by his side.

And his sling was in his hand.] A sort of weapon, in the management of which some were wonderful skilful in ancient days. (See Judg. xx. 16.) And Livy, with other authors, mention slingers that could hit a mark at a very great distance: particularly the Phœnicians, who, as Bo-

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chartus observes, were famous slingers; from whom this art was derived to the Baleares. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 44.)

And he drew near to the Philistine.] It seems David made the first motion towards him, to shew he was in no fear of him.

Ver. 41. *And the Philistine came, and drew near to David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.*] As he was wont to do, (ver. 7.)

Ver. 42. *And when the Philistine looked about and saw David.*] He expected some tall, robust person to encounter him; and, therefore, at the first did not mind David, who was but a stripling.

He disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.] He contemned him upon three accounts: as being a youth, unaccustomed to war; and being beautiful, seemed more fit to dance with women, than to fight with men; and he came also unarmed. (See xvi. 12.)

Ver. 43. *And the Philistine said, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And he cursed David by his gods.*] So the Romans were wont to do, saying, "Dii Deæque te perdant:" as Goliath, it is likely, now wished, that Dagon and Ashtaroth, and the rest of his gods, would confound David.

Ver. 44. *And the Philistine said unto David, Come unto me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.*] For in his hand David was no more than a little lamb in the hand of a butcher.

Ver. 45. *Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts.*] By a commission from Him who commands all creatures in heaven and earth: and in a full assurance that he will deliver thee into my hand. Concerning the word *chidon*, which we translate a *spear*, see Bochart in his Hieroz. par. i. p. 138.

The God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.] The leader and protector of those armies whom Goliath had set at nought.

Ver. 46. *This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head off from thee.*] Which Goliath thought impossible, he having no sword by his side.

And will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the earth.] David did not rashly and vainly boast beforehand of the victory, as Goliath hath done: but, being full of faith (as Pellicanus here notes), praised the Divine omnipotence, and prophesied of an assured victory.

That all the earth may know there is a God in Israel.] Superior to all other.

Ver. 47. *And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not by sword and by spear.*] They might learn, if they pleased, that the Lord needed not human force to effect his designs. David did not want courage: but he ascribes all to God; in whose power and might he went forth, and not his own.

For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand.] The battle was properly the Lord's against the seven nations of Canaan: because he had commanded them to be extirpated. But in all other battles he disposed of the victory as he pleased. Strigelius here notes out of Sophocles the profane spirit of Ajax; who was therefore punished with madness: because his father Telamon piously admonishing him, as he went to war, to fight bravely, but to expect victory from God; he impiously answered, that "cowards might overcome by the help of God, but he doubted not to overcome without him."

Ver. 48. *And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew near to meet David.*] Having nothing but victory in his thoughts, as Pellicanus here observes, he arose, and marched gravely, and pompously, covered over with armour, and fearing nothing.

That David hasted, and ran towards the army to meet the Philistine.] But David, being loaded with no armour, nimbly ran towards him, and knocked him down; before he had so much as drawn his sword out of his sheath.

Ver. 49. *And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and smote the Philistine in his forehead.*] Which either was bare (he perhaps contemning David so much, as not to pull down his helmet over his face), or else was thrown with such a force, that it pierced his helmet first, and then his forehead: or went in at the place which was left open for his eyes. However it was, the Divine hand directed it: for though there were men so wonderful skilful as to hit a mark that was fixed and immoveable, though small and at a distance; yet none had such admirable skill as to be sure to hit a mark that was in motion, as Goliath's body was at this time.

And the stone sunk into his forehead.] Pierced into his brain, so that he immediately, as it here follows, *fell upon his face to the earth.*

Kimchi thinks, that when he said to David, *Come, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air,* he looked up, and his helmet then fell from off his head.

Ver. 50. *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him.*] So true is that of Vegetius, (lib. i. cap. 6.) "Utilius est fortes esse milites, quam grandes." *But it was not mere fortitude and valour that prevailed,* but the Spirit of God.

But there was no sword in the hand of David.] This was so wonderful a thing, that so great a victory should be obtained without the usual warlike weapons, that it was thought fit a special mark should be set upon it.

Ver. 51. *Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine.*] That he might complete his victory, and make it notorious to all the army.

And took his sword, and drew it out of its sheath.] He was strong, not merely by nature, but by the power of God: otherwise he could not have well managed the sword of a giant.

And slew him, and cut off his head therewith.] It is likely the stone had only stunned him; but his life was still in him after this blow in his forehead: and therefore now he quite dispatched him.

And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.] Having lost all their courage with his life.

Ver. 52. *And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted.*] As they used to do when they had got the victory.

And pursued the Philistines, till they came to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron, &c.] They pursued them to their own country (which was in a valley), even to the gates of their principal cities; as Gath and Ekron were.

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Ver. 53. *And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and spoiled their tents.*] They acted like good soldiers; who did not first fall upon the spoil; and thereby let the enemy escape.

Ver. 54. *And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem.*] After he had shewn it to Saul, (ver. 57.) and exposed it to all the people, (xviii. 6.) Jerusalem was now become a noted city, which was the reason, I suppose, why he brought his head hither: though it is only said, he brought it to that place; where it having been shewn as a spectacle, perhaps was reposited somewhere else.

But he put his armour in his tent.] Which, I suppose, was set up for David, upon this occasion; when he prepared himself to encounter the Philistine. And when his tent was taken down after the battle, the armour was deposited in the tabernacle, as his sword was, to remain there for a trophy.

Ver. 55. *And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Whose son is this youth?*] Such cavillers as Spinosa from hence argue, that this chapter was not written by him that wrote the former: for how is it possible, say they, that Saul should not know David, who had lately attended on him in his court? But this is very frivolous; for in such a multitude of business as kings have, and among so many new faces which they see every day, it was easy to forget a man he had seen and conversed withal now and then; especially when he was crazed, and had a disease in his head, as Saul had. Besides, David came now in another kind of apparel than he did when he was sent to wait upon Saul at court: for he appeared now as a shepherd, in a rustic habit, (ver. 40.) and his countenance, it is likely, was much altered by the heroic motion he now found in himself to fight with Goliath. And after all, Abarbinel observes, he doth not ask who David was, but who was his father: which he might easily forget when he had been disturbed with melancholy, and with the public affairs.

And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.] He being a military man, and therefore much abroad, had not seen David when he was at court, or taken no notice of him.

Ver. 56. *And the king said, Inquire then whose son this stripling is.*] It was natural to desire to know whence such a young man came, who so much excelled all other men.

Ver. 57. *And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him unto Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand.*] He thought it was best the king should learn from his own mouth who he was: especially after such a glorious exploit.

Ver. 58. *And Saul said, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.*] More discourse, no doubt, passed between them, as appears by the next words; but this was all that was proper to be recorded, in answer to Saul's question.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit unto the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul.*] Such was the prudence and modesty of his discourse and behaviour, after such an heroic action, that he entirely gained Jonathan's affection.

Ver. 2. *And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more to his father's house.*] Saul also resolved to shew greater respect unto him than before. For it appears by this that he had not lived always at court, after he came first thither; but often went to his father, when Saul was well, and had no use of him.

Ver. 3. *Then Jonathan and David made a covenant.*] Solemnly entered into a mutual friendship.

Because he loved him as his own soul.] Such excellent men there were among the heathen, between whom there was ζεῦγος φιλίας, as Plutarch calls it, *a yoke of friendship*, wherein they were so joined together in love and amity, as to have one common interest. He mentions (in his book περὶ πολυφιλίας) Theseus and Perithous; Achilles and Patroclus; Orestes and Pylades; Pythias and Damon; Epaminondas and Pelopidas: but none of them comparable to these two, Jonathan and David: who entered into the most sacred bonds of mutual assistance and defence to the very death; and kindness to their posterity after either of them was dead. Which was a singular providence of God, who by this means preserved David, in that sharp persecution which shortly after arose against him at court.

Ver. 4. *And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it unto David.*] That he might appear like a courtier.

And his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.] That he might look like another Jonathan; and all might take notice they were no longer two, but one. For he put him into the garb both of a courtier and of a soldier; or rather, great commander.

Ver. 5. *And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him.*] Upon military expeditions: none of which he refused, though ever so hazardous.

And he behaved himself wisely.] Shewed as much prudence in his conduct as he did courage.

And Saul set him over the men of war.] Not over all; for Abner was general, as we speak, of all his forces: but he made him captain of his guard; or gave him some other great command in his army.

And he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.] Except a few, who envied his preferment.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, as they came.*] Marched along, in a great cavalcade (as they now speak), from the place of battle.

When David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine.] I suppose, Saul and the whole court thought fit to honour David, by accompanying him to Jerusalem, when he carried Goliath's head thither.

The women came out of all the cities of Israel.] All the neighbouring cities.

Singing and dancing to meet king Saul with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music.] As the custom was in times of great rejoicing.

Ver. 7. *And the women answered one to another as they played.*] They sang as well as played on musical instruments: and they sang alternately, as they did Exod. xv. 21. And the burden of the song seems to have been that which follows.

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And said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.] For his slaying Goliath was the cause of the flight of the army of the Philistines, and the great slaughter of them.

Ver. 8. *And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?*] He began to be jealous they would advance him to the throne, in a little time: having so highly magnified him above their king.

Ver. 9. *And Saul eyed David from that day forward.*] Narrowly observed him, whether he had any such design to make himself king. Or, as it is commonly interpreted, he looked askew upon him, as one he envied and hated, and was afraid of; as the LXX. translate it.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul.*] Which had formerly haunted him, (xvi. 14.) and now, by his discontent, anger and melancholy was brought again upon him.

And he prophesied in the midst of the house.] Before the whole court. This prophesying is generally understood, only of his imitating the motions, actions, and gestures of the prophets; which sometimes were very different from those of other men: (see 2 Kings ix. 11.) but I do not see why this word should not retain the signification here, which it hath in other places: that he sung Divine songs. Which perhaps he the rather did, that David might suspect no danger from him. Abarbinel thinks, that his mind being disturbed with various roving thoughts about his own condition, and about David, he foretold that David should be heir of his kingdom.

And David played with his hand, as at other times.] To compose and quiet his disturbed spirits.

And there was a javelin in Saul's hand.] Which he had provided on purpose, as the following words shew, to dispatch David.

Ver. 11. *And Saul cast the javelin, for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it.*] This argued he was so full of fury, that he designed to kill him in his own house, before all his courtiers, when David was waiting upon him, and doing him service.

And David avoided out of his presence twice.] Had his eye upon him, and shunned the blow, both now, and at another time mentioned xix. 10.

Ver. 12. *And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul.*] Who was as unsuccessful in all his designs, as David was prosperous.

Ver. 13. *Therefore Saul removed him from him.*] From his court.

And made him a captain over a thousand.] Instead of captain of his guard (which required his attendance at court), he gave him a command abroad: where he hoped he might be killed in some expedition; or he might have an opportunity privately to take away his life.

And he went out and came in before the people.] As the leader of that thousand men.

Ver. 14. *And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways.*] None could find any fault in his conduct, whithersoever he went.

And the Lord was with him.] Made all his undertakings prosperous.

Ver. 15. *Wherefore, when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.*] His fears increased as he saw David still grow so prudent that no exception could be taken to his behaviour.

Ver. 16. *But all Israel and Judah loved David.*] This is to be understood (as Corn. Bertram thinks, de Repub. Jud. cap. 10.) as if he had said, The Israelites in general loved David, but especially they of the tribe of Judah.

Because he went out and came in before them.] This phrase signifies in other places to administer all things belonging to one's charge with full authority. So Moses speaks of himself, Deut. xxxi. 2. and of Joshua his successor, Numb. xxvii. 21. And so I suppose it signifies here, that David had an absolute power under Saul, over those whom he commanded: and managed it so well that he gained every body's affection.

Ver. 17. *And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife.*] He at last bethinks himself of the promise he had publicly made unto him that should kill Goliath. The performance of which David did not demand, but in modesty left it to Saul's own conscience. Who now intended nothing less, it appears by the sequel, than to be as good as his word.

Only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles.] He would not have him think upon this marriage of coming again to live at court: but to continue a military life, and fight for his country, whereby he hoped to be rid of him.

For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him.] Now he seems to have some sense of honour, and to lay aside those base thoughts of murdering him himself.

But let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.] By whose hand God's just judgment so ordered things that Saul himself fell.

Ver. 18. *And David said unto Saul, Who am I? and what is my life.*] The hazarding his life, he tells him, could not deserve so high an advancement.

And what is my family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?] This was not a refusal of the honour, but an acknowledgment how unworthy he was of it.

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David.*] When all things were ready for the marriage.

That she was given to Adriel the Meholathite to wife.] A most high affront to David, and the greatest injury that could have been done him: which he wisely dissembled. How Jonathan resented this usage we are not told. It is likely his duty to his father made him entreat David to take it patiently; and to look upon Saul as one that was sometimes beside himself, and did not know what he did.

Ver. 20. *And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.*] Not out of any love to David, or desire to perform his promise: but because he hoped by her means to bring his ends about of destroying David.

Ver. 21. *And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.*] He hoped his daughter, in obedience to him, might be persuaded to bring him into some snare that he would lay for him: or, that being exposed to great dangers (which he was to undergo, as a condition of having her to wife) he might perish in some of them.

Wherefore Saul said unto David, Thou shalt be this day

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my son-in-law.] That is shortly, within a time, it is likely, prefixed by Saul.

In the one of the twain.] By marrying one of his daughters. He had two; and though he was disappointed in one of them, yet his promise was fulfilled, if he married the other.

Ver. 22. *And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly.*] It seems David was not forward to embrace Saul's offer; having been so grossly abused: therefore Saul ordered his courtiers in private discourse to take occasion to persuade him to it.

And say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son-in-law.] The affection of the king and of the whole court, was a mighty argument to induce him to it.

Ver. 23. *And Saul's servants spake these words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it a light thing unto you to be a king's son-in-law, seeing I am a poor man, and little esteemed?*] Having no estate, and of small credit: and therefore unable to endow her according to her quality.

Ver. 24. *And the servants of Saul told him, saying, In this manner spake David.*] In the Hebrew, *according unto these words;* that is, they reported his words faithfully; that he was as sensible of his own meanness, as of the honour that was offered him.

Ver. 25. *And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of his enemies.*] This custom hath prevailed in latter times in some countries, to give their daughters in marriage to the most valiant men; or those who should bring them so many heads of their enemies. Alex. ab Alexandro reports of a people in Carmania, that if any were desirous to marry, it was necessary he should first bring the king the head of an enemy, (lib. i. cap. 24.) Vincent le Blanc reports the like of others, (par. i. cap. 30.) But why did Saul desire the foreskins of the Philistines', and not their heads? To this Procopius Gazæus answers, that Saul did not know but David might cut off the heads of his own subjects and bring them instead of the Philistines, and therefore he asked so many foreskins, which the Israelites had not, that he might be sure he had killed so many enemies. As for portions, the Hebrew custom was not like that of the Romans, who required the wife to bring a portion to her husband, "ut onera matrimonii tanto æquius sustineat," *that he might be able to bear the charges of matrimony more equally.* But among the Hebrews the husband endowed the wife, and received nothing at all with her. And so the custom was among the people of that land before they came into Canaan. For Sichem bade Dinah's relations require what dowry they pleased, and it should be settled upon her, he desiring nothing of them but her, (Gen. xxxix. 17.) And so it was in the case of David. (See Wagenseil upon Sota, cap. 4.)

But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.] Who he knew would be extremely enraged against David, by putting this great indignity upon them, as they all counted it, of cutting off their foreskins.

Ver. 26. *And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *the thing was right in David's eyes;* that is, he thought fit to accept the offer upon these conditions.

And the days were not expired.] Which were appointed to be fulfilled (as it is in the Hebrew) before the marriage took effect: so that he had time to perform what was agreed instead of a dowry.

Ver. 27. *Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men: and brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law.*] He gave Saul double of what he had demanded: partly to shew his sense of the honour he had done him, and partly to express his love to his daughter, and to declare his intention to venture his life freely to do him service.

And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.] There being no way to avoid it, after the marriage had been so solemnly treated and ratified.

Ver. 28. *And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David.*] He was convinced of it, by the success which he constantly gave him.

And that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him.] Which was a great disappointment to him.

Ver. 29. *And Saul was yet the more afraid of David.*] Having thus advanced him; and seeing no hope of bringing his designs to pass against him.

And Saul became David's enemy continually.] He was every day more resolved to destroy him. Such strange blindness did his anger and hatred, and such-like passions, bring upon him, that he set himself against him, who he saw and knew had God for his friend.

Ver. 30. *And the princes of the Philistines went forth.*] To fight with the Israelites: who had highly incensed them by David's late action, as well as by former losses. And they thought, perhaps, that David would make use of the benefit the law allowed, Deut. xxiv. 25. of not going to war in a year after he was married.

And it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul.] By discovering, I suppose, the designs of the Philistines, and preventing them: for we do not read that they came to a battle.

So that his name was much set by.] He was very highly esteemed.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1. *AND Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.*] When he could not destroy him by craft, he declares open enmity to him; and commands his son and his whole court to make him away: some of which he thought would obey him. It is strange that he should speak to Jonathan to murder David, if he knew the friendship he had for him; and he could not well be ignorant of it, since he had so publicly declared it, as we read xviii. 3, 4. But he imagined his love to a father would overcome his love to a friend. And there was a great providence of God in his disclosing his mind so freely to Jonathan, whereby David came to be certainly informed of his danger.

Ver. 2. *And Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David.*] He continued to take much delight in his company: and therefore would not lose the pleasure of his friendship by suffering him to be killed.

And Jonathan told David, saying, My father seeketh to

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kill thee. Now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself.] He hoped, I suppose, to find his father better disposed in the morning: and in the mean time would have David secure himself in some close place where nobody could find him.

Ver. 3. *And I will go out.*] The next morning.

And stand beside my father in the field.] In which, it is likely, Saul used to walk in the morning, and take the fresh air. Thereabouts he advised David to lurk in some secret place, that he might speedily acquaint him with the issue of his discourse with his father.

And I will commune with my father concerning thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee.] Let him know how he left his father inclined.

Ver. 4. *And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father.*] A noble act of friendship, to adventure to commend him to one who was his declared enemy.

And said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his work hath been to thee-ward very good.] He represented to him what a sin and dishonour it would be to kill such a faithful servant as David had been: who never offended him; but studied by all good offices to please him.

Ver. 5. *For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine.*] Especially he puts him in mind of that hazardous enterprise wherein he slew Goliath.

And the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel.] By which means the whole realm was delivered out of their enemies' hand.

Thou sawest it, and didst rejoice.] He desires him to remember that he himself was a witness of it; and could not then but applaud David, and rejoice in what God had done by him.

Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, and slay David without a cause?] Having mollified Saul by so many arguments, he beseeches him to revoke the order he had given ver. 1. and in downright terms tells him, if he did not, he would bring innocent blood upon his own head.

Ver. 6. *And Saul hearkened to the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain.*] Some think he sware deceitfully; that Jonathan, believing he had no ill intentions towards David, might not persuade him to fly, but bring him to court again, where he might have an opportunity to kill him. But I rather think he spake what he really meant at this present: though this alteration proceeding not from any affection he bare to David, but from a sense (which Jonathan's discourse had wrought in him) how base a thing it would be, to slay a man of such worth, and who had done him such service, he soon forgot it, and returned to his old bent.

Ver. 7. *And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all these things: and Jonathan brought David unto Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.*] When he was in his favour.

Ver. 8. *And there was war again: and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him.*] All these battles were only between parties, for David commanded no more than a thousand men, (xviii. 13.) And if the whole army of the Philistines had been gathered together, Abner would have commanded the army of Israel against them; for he was captain of the host.

Ver. 9. *And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, and he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand.*] The more services David did his country, the more did Saul's hatred and malice increase against him. For this new victory, in all likelihood, made him melancholy and mad to see him so prosperous.

And David played with his hand.] He did not omit his duty to Saul, though he knew his danger.

Ver. 10. *And Saul sought to smite David to the wall with his javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall.*] His wrath and fury made him forget his oath: so dangerous it is to be possessed with such passions.

And David fled, and escaped that night.] He got out of the palace, before Saul's order (which it is likely he gave) could be executed, to apprehend him.

Ver. 11. *Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning.*] As he went out of the door of his house. By this it is apparent, when Saul missed his blow, he was the more enraged, and implacably pursued his destruction.

And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain.] She had intelligence either from her brother Jonathan, or some other friend at court: or perhaps she saw suspicious persons hovering about the house.

Ver. 12. *So Michal let down David through a window.*] Which did not look towards any of the doors which were narrowly watched.

And he went, and fled, and escaped.] Having most of the night, it is likely, to travel in.

Ver. 13. *And Michal took an image.*] In the Hebrew, a *teraphim*. But it doth not signify such as were made for a superstitious use (which David would not have suffered in his house), but a simple image of a man's head; such as we now use for blocks, whereon to comb our perukes. Abarbinel thinks (whom Abendana follows) that women were wont in those days to make such figures in the likeness of their husbands; that when they were absent from them, they might have them in their image, to look upon them, as still present with them. Of which sort of teraphim (which were images in the likeness of men) was this of Michal's; who, dearly loving her husband, had got one made in his likeness. But whatsoever becomes of this, the conceit that teraphim were little puppets (as I may call them), which the high-priest had in his breast-plate (called *urim* and *thummim*) is plainly destroyed. For this place shews that teraphim was a large image representing a man: and therefore fitter for a bed, than for a breast-plate.

And laid it in the bed.] Where David was wont to lie.

And put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.] It is hard to determine what the word *cebir* signifies, which we translate *pillow;* for there is great variety of opinions among interpreters about it. But Bochartus hath with much probability resolved that it signifies *great*. And the meaning is, she put a great deal of goats' hair upon his bolster; for though the word *goats* is only mentioned in the Hebrew, yet the word *hair* must be supplied, as a great many other places of Scripture testify. (See his Hierozoicon,

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par. i. lib. ii. cap. 51. p. 623.) For in those countries goats had long hair, which was shorn, as the wool of sheep is, and served for many uses; and it is not unlike man's hair, as he there observes. It was also of divers colours, so that she might choose some fine goats' hair (which was ready at hand, being used to be spun) of the same colour with David's.

And covered it with a cloth.] As if David had been sick.

Ver. 14. *And when Saul sent messengers to take David.*] He not coming out of doors, where they watched for him, Saul sent other messengers to take him in his house.

She said, He is sick.] Her affection to David made her tell an untruth; whereby he gained more time to get to a place of safety.

Ver. 15. *And Saul sent messengers again to see David.*] As if they came to visit him, and see how he did.

Saying, Bring him to me in the bed, that I may slay him.] Such was his insatiable rage, that he could not stay to see whether he would die of his sickness; but when he was able to make no resistance, resolved to dispatch him.

Ver. 16. *And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.*] An image dressed up with goats' hair, resembling a man.

Ver. 17. *And Saul said unto Michal, Wherefore hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped?*] He did not expect to be served so by a daughter, whom he had married to David, that she might betray him.

And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?] This was another fiction of her own; for it is not likely that she endeavoured to detain him, or that he threatened to kill her if she did.

Ver. 18. *So David fled, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him of all that Saul had done unto him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.*] A place near to Ramah, as the next verse shews.

Ver. 19. *And it was told Saul, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.*] Ramah seems to have been the place from whence Samuel was descended, called (in the first chapter, ver. 1.) Ramathaim-zophim, for the reason I gave there. And Naioth was a neighbouring place belonging to it, and perhaps the suburbs of it: where the sons of the prophets either had their ordinary residence, or were wont sometimes to retire thither for greater privacy.

Ver. 20. *And Saul sent messengers to take David.*] His implacable hatred had abolished all respect and reverence to Samuel (under whose protection David now was), and to the college of the prophets, which was a kind of sanctuary unto those who fled to it.

And when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them.] To govern them.

The Spirit of the Lord came also upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.] That is, praised God in hymns, which the prophets composed and sang to him, (1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2. 4.)

Ver. 21. *And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent again the third time, and they prophesied also.*] A strange obstinacy, to contend so long with the Spirit of God: who quite diverted the minds of his messengers from David, by inspiring them with Divine thoughts.

Ver. 22. *Then went he also unto Ramah.*] Not out of devotion, but to destroy David.

And came to a great well that is in Sechu.] Where company commonly was to fetch water.

And he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And they answered and said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah.] It is a probable opinion of Conrad. Pellicanus, that *Naioth* signifies the *habitation* or *college* where the prophets dwelt in Ramah.

Ver. 23. *And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah.*] He directed his way towards that place.

And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him also, and he went on prophesying until he came to Naioth in Ramah.] His messengers did not prophesy till they came thither; but God inspired Saul as he was on the way unto that place. So that from Sechu, I suppose, till he came there, his evil spirit was gone, and he praised God as the prophets did. This was to convince him, that he laboured in a vain pursuit after David, whom the Spirit of God powerfully defended.

Ver. 24. *And he stripped off his clothes also.*] His royal robes (as R. Solomon and other Jewish doctors expound it), appearing like an ordinary man; or perhaps in the prophetical habit. Or it may be meant only of his upper garment, whatsoever it was. For when the Germans are said by some to have appeared naked, Tacitus interprets it, "rejecta veste superiore," *throwing off their upper garment.* But the first I take to be the truest account; and, as Procopius Gazæus here notes, "Habitus ille regni ablationem significabat;" *this throwing off his royal habit signifies the taking away his kingdom from him.*

And prophesied before Samuel in like manner.] This seems to denote, that his messengers had also stripped themselves when they prophesied. And Abarbinel will have it, that they all still foretold the crown should be set upon the head of David.

And lay down naked all that day, and all that night.] As a man in an ecstacy, that had not the use of his senses. But by *naked* is meant only, as before, stripped of his royal robe.

Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?] This gave occasion to renew the proverbial saying, which had been in use long before. (See x. 12.)

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *AND David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan.*] By Saul's being thrown into a trance (mentioned in the verse beforegoing), God's providence gave David time to escape; and he went from thence to Gibeah, where Jonathan was.

What have I done? and what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?] Such violent and unwearied persecution must arise from some extraordinary cause or other; which he desires to know: for he could not accuse himself of any kind of fault, that should embitter Saul against him.

Ver. 2. *And he said, God forbid; thou shalt not die.*] He would have him think there was no such danger as he suspected.

Behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small,

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but he will shew it me; and why should my father hide this from me? it is not so.] These words signify that Jonathan knew nothing of his father's design; and that he had sent the messengers forenamed, without his privity, to seize David. Yet it is strange he should not know of his sending to his house to apprehend him. Therefore some think Jonathan, out of dutiful affection to his father, dissembled the matter: and would not have David think him so very wicked as he was.

Ver. 3. *And David sware moreover, and said.*] That it was certainly so.

Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes, and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.] He was willing to believe that Saul might conceal his intentions from Jonathan; for the reason here mentioned.

But truly, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.] But by a most solemn oath he endeavours to persuade him that he was in extreme danger of losing his life.

Ver. 4. *Then said Jonathan to David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.*] Both to find out Saul's intentions, and to save David's life.

Ver. 5. *And David said unto Jonathan, To-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat.*] There were solemn sacrifices every new moon, and then a feast upon them. And David being one of the king's family, by marrying his daughter, used to eat with them at these festival times: and he thought it possible that Saul, who lately pursued him in a fit of rage, when the evil spirit was upon him, might now be mitigated by the Spirit of God coming upon him at Naioth: and so might inquire after him, and receive him into favour again, as he had formerly done. But he durst not trust to this opinion, till he had tried his mind and affection to him, after the manner here propounded.

But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field.] He desires, with his approbation, to retire to his father's house, and the field thereabouts, with which he was well acquainted.

Till the third day at even.] That is, till the next day but one after the new moon, as appears from ver. 27. 35.

Ver. 6. *If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Beth-lehem, his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.*] It is likely this was a custom among pious families to meet together once a year, and praise God for his mercies towards them all.

Ver. 7. *If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him.*] If he approved of Jonathan's licence, he might hope he was pacified: but if he still stormed and raged, he might probably conclude his destruction was decreed; and that his hatred continued so implacably, that he must be forced to leave his country.

Ver. 8. *Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant.*] In giving him a faithful account how he found his father disposed towards him.

For thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee.] It was Jonathan's motion, that they should make a solemn covenant before God (who is the avenger of all falseness) of mutual friendship, (xviii. 3.)

Notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?] A marvellous assurance of his integrity, which made him freely offer himself to die, without troubling his father any further, if he knew any guilt in him.

Ver. 9. *And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee.*] Do not speak after this manner.

For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell thee?] He disclaims all thoughts either of killing him himself, or letting him fall into the hands of his father, if he could prevent it. For who could imagine a man so solemnly engaged, and who had already shewn himself such a faithful friend, would not discover any design he knew against him?

Ver. 10. *And David said, Who shall tell me?*] He desired to know who should bring him advice how matters stood.

And what if thy father answer thee roughly?] And not suffer thee to come to me thyself.

Ver. 11. *And Jonathan said unto David, Come, let us go into the field. And they went both of them into the field.*] To take their measures about this matter.

Ver. 12. *And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father any time to-morrow, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good towards David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee.*] The first words seem to be an exclamation: and the rest, as if he had said, Shall I who love thee so much, be thought capable of breaking my word with thee? All these verses are full of passion; and the words are broken, concise, and interrupt: as the words of lovers are wont to be, especially when they are disturbed.

Ver. 13. *The Lord do so, and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace; and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father.*] In this case he advises him to get away, and preserve himself as well as he could: praying God to make him as successful as his father had been; and bring him to the kingdom.

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt not only, while I yet live, shew me the kindness of the Lord.*] The kindness promised him before the Lord, or the greatest kindness. The words in the Hebrew run plainly thus, *And wilt thou not, if I be then alive* (*viz.* when God had advanced him to the throne, as he did his father) *wilt thou not shew me the loving-kindness of the Lord?* He made no doubt, but rather strongly affirmed his belief of it.

That I die not.] After the manner of those kings, who were wont to cut off the children of their predecessors: unto whose throne they were advanced.

Ver. 15. *But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever.*] The covenant they had made was not merely personal, but reached to their posterity.

No, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David, every one from the face of the earth.] When he had the greatest power, and none to oppose his will.

Ver. 16. *So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies.*] They had made a league of personal friendship, a little after the slaughter of Goliath: and now they make a friendship between their families; and Jona-

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than wished that God would requite it, if any of his family proved David's enemies. This he renewed afterward, and added further articles to the league, that Jonathan should be next to himself, (xxiii. 18.)

Ver. 17. *And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him.*] Or he made him swear again by the love he bare to him.

For he loved him as he loved his own soul.] The greatness of his love to him made him think he could never do enough to secure his friendship to all generations.

Ver. 18. *Then Jonathan said unto David, To-morrow is the new moon; and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.*] The place where he used to sit with Saul at table.

Ver. 19. *And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly.*] It is commonly interpreted, of staying so long with his kindred at Beth-lehem, or some other place of retirement. But in the Hebrew the words are, *thou shalt three times* (or three days) *go down to a very low place:* and the meaning seems to be, that if Jonathan did not come the first day, he should take it for granted he knew nothing; and come again the second; and if he brought him no news then, come the third.

And come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand.] When they were discoursing of this very matter; how to discover Saul's affection towards David. Or, when he did David's business with his father, and interceded so effectually for him, that Saul promised not to kill him.

And thou shalt remain by the stone Ezel.] It is thought to be a stone that shewed men their way, where several roads met: because the word imports *going* or *travelling.*

Ver. 20. *And I will shoot three arrows, as though I shot at a mark.*] For when he came there might be passengers going to and fro: which would deprive them of the privacy they desired. Therefore this seems to have been given as a sign that the coast was clear.

Ver. 21. *And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go find out the arrows. If I expressly say to the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt, as the Lord liveth.*] So that he might securely appear, and shew himself.

Ver. 22. *But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way: for the Lord hath sent thee away.*] He would not have him venture to discover himself; but look upon this as a sign that God would not have him appear at court.

Ver. 23. *And as touching the matter that thou and I have spoken of, behold, the Lord is between thee and me for ever.*] As a witness, and an avenger, if we keep not the covenant we have made of perpetual friendship.

Ver. 24. *So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.*] He did not immediately hide himself in the field, but when the time came that he had appointed: for he first went to Beth-lehem, (ver. 6. 28.)

Ver. 25. *And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall.*] The Israelites sat at meat (as did the Greeks and Romans in aftertimes) in a half round, or circle: which they called *sigma*, from the ancient figure of that letter, which was thus, ς. Now the middle place, in this fashion of sitting, was most honourable among this people, as our Mr. Thorndike gathers from this very place. Upon which R. Solomon saith, "Saul sat in the head of the couch next the wall." For supposing them to sit in a round, or half circle, as the manner always was, we must needs conceive that the back or middle of this half circle must be towards the wall, for all conveniences. (See his Religious Assemblies, p. 62.) It may be also here observed, that the custom of lying along, leaning on their elbows, was not yet introduced, in these ancient times; but they sat at meat as we do. (See Bochartus, Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 5. p. 598.)

And Jonathan arose.] When his father came into the room: and after Saul had taken his place, it is likely, sat on his right hand.

And Abner sat by Saul's side.] On his left hand, I suppose, being his cousin, and the general of his army.

And David's place was empty.] Which, it is probable, was next to Abner's.

Ver. 26. *Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day.*] Made no inquiry after David.

For he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.] What this *mikrah* or *accident* signifies, which we translate *something hath befallen him*, see upon Lev. xv. 16.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse.*] His calling him the *son of Jesse* argued both scorn and displeasure against him.

To meat, neither yesterday nor to-day?] By this it appears, the Jews anciently observed two days, in the beginning of every month, with festival joy. The reason was, because the new moon being proclaimed according to its appearance, and it appearing unequally, sometimes in the afternoon, sometimes in the evening, sometimes at midnight, therefore they observed two days, as Scaliger and others have observed. And they who were not clean the first day, might observe the second: for that sort of uncleanness here spoken of lasted but one day.

Ver. 28. *And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Beth-lehem.*] Which he, being next to the king, had power, I suppose, to grant: as appears, from his demanding of Jonathan an account what was become of him.

Ver. 29. *And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for my family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there.*] The eldest brother let all the rest know that their company was expected.

Now, if I have found grace in thine eyes, let me go away, I pray thee, and see my brethren: therefore he cometh not to the king's table.] He expresses in many words, the great importunity of David for leave to go and visit his relations: which he thought might make the king not take it ill that he had granted it.

Ver. 30. *And Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of a perverse rebellious woman.*] Or, as it is in the Hebrew, *thou son of perverse rebellion.* That is, a very perverse rebel.

Do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thy own confusion.] Made him his friend, to his utter undoing.

And unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?] For

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the world would think that he was none of his son; because he loved him entirely, whom Saul hated extremely.

Ver. 31. *For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom.*] He was fully satisfied that David, if he lived, would be king of Israel. Which, if he knew by Samuel's anointing him, it was madness to imagine that he should be able to overthrow the counsel of God.

Wherefore now fetch him to me; for he shall surely die.] He could not expect to be obeyed, since his son loved him so much: but his fury made him lay this command upon him.

Ver. 32. *And Jonathan answered Saul his father, Wherefore should he be slain? what hath he done?*] He declines his command, by desiring to know what his guilt was.

Ver. 33. *And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him.*] It is not said, as it is of David, xix. 10. *to smite him to the wall:* and therefore some think he intended only to wound him, not to kill him: but the word *smite*, in Scripture, commonly signifies to kill, and there is no reason to take it otherwise here: Saul's fury being so great, that he minded not what he did. One would think that he used a *javelin* or lance as a sceptre: for it was always ready at hand.

Wherefore Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.] That it was his unalterable resolution. Which is implied in that phrase, (ver. 31.) *he is the son of death*, as Constantine L'Empereur observes upon Bava-kama, p. 90.

Ver. 34. *So Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.*] Here are two reasons why he fasted: first, because he was extremely afflicted for David; and, secondly, his father had put Jonathan to shame, by his foul language, and by throwing a javelin at him: for so the words run clearly in the Hebrew; *for he was grieved for David, and because*, &c. the copulative *and* being wanting, as in many other places.

Ver. 35. *And it came to pass in the morning.*] Of the third day.

That Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.] According to their agreement, (ver. 20, 21.)

Ver. 36. *And he said to the lad, Run, find out the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.*] Which was the sign given to David of Saul's ill intentions, (ver. 22.)

Ver. 37. *And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, Is not the arrow beyond thee?*] He cried so loud, I suppose, that David might hear him what he said.

Ver. 38. *And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, stay not.*] So desirous he was to be alone with David.

And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

Ver. 39. *And the lad knew not any thing; only Jonathan and David knew the matter.*] The meaning of all this.

Ver. 40. *And Jonathan gave his artillery to the lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them into the city.*] That he might be left alone with David.

Ver. 41. *And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place towards the south.*] On the south of the stone Ezel: on the north side of which Jonathan shot his arrows, that the lad might not chance to stumble upon David.

And fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times.] After three bows, he fell on his face; out of reverence to him, as the king's son, and his excellent friend. Arrianus saith, (lib. iv.) that this prostration was introduced by Cyrus: but he is confuted by this action of David; which shews it to have been a far more ancient posture.

And they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.] Being to become an exile from his friend, from his wife, from his kindred, and the people of God; and from all sacred solemnities.

Ver. 42. *And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.*] As much as to say, doubt not that I will faithfully keep my covenant with thee; as I doubt not of thy perpetual steadfastness in it, when I am dead. And this must be our satisfaction, in this sad separation.

And he arose and departed.] That is, David left Jonathan.

And Jonathan went into the city.] I suppose their discourse continued but a short time; for fear of being discovered.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *THEN came David to Nob.*] It is hard to tell where this city was; for it is not reckoned among the cities of the priests, either in the tribe of Judah, or of Benjamin, or of any other. But D. Kimchi saith, his father took it for Jerusalem; and perhaps it was near to it: where the tabernacle being fixed, the priests resorted thither in great numbers, and settled there. In Neh. xi. 32. we find mention of a city of this name, in the tribe of Benjamin: whither Saul, perhaps, brought the tabernacle, being his own tribe.

Unto Ahimelech the priest.] Intending here to commend himself and his cause to God; and to beg his direction and protection. Ahimelech is no where called the high-priest, but always *Ahimelech the priest*, or simply *the priest:* (ver. 4—6. 9.) yet, being the son of Ahitub, (xxii. 9. 11.) who was the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, he is generally supposed to have been the brother of Ahijah, (mentioned xiv. 3.) and he being dead, to have succeeded him in the high-priesthood.

And Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David.] Seeing him alone; and having heard, perhaps, something of the king's displeasure against him.

And said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?] A man of David's quality, he knew, never went without attendants. And the truth is, David had some persons with him, as the fourth verse tells us, and appears from our Saviour's words (in the second of St. Mark), where he mentions "David and those that were with him." But he had no such persons as used to be his guard; and he left those that were with him at some distance, that Ahimelech might not see them.

Ver. 2. *And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me,*

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Let no man know any thing of the business whereon I send thee, and what I have commanded thee.] We are not from hence to take an example of speaking untruths (as Conradus Pellicanus here glosses), but the wickedness of the world is the more to be deplored, which sometimes puts a necessity upon excellent men to lie, that they may preserve their lives, which cannot be safe without it.

And I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.] Here he acknowledges he had servants with him: but he had disposed them into several places, that the king's business might be the better concealed.

Ver. 3. *Now therefore what is under thy hand?*] He desires to know what he was able to do for him, to supply his wants.

Give me five loaves of bread in my hand.] Particularly he desires to satisfy his hunger, and enough for his servants.

Or what there is present.] That is, any other victuals.

Ver. 4. *And the priest answered, There is no common bread under my hand; but there is hallowed bread, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.*] It was the ancient custom among other nations, for the priests to keep themselves even from the lawful use of women, before they performed their office: as Porphyry informs us, lib. iv. Περὶ Ἀποχῆς, sect. 7. Therefore Ahimelech requires this of David's soldiers, or companions, that being to eat of the holy bread, which none but priests might eat, they should eat it with the same purity, which was required of the priests.

Ver. 5. *And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out.*] As many days as the Lord himself required for the sanctifying of the people, when he appeared on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, (Exod. xix. 15.)

And the vessels of the young men.] That is, *their bodies:* so the word *keli* here signifies, as σκεῦος doth in 1 Tim. iv. 4.

Are holy.] That is, separated from women.

And the bread is in a manner common.] He adds, that he need not scruple to give them the hallowed bread; for it was not so holy as when it was upon the table of the Lord: but became, in a manner, or in some part, common bread; being now the food not only of the priest, but of his whole family.

Yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.] The marginal translation is more plain, *especially when there was other that day sanctified in the vessel.* He means, new bread was set upon the table of the Lord: so that no wrong was done to him. By the *vessel* is meant the dish on which the bread was placed, mentioned Exod. xxv. 29.

Ver. 6. *So the priest gave him hallowed bread; for there was no bread there but the shew-bread that was taken from before the Lord, to put hot bread in the day that it was taken away.*] In this neither Ahimelech nor David committed any sin: for invincible necessity dispensed with all these ritual laws; as the Jews themselves confess. Particularly R. Levi, who saith, in a great famine they might eat an ass's head, which was an unclean creature. And they justify this by the words of the law, (Lev. xviii. 5.) *he shall live in them,* not, He shall die in them. From whence they gather, that in danger of life such laws were not to be observed. And so Procopius Gazæus observes, that wise men among the ancient people of God, had less regard to these bodily precepts of the law: and that Abiathar, in granting leave to David and his men to eat of the pontifical bread, *plusquam vulgus sapiebat, was much wiser than the vulgar people.* He calls him Abiathar, not Ahimelech, who granted this indulgence; for so doth our blessed Saviour, Mark ii. 26. and there is a learned friend of mine, who hath a Dissertation ready for the press, to prove that Abiathar was at this time high-priest. Though it is commonly thought he was only the *sagan,* as the Jews in later times call him who was the high-priest's vicar: and upon that account was a secondary high-priest; though that name of high-priest did not belong to Abiathar in the highest sense. And besides this, there is no incongruity in saying, that was done *in the days of Abiathar the high-priest* (as our Saviour speaks), which was done in Abiathar's days, though done somewhat before he came to the high-priesthood. As things may be said to have been done in the days of Henry VIII. or any other king of England, which came to pass before he began to reign.

Ver. 7. *Now, a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord.*] It is not to be imagined that he was detained here by force and constraint: but by some vow he had upon him; or other religious performance, to which he had obliged himself.

And his name was Doeg, an Edomite.] His native country was Edom: but he was proselyted to the Jewish religion.

The chiefest of the herdsmen that belonged unto Saul.] The Hebrew word *abir* signifies a *potent man,* or prince; and is sometimes attributed to God. And therefore here signifies, that he was set over all the herdsmen, as their inspector and governor. Such there were in Syria, as Bochartus observes, out of Diodorus Siculus; who mentions one that was προεστὼς τῶν βασιλικῶν κτηνῶν, *pecoris regii præfectus.* And so the Targum, and Kimchi, and others, here translate it.

Ver. 8. *And David said unto Ahimelech, Is there not here under thy hand either spear or sword? for I have not brought my sword nor any weapon with me.*] He left them all behind, that he might the better conceal himself, and pass for a private man.

Because the king's business required haste.] But he pretended to Ahimelech, it was because he had not time to go to his house: the king pressing him immediately to be gone about his business.

Ver. 9. *And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod.*] Behind the place where the garments of the priests were laid up: of which the ephod and its appurtenances were the chief.

If thou wilt take that, take it; for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like unto that; give it me.] Which he thought he might use, though it had been laid up in God's treasury as a monument of his wonderful mercy: because he was in great necessity to provide for his own defence.

Ver. 10. *And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul.*] Out of the country of Israel.

And went to Achish the king of Gath.] A miserable condition! to be forced to flee to those for protection, who, he had reason to think, were his bitter enemies. For this was the city of Goliath whom he had slain, and whose sword he had now about him. But perhaps he thought he should

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not be known; or he knew Achish to be a very generous person; or being now in disgrace with Saul, he thought the Philistines might take him for Saul's enemy, and engage with them against him. Thus Themistocles being banished his own country, fled first to Admetus the king of the Molossians, with whom he had been at enmity, and then to the king of Persia.

Ver. 11. *And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land?*] Either they meant a chief commander in Israel, who was respected as the king: or they had heard of his being designed to be king instead of Saul, which made him persecute him.

Did they not sing of him one to another in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?] By this it appears they had good information of what was done in the land of Israel: and so might know what was reported, that Samuel had anointed him to be their king.

Ver. 12. *And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish king of Gath.*] This discourse deeply affected him, and made him think himself not safe there.

Ver. 13. *And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gates, and let the spittle fall down upon his beard.*] He counterfeited himself to be out of his wits, or to be a fool, who never had any. For he wrote upon the gates, and slavered, as fools are wont to do.

Ver. 14. *And Achish said unto his servant, Lo, the man is mad, wherefore have ye brought him unto me?*] Some of the courtiers had presented him unto the king: who seeing him a goodly person, had listed him, perhaps, as an officer in his service.

Ver. 15. *Have I need of madmen that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?*] He would not have his court troubled with fools or madmen. For it is likely he did not believe this to be David; or if he was, he was now become good for nothing: and come out of his own country because he was beside himself.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *DAVID therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam.*] Which was a strong hold (1 Chron. xi. 13.) in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 35.) unto which tribe he belonging, might hope to find some friends there.

And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.] Either to comfort him, or to secure themselves from the fury of Saul: who they thought might probably wreak his hatred to David upon them.

Ver. 2. *And every one that was in distress.*] All needy people, pinched with want, who heard that David was there.

And every one that was in debt.] Perhaps David might not know they were such persons: or if he did, intended not to protect them from their creditors, if they had been able to pay them. It was the manner in ancient times, among the Gauls, for those who were in debt or oppressed, to betake themselves to the service of some great men: by whom, as they were maintained, so they devoted themselves to live and die with them. Thus Cæsar tells us, lib. vi. de Bello Gall. cap. 13. "Plerique cum aut ære alieno aut magnitudine tributorum, aut injuria potentiorum premantur, sese in servitutem dicant nobilibus," &c. And these they called *Soldurii:* and the men that came to David seem to have been such as resolved to live and die with him.

And every one that was discontented.] In the Hebrew, *bitter of soul;* that is, lay under sore afflictions.

Gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them.] They listed themselves under him, as their commander: who was forced to take this course in his own defence, that he might not be suddenly surprised. But Grotius observes, (lib. i. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 4. sect. 6.) that David did not entertain these men into his service, till, in the judgment of Jonathan, and by many other certain arguments, his life appeared to be in imminent danger. And then he neither assaulted any city, nor sought for any occasion to fight: but avoided it, by seeking for lurking-places, sometimes in the deserts, sometimes among strange people: always taking care not to hurt his countrymen.

And there were with him about four hundred men.] Among whom, I suppose, his own kindred were the chief.

Ver. 3. *And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab.*] For the Moabites were at difference with Saul, (xiv. 47.)

And he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you.] He the rather hoped for this kindness to be shewn to his aged parents (who were not able to travel up and down, as he was likely to do), because he was descended from a Moabite by the mother's side, especially if Ruth the Moabitess were of the royal family, as the Jews imagine.

Till I know what God will do with me.] Who, he doubted not, would make good his word to him.

Ver. 4. *And he brought them before the king of Moab; and they dwelt with him all the time that David was in the hold.*] All the time of his exile: when he wandered here and there, and had no certain place of abode: being haunted by Saul from place to place; seldom suffering him to rest. So Pellicanus expounds the Hebrew word *metzudah:* which signifies also a *strong hold.*

Ver. 5. *And the prophet Gad.*] Who being bred under Samuel, and knowing he had anointed David to be king, resolved to accompany him in his banishment: which was a great comfort to him.

Said unto David, Abide not in the hold.] This doth not signify any particular strong place, where he now was: but, in general, all those places where he thought himself secure, in the neighbouring countries.

Depart, and get thee into the land of Judah.] Where he would have him publicly appear; as one that confided in God, and in his own innocence.

Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.] Where there were many secret lurking-places: unto which he might upon occasion resort.

Ver. 6. *And when Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him.*] He was not so well beloved, as to have early intelligence of David's listing men: which made him reproach those that attended him, in the following verse.

(Now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah.] Or, in a *high place,* as *Ramah* signifies. Otherwise the first words must be interpreted *near Gibeah,* or in the territories of Gibeah.

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Having his spear in his hand.] By his *spear* is to be understood his *sceptre*, according to the phrase of those times. For so Justin, (lib. xliii. cap. 3.) speaking of the first times of the Romans (which was about the reign of Saul), saith, "Per ea adhuc tempora, reges hastas pro diademate habebant, quas Græci sceptra dixere," &c. *In those days, kings hitherto had spears as signs of royal authority: which the Greeks call sceptres.* For in the beginning of things, the ancients worshipped spears for immortal gods. In memory of which religion, spears are still added to the images of the gods. And thus the kings of Argos (as Pausanias tells us in his Bœotica) called their sceptres spears.

And all his servants were standing about him).] His usual guards, and the principal officers of his court.

Ver. 7. *Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites.*] Ye men of my own tribe: of whom he seems to speak with disdain.

Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?] Bestow preferment upon them all, more or less; if not lands of inheritance. For so the words are to be translated, *give you fields*, &c. or *make you captains*, &c.

Ver. 8. *That all of you have conspired against me.*] To conceal David's designs from him, if not to assist him in them. The spirit of jealousy always possesses those who are engaged in such bloody designs as he had against David: which all good men abhorred.

And there is none of you that sheweth me my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse; and there is none of you that is sorry for me.] He suspected Jonathan had made a league with David; but did not certainly know it, much less what it was: and was very much vexed, that none were solicitous enough for him (so the word signifies, as De Dieu observes, which we translate *sorry for him*), to make a discovery of it to him.

Or sheweth me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait as at this day.] His jealousy carried him so far as to make him suspect Jonathan not only sided with David, but had encouraged him to take up arms, and to appear openly, as having many friends and partakers: for since he threw the javelin at Jonathan, it is likely he absented himself from court, or did not appear so frequently, or looked discontented when he came into his presence.

Ver. 9. *Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was over the servants of Saul.*] The rest being silent, he undertook to inform the king who were false to him: or being a forward man, and hating David, prevented all the rest of his fellow-servants.

And said, I saw the son of Jesse.] He speaks as contemptibly of him, as his master had lately been wont to do, not vouchsafing to call him by his name, (xx. 27. 30.)

Coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.] He represents him, as if he came to take advice of Ahimelech, and lay his designs accordingly.

Ver. 10. *And he inquired of the Lord for him.*] Some think Doeg in this slandered Ahimelech, because we read nothing of it; and David speaks of his false tongue: but this may as well be true as that which follows is. And Doeg's wickedness consisted in representing things wrong: concealing the truth, and saying nothing of David's pretences to Ahimelech; but insinuating as if he were in a plot with David against the king. Whereas, the good man was made to believe that David was going about the king's business, and upon that account assisted him.

And gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.] And very innocently, as he very well knew: but represented these as acts whereby he abetted David in his conspiracy: which are the lies of which David accuses him, nothing being farther from the truth.

Ver. 11. *And the king sent to call Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.*] By *his father's house* is meant all the house of Eli, whom God had threatened to cut off.

Ver. 12. *And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub.*] He shews not the least respect to him, but rather the utmost contempt: calling him in his rage *the son of Ahitub.*

And he answered, Here I am, my lord.] But he did not forget his respect to the king.

Ver. 13. *And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?*] A very rash charge, unless there had been proof that he did these things with an evil intent, which there was not.

Ver. 14. *Then Ahimelech answered and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thy house?*] The oracle was consulted only upon public occasions, not for any private business. And therefore the sense of Ahimelech's apology for himself is this: Since David was held by all to be a most loyal subject, as well as a person of great honour, and in high favour with the king, having married his daughter; what could he think but that David was sent by the king (as he said he was) upon some business of public concern; to command his forces, suppose (as he had often done), in some expedition against his enemies? And, doubting what course to take, came to advise with God, as he had done heretofore. For this was not the first time (as he saith in the next verse) that he had consulted the Divine Majesty for him, in difficult cases, concerning the good of the kingdom.

Ver. 15. *Did I then begin to inquire of God for him?*] He desired that might not be an argument against him; for he had theretofore done the same thing without any imputation of guilt.

Be it far from me.] That which he was charged withal; conspiracy against the king, (ver. 13.)

Let not the king impute any thing to his servant, or to his father's house; for thy servant knew nothing of all this, more or less.] If there was any bad design, he pleads perfect ignorance of it.

Ver. 16. *And the king said unto him, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and thy father's house.*] A mad resolution: for what had the rest of the priests done to deserve such a bloody execution?

Ver. 17. *And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him.*] In the Hebrew it is, *to the runners;* that is, to those who used to go before him, and to follow him when he went abroad.

Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand

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is also with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it me.] Such was the power their kings exercised (as Samuel told them they would), that, without a formal process against a man accused of a crime, they commanded him to be cut off at their pleasure.

But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord.] Such was their reverence to God and religion in ancient times: which kept them in their wars from doing any hurt to the priests of their enemies, as Grotius observes, lib. iii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 11. sect. 10. And therefore Theodoret here justly praises the guards of Saul, that they chose rather to expose themselves to the enraged fury of Saul, than execute it upon the priests of God.

Ver. 18. *And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests.*] He who was the informer, he made also his executioner.

And Doeg the Edomite turned, and fell upon the priests, and slew that day eighty-five persons.] Kings never want some to execute their commands, though never so bloody. Saul was little better than a madman; and yet had those at his beck who would do as he bade them, because he was their king. It was excellently, therefore, said by Justin Martyr, Εὐχώμεθα τοὺς βασιλεῖς καὶ ἄρχοντας, μετὰ τῆς βασιλικῆς δυνάμεως, καὶ σώφρονα τὸν λογισμὸν ἔχοντας εὑρεθῆναι, *Let us pray that kings and rulers, together with a royal power, may be found having a sober mind.*

That did wear a linen ephod.] *i. e.* Ministered unto God: but we are not to understand by the *ephod* such a garment as the high-priest wore, for this is distinguished from that by the matter of it, which was merely *linen:* and nothing else but a linen robe, which was an honourable kind of garment, which others who were not priests were permitted to wear; as I observed before upon chap. ii. ver. 18. and see Braunius, lib. ii. de Vestitu Hebr. Sacerd. cap. 6.

Ver. 19. *And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both man and woman, and suckling, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.*] His fury transported him to deal worse with them than he did with the Amalekites; some of which he spared, though God commanded him to destroy them all. But he did this to terrify all the Israelites from giving the least assistance to David: and make them forward to come and tell him, if they knew where he was. In all this was fulfilled the word of the Lord against the house of Eli by the prophet, in the second chapter of this book; and by Samuel, when he was a child, in the third chapter. Abarbinel thinks, that, at this time, the Gibeonites were slain; upon which account there was a sore famine in the days of David. For Josephus saith, (lib. vi. cap. 14.) that Doeg slew in all three hundred eighty-five persons; taking some men, as wicked as himself, into his assistance.

Ver. 20. *And one of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.*] For he could be safe no where else.

Ver. 21. *And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests.*] Which confirmed David in his belief of the hatred he bare him, and his resolution to destroy him.

Ver. 22. *And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul.*] For he knew he was none of his friend, and a man that loved mischief.

Ver. 23. *Abide thou with me; fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life.*] He comforts him with the assurance, that he would take as much care of him, as of himself.

But with me thou shalt be in safeguard.] For he was sure God would make good his promise of protecting him, till he was made king of Israel.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *THEN they told David, saying, The Philistines fight against Keilah.*] Or, *they had told David,* &c. For this was done before Abiathar came to him to tell him of the slaughter of the priests, ver. 6. where it is said, he *fled to David to Keilah.* Which was a city in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 44.) Which the Philistines now besieged; being encouraged thereunto, perhaps, by the news they heard that David was forced to flee his country.

And they rob the thrashing-floors.] Which was commonly without their cities; for the convenience of wind, to separate the chaff from the corn. (See Ruth iii. 2. 15.)

Ver. 2. *And David inquired of the Lord.*] It is probable by the prophet Gad, who we read before, xxii. 5. was now with him. For there is no mention yet of Abiathar's having the *ephod;* though some think it is mentioned, ver. 6. to shew how David inquired of God.

Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.] A remarkable instance of David's love to his country: unto which he did not become an enemy, when he was banished from it.

Ver. 3. *And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah.*] In that part of the country where they then were.

How much more, then, if we come to Keilah, against the armies of the Philistines?] His men argued against this expedition, because they did not think themselves safe in their own country, where they hoped they had some friends: and therefore thought they should be in greater danger, if they made the Philistines their enemies.

Ver. 4. *Then David inquired of the Lord yet again.*] Not for his own satisfaction, but for theirs: as we read in the history of Gideon that he did.

And the Lord answered him and said, Arise.] Make no delay.

Go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thy hand.] Here he expressly assures him of victory.

Ver. 5. *So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.*] He seems to have pursued the Philistines to their own country: from whence he brought their cattle. Or else we must suppose these cattle were the booty they had among the Israelites; which is not so probable, because then David would have restored them to their owners.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, that when Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.*] Or rather, *with the ephod.* For he being left, I suppose, to keep the sanctuary, while his father and the rest of the priests went to wait upon Saul, as soon as he heard of their slaughter, took this principal

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vestment of the high-priest, viz. *the ephod*, unto which the *urim* and *thummim*, with the breast-plate, were annexed, and carried it unto David. Unto whom he hoped to be the more acceptable, when he appeared capable to serve him in that high office. And accordingly he calls upon him, (ver. 9.) to *bring hither the ephod;* as he did afterward, (xxx. 7.) But the *ephod* could do no good, without the *urim* and *thummim*, which were inseparable from it. And that he speaks of the high-priest's *ephod* is manifest, because he doth not call it a *linen ephod*, such as the priests wore; but *the ephod*. The only difficulty is, that Saul after this seems to have consulted God by *urim*, (xxviii. 6.) But perhaps he made a new one, in the room of that which Abiathar carried away: but God would not own it, nor any other way give him advice. Aben Ezra, indeed, here notes, that there wants that which they call the *he hajediah*, that is, the demonstrative particle *he*, to shew that he means the high-priest's *ephod*, and therefore it was only a *linen ephod*. Which led him into this absurd opinion, that in some cases God answered without *urim* and *thummim;* being consulted merely by an *ephod*.

Ver. 7. *And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah.*] So remarkable an action could not but come presently to Saul's ears; who was not at all mollified by it, but rather more resolutely bent upon David's destruction.

And Saul said, God hath delivered him into my hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.] The men of Keilah could not but open their gates to their deliverer; but Saul fancied that he sought for safety in a place, that would only secure him from running away from him.

Ver. 8. *And Saul called all the people together to war.*] Raised a great army.

To go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.] He pretended, it is likely, he would go, and be avenged of the Philistines: but his inward intention was to go against David.

Ver. 9. *And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him.*] This intimates that Saul did not openly declare, when he raised his army, he would besiege Keilah; but made a show of some other design.

And he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.] Which no doubt he put on: otherwise he could not have inquired of the Lord by it.

Ver. 10. *Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.*] Some think that David put on the ephod, and then asked the Lord's advice: but that is a great mistake; for the high-priest was the person appointed by God, to ask counsel of him for the supreme governor, (Numb. xxvii. 21.) Therefore David spake these words by the mouth of Abiathar.

Ver. 11. *Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hands? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the Lord said, He will come down.*] He seems to have been in a great fright, and some confusion of spirit, when he spake these words: which made him not only to ask two things together (which the Jews say was not usual), but also out of due order. For the first question should have been, *Will Saul come down?* and then the other should have followed, *Will they deliver me into his hand?* God therefore put him into the right method, by answering to the last question first: as the Jewish doctors observe in the Gemara of the Codex Joma.

Ver. 12. *Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?*] Hence the Talmudists gather, that he who asked out of order was bound to ask again.

And the Lord said, They will deliver thee.] He saw the base disposition of their hearts, whatsoever gratitude they pretended to David for their deliverance. For that is a rare virtue; not to be found in those in whom self-love prevails. It is not easy to be resolved, how they inquired of God, the tabernacle not being there. It is likely David had some tent, wheresoever he was, wherein he was wont to pray to God, and meditate his praises; and there God was pleased to answer him.

Ver. 13. *Then David and his men, which were about six hundred.*] His forces were increased two hundred, since the famous victory over the Philistines at Keilah.

Arose, and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go.] Sometimes to one place, sometimes to another: according as they found any hope of safety. So Hackspan interprets this phrase in his Disputationes, p. 403.

And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah.] Now he began to have better intelligence of David's motions, since the slaughter at Nob: which made the people afraid to fall under his displeasure.

And he forbore to go forth.] Not knowing as yet where to find him.

Ver. 14. *And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph.*] Where it was not easy to come at him.

And Saul sought him every day; but God delivered him not into his hand.] As he foolishly fancied he would, (ver. 7.) though God very manifestly had forsaken him, and was with David.

Ver. 15. *And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life.*] That he was restless in his endeavours to destroy him.

And David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.] Where he could better defend himself than in an open country.

Ver. 16. *And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose, and went to David into the wood.*] Being a very private place, they had, it is likely, by some intelligence which passed between them, appointed a meeting there.

And strengthened his hand in God.] In his promise to him. What Hecuba saith in Euripides, is most true in this friend of David's, and in Saul his father:

Ὁ μὲν πονηρὸς οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν κακός·
Ὁ δ' ἐσθλὸς, ἐσθλός· οὐδὲ συμφορᾶς ὕπο
Φύσιν διέφθειρ' ἀλλὰ χρηστός ἐστ' ἀεί.

A bad man is nothing else but bad. But a good man is still good: nor because of any calamity doth he lose his nature; but is always good.

Ver. 17. *And he said, Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee: and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I will be next unto thee.*] He doth not mean, that he would succeed him in his throne; but be the principal person in the kingdom, next to David. Which, I suppose, had been agreed between them.

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And that also Saul my father knoweth.] For he remembered what Samuel told him, xv. 28. and by his wonderful successes concluded he was the person of whom Samuel spake.

Ver. 18. *And they two made a covenant before the Lord.*] Solemnly renewed the covenant, which they had formerly made. This is the third time that we read of their making a covenant. (See xviii. 3. xx. 16.) In none of which there is any mention of a sacrifice, no more than there is in the covenant between David and the elders of the people, (2 Sam. v. 3.) and between Solomon and Hiram; (1 Kings v. 12.) which is an argument that eating together of a sacrifice, or going between the parts of a sacrifice, was not essential to the making a covenant: though it must be acknowledged, the rite was so ancient of dividing the parts of the sacrifice, that hence is the phrase which is so frequent in Scripture of *cutting a covenant, i. e.* entering into it.

And David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.] For he did not accompany his father, in his search after David.

Ver. 19. *Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, and said, Doth not David hide himself with us in the strong hold in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?*] These people were of the tribe of Judah; among whom David thought himself the safer, because he was of the same tribe. But they were afraid to be served as those at Nob: which made them come and discover the place where he was, very particularly, and precisely.

Ver. 20. *Now therefore, O king, come down, according to all the desire of thy soul to come down.*] Which they knew was very great.

And our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand.] For being neighbours to it, they knew all the avenues of the wood where he was: and how to come at him.

Ver. 21. *And Saul said, Blessed are ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me.*] This signifies, that the generality of people did not favour him in his design: which made him so joyfully receive the Ziphites' intelligence.

Ver. 22. *Go, I pray you, and prepare ye.*] Dispose all things so, that I may take him.

And know and see his place where his haunt is.] Inform themselves perfectly, in what hill, or wood, or cave, he hid himself.

And who hath seen him.] He would have them certainly informed, that he might not go after him in vain.

For I am told he dealeth very subtilely.] So that it was not easy to catch him.

Ver. 23. *See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking-places where he hideth himself, and come to me again with the certainty, and I will go with you.*] He seems to be very diffident, having been so oft disappointed: and by this means gave David time to get intelligence, and remove to another place.

And it shall come to pass, that if he be in the land, I will search him out through all the thousands of Judah.] Their tribes were divided into thousands; (see Judg. vi. 15.) among some of whom he supposed he would lurk: and he would not cease searching for him till he found him.

Ver. 24. *And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul.*] As he had directed them, ver. 22.

But David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.] Having heard what the Ziphites had undertaken, he disappointed their design, by going into another place, with which, it is likely, they were not so well acquainted. For Maon was a distinct wilderness from Ziph: though both in the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 25. *Saul also and his men went to seek him.*] Hearing, I suppose, by the Ziphites, whither he was gone.

And they told David.] He also had intelligence brought him, that Saul was coming against him.

Wherefore he came down into a rock.] Some craggy place.

And abode in the wilderness of Maon.] Not thinking himself safe there, he went into another part of the same wilderness.

And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.] So that he came to the very place where he was.

Ver. 26. *And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.*] Saul's forces being far more numerous, he divided them into several parties; who marching several ways, were about to encompass the whole mountain: so that it should be impossible for David to escape them. Who therefore made haste to get away before he was quite surrounded.

Ver. 27. *But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.*] A marvellous providence of God, who stirred them up at this very time to make an irruption into the land of Israel, for the preservation of David when he was in extreme danger.

Ver. 28. *Wherefore Saul returned from following after David, and went against the Philistines.*] It was very probable David would in a little time have fallen into his hands, had not the messenger, who, I suppose, was sent by his council, desired him with all speed to come and oppose the Philistines, who were the most dangerous enemies.

Therefore they called the name of that place Sela-hammah-lekoth.] That is, *the rock of divisions.* Either because Saul was distracted here between two counsels, whether to pursue David, or go immediately against the Philistines; or, because God divided Saul from David, when he was coming up close unto him.

Ver. 29. *And David went up from thence, and dwelt in the strong holds at En-gedi.*] A place in the tribe of Judah, not far from the Dead Sea: which Solomon in his Song celebrates for the famous vineyards which were there: and St. Jerome and Eusebius say there was excellent balm at En-gedi: from which the wilderness near it took its name, where David found secure lurking-places.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines.*] Who either retreated upon Saul's march towards them, or he drove them out of the land.

That it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi.] The very place was not told him

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where David was, but only in general that he was in that wilderness.

Ver. 2. *Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel.*] Men of valour, and whom he thought he might trust.

And went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.] In craggy and bushy places, where none but wild goats lived; but he imagined David might there skulk: and, therefore, resolved to be at the pains of searching for him there.

Ver. 3. *And he came to the sheep-cotes by the way, where there was a cave.*] In which the sheep rested in the heat of the day. Unto which place David was directed by God's guidance: for Saul would not suspect that he would abide in the highway unto those rocks, where he was going to look for him.

And Saul went in to cover his feet.] See upon Judg. iii. 24.

And David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.] Where they could see him by the light at the entrance of it: but he could not see them, because it was dark in the remote parts of it. Some of these caves were exceeding large: Strabo in his sixteenth book mentions one that would contain four thousand men.

Ver. 4. *And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thy hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.*] We do not read any where that God made a promise to deliver Saul into David's hand: but so they interpreted what Samuel had said, that God would take the kingdom from Saul and give it to David. And they, having a desire to return to their own habitations, and likewise to have preferment under David, desired him to make use of the opportunity which now presented itself of destroying his enemy, and advancing himself.

Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privately.] Which he might easily do, if he were asleep: as that phrase may be interpreted, *he went in to cover his feet.* This robe was long, coming down to the feet: as the Hebrew word *meil* signifies.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass, that afterward David's heart smote him.*] He was inwardly troubled.

Because he had cut off Saul's skirt.] For it looked like an indignity unto a prince to have his royal robe disfigured: "Tantam intelligebat personæ illius sanctitudinem" (as Grotius speaks), *such he understood was the sacredness of his person.* And that very deservedly; for the supreme powers being obnoxious to many men's hatred, ought to be secured in the discharge of their office. Of which the Romans took care in the very tribunes of the people, that they should be ἄσυλοι, *inviolable,* (lib. i. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 4. sect. 7.)

Ver. 6. *And he said unto his men.*] When he returned unto them, and they grew angry, he had only cut off the skirt of his robe, and not killed him.

The Lord forbid that I should do this thing.] Which they desired.

Unto my master.] For I must own him, as long as he is alive, to be my lord and master; unto whom I am bound to be faithful.

The Lord's anointed.] Whom God hath appointed to be king as long as he lives.

To stretch forth my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.] Set up by God, who alone could throw him down. For he was as much constituted king by God while he lived, as David was after his death. And his *anointing* made his person sacred: for the very heathens looked upon their kings as holding the place of God. So Artabanus the Persian (as Plutarch relates in the life of Themistocles), *This is the very best of our many excellent laws,* Τὸ τιμᾶν βασιλέα καὶ προσκυνεῖν, ὡς εἰκόνα Θεοῦ τὰ πάντα σώζοντος, *that we should honour and adore our king, as the image of God, who preserves all things.*

Ver. 7. *So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul.*] Who still had a desire to kill him, though David would not: which he hindered by his wise and pious persuasions.

But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went his way.] To his camp: which he had left to take some repose in the cave, having a guard to attend him, who stood without while he covered his feet within.

Ver. 8. *David also arose afterward.*] When Saul was gone.

And went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king.] A bold attempt, to adventure to come into the presence of such an enraged enemy. But his innocence and confidence in God emboldened him, especially having so strong an evidence to give him of his integrity.

And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.] See xx. 41.

Ver. 9. *And David said unto Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt.*] He wisely endeavours, at the entrance of his speech, to mollify Saul, by transferring all the blame of his persecution, from him, unto the sycophants and false accusers that were about him.

Ver. 10. *Behold, this day thy eyes have seen that the Lord had delivered thee into my hand in the cave.*] Out of which he followed Saul.

And some bade me kill thee, but my eye spared thee.] A phrase for taking pity and compassion upon those whom we have in our power to hurt.

And I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.] He acknowledgeth him both to be his king, and appointed by God so to be.

Ver. 11. *Moreover, my father.*] So he was by the marriage of his daughter; and as he was supreme governor, the father of his country. Or if he had not been so, yet this word was proper to be used, that he might soften and sweeten him into more tender usage to him.

See; yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand.] He offers him a demonstration of the truth of what he declared: and prays him to observe it.

For in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see.] Let it convince thee.

That there is neither evil nor transgression in my hand.] That he had no bad design against him, nor ever attempted to do him any harm. For if he had, it had been as easy to cut his throat, as to cut off the skirt of his robe.

And I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.] This was a great aggravation of Saul's guilt (which makes David repeat it), that he sought the life of one who had no way offended him, and when it was in his power would not hurt him.

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Ver. 12. *The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee.*] If he still persisted to persecute him. But he doth not, by these words, *avenge me of thee*, pray God to punish him for the injuries he had done him; but only to vindicate and deliver him from his violent and unjust persecution. So the Hebrew word *nakam* often signifies.

But my hand shall not be upon thee.] He persisted in his resolution not to avenge himself; but leave it to God to do him right.

Ver. 13. *As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; but my hand shall not be upon thee.*] Men may be known by their actions. And this is as if David had said, Were I so bad as I am represented, I should now have shewn it: but I will never have my hand in such crimes. Or thus, It is for wicked men to do this: but I am none of them.

Ver. 14. *After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue?*] He turns every stone, as we speak, to appease Saul's rage; and tells him in conclusion, that it was below him, and a disparagement to him to raise armies against such a mean person as he was.

After a dead dog, after a flea?] He represents himself as contemptible as it was possible, that he might convince Saul it was not for his honour to take so much pains to kill him if he could: for what an inglorious thing was it for a king, with so many armed men, to triumph over a dead dog? As if a lion should hunt after a flea. "Which (as Bochartus glosses) if it be sought, is not easily found; and if it be found, is not easily caught; and if it be caught, is a poor prey, especially for a prince."

Ver. 15. *The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thy hand.*] He thought he could not repeat this too often, that as hitherto, so he resolved hereafter to leave it to God to judge which of them was in the right, and not avenge himself. It may seem strange that Saul, who came with such an enraged mind to seek for David, should hear him make so long a speech to him with patience, and not furiously fall upon him as soon as he saw him. But we may well think, that at the first he was surprised to see him follow after him out of the cave; and more astonished to find, after a few words, that it was in David's power to kill him, if he had pleased: which he knew he had, by a long persecution of him, provoked him to do.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David?*] Though he stood at such a distance, that it is likely he could not know him by his face, yet he very well knew his voice.

And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.] His heart being mollified at present, by this unparalleled kindness of David, in sparing his life, when he could have taken it away.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.*] Most men have their good moods. And Saul now could scarce avoid being touched with a deep sense, how very unjust and unkind he had been to one who truly loved him.

Ver. 18. *And thou hast shewed this day, how that thou hast dealt with me: forasmuch as, when the Lord had delivered me into thy hand, thou killedst me not.*] The demonstration of his kindness was so clear, that he could not but acknowledge it, and be affected with it.

Ver. 19. *For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?*] *i. e.* He will certainly destroy him to save himself. The kindness of David therefore was unusual, and without example.

Wherefore the Lord reward thee good, for that thou hast done unto me this day.] Herein David had imitated God; who doth good to the evil: from whom Saul prays David might receive his reward for the good done to him.

Ver. 20. *And now I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand.*] These wonderful providences of God over David, and David's no less wonderful virtue, at last convinced Saul that God designed him to be the king of his people, and that none could hinder his establishment.

Ver. 21. *Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.*] As he had endeavoured to destroy David; and as kings frequently destroyed the family of those into whose thrones they were advanced.

Ver. 22. *And David sware unto Saul.*] Who should rather have sworn unto David, he would suffer him to live quietly; yea, have invited him to return home, and assured him of his protection. But David did not require this: resolving to trust to God, and not to him. Some question how David kept this oath, when he hanged up seven of Saul's sons, (2 Sam. xxi.) But they should consider, that he did not this of himself, but at the desire of the Gibeonites, unto whom God required satisfaction should be given for Saul's bloody endeavours to destroy them.

And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.] *viz.* Of En-gedi. For he durst not stay in such an open place as he now was in, knowing Saul's inconstancy, and the hatred he had to him, and the fury he was in when the evil spirit came upon him. It is dangerous to trust a reconciled enemy: and the old saying is very wise, μέμνησο ἀπιστεῖν, *remember not to be too credulous.* And so the son of Sirach, (Ecclus. xii. 10, 11.) "Never trust thine enemy: though he humble himself, yet take good heed, and beware of him."

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. *AND Samuel died.*] According to Josephus (lib. vii. latter end) he governed Israel after the death of Eli twelve years, and lived eighteen in the reign of Saul, and then died. But according to Sir J. Marsham, he judged Israel sixteen years before Saul's inauguration; and after he was made king lived eighteen.

And all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him.] Such was his virtue, and such was the love the people bare to him, that the whole nation bewailed his loss, and that many days, as Josephus saith, Καὶ ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας ἔκλαυσεν.

And buried him in his house at Ramah.] The place where he was born, and had long lived: where, it is likely, there was a place belonging to his house in which his family was interred.

And David arose, and went into the wilderness of Paran.]

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Which was in the southern parts of Judea, near to Arabia: into which he might presently flee, if there were occasion. The Mahometan writers (as Hottinger observes) make Paran a part of Arabia Deserta: so that now it was that David dwelt *in the tents of Kedar:* which was the same with Paran, as our learned Fuller observes in his Miscellanies.

Ver. 2. *And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel.*] There were two Carmels: one in the north near the sea, in the confines of Asher and Zebulun, to which Elijah was wont to resort; and another in the south near Hebron, in the tribe of Judah, which is here meant. See Josh. xv. 55. both concerning Maon and Carmel.

And the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats.] A very wealthy man.

And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.] They pulled off the wool at Rome, and in the neighbouring countries (as Bochartus observes), but not in Greece, nor Judea; where they sheared it, as we do now.

Ver. 3. *And the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife was Abigail; and she was a woman of great understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish, and evil in his doings.*] Uncharitable, and perhaps oppressive in his dealings.

And he was of the house of Caleb.] Descended from a worthy ancestor, but very unlike him. In the Hebrew the word is *Calebi, a Calebite,* of the family of Caleb. But the word *Caleb* signifying a *dog,* some of the ancient interpreters understand the word here, as if the holy writer insinuated he was of *dog-like* dispositions and manners. Whence the LXX. translate it, ὁ ἄνθρωπος κυνικὸς, *a dogged man,* or a cynic. And so the Syriac and Arabic.

Ver. 4. *And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.*] For the wilderness of Paran was not far from Nabal's house.

Ver. 5. *And David sent out ten young men.*] To shew his great respect to him.

And David said unto the young men, Get ye up to Carmel.] For it was a mountain, as the other Carmel was.

And go to Nabal, and greet him in my name.] Present his service to him, as we now speak; and wish him continued happiness, as it is in the following words.

Ver. 6. *And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity.*] In the Hebrew the words are only, *to him that liveth:* unto which we add *in prosperity;* because *life* in Scripture signifies happiness, as *death* signifies misery.

Peace be both to thee, and peace be unto thy house, and peace to all that thou hast.] A most affectionate and comprehensive salutation; wherein he wishes well to him (both his soul and body), and to his whole family, and to all that he possessed, either at home or abroad: and some think in the first words he wishes all this might be perpetuated as long as he lived. There could not well be a higher compliment, as we now speak; for *peace* comprehends all manner of blessings, in the holy language.

Ver. 7. *And now I have heard that thou hast shearers.*] Whom he entertained that day.

Now, thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there aught missing to them all the while they were in Carmel.] He represents the good demeanour of those who belonged to him, while they were in his neighbourhood. And suggests, that he would not have had so many sheep to shear, if his men had been like others in their condition. But though they were soldiers, and in great necessity, they never took any thing from him.

Ver. 8. *Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee.*] He desires him to be informed of the truth of this from his own servants.

Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes (for we come in a good day); give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh unto thy hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.] Most humble words, and full of respect: mixed with strong arguments; from their harmless and friendly living in his neighbourhood; and from the present festival which he kept, when men's hearts use to be open and bountiful: and they did not desire delicates, but any thing that was at hand, which he could spare.

Ver. 9. *And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and ceased.*] Added nothing of their own, but waited for his answer in silence, as Maimonides interprets it, in his More Nevoch. par. i. cap. 116.

Ver. 10. *Nabal answered David's servants and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse?*] A most rude and brutish answer to such a civil message and humble request.

There be many servants now-a-days that break every man from his master.] He reproaches them all as a company of fugitives and vagabonds; and taxes David secretly, with infidelity to his master Saul.

Ver. 11. *Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?*] A most foolish speech; when he had just before called David the son of Jesse: which shews he knew well enough who he was.

Ver. 12. *And David's young men turned their way, and went again, and told him all these sayings.*] They did not stand arguing with him, or entreating him: but slighted him, as much as he did them.

Ver. 13. *And David said unto his men, Gird you on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword.*] Being resolved, in his passion, to be revenged on Nabal.

And there went up after David about four hundred men, and two hundred abode by the stuff.] For he had with him six hundred men in all; as we read before, xxiii. 13.

Ver. 14. *But one of the young men.*] Belonging unto Nabal.

Told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.] Some of his servants were wiser and better than he himself, which makes good that saying of Seneca (in his third book de Beneficiis), "Nulli præclusa est virtus, omnibus patet," &c. *Virtue is shut up from none; it lies open to all.* It admits all, it invites all; free men and servants, kings and exiles. It makes not choice of such a house, or of such an estate: but is content with a man himself.—For who can choose but admire the wisdom and fidelity of this shepherd? who admonished his mistress of the danger her family was in; as he rationally concluded from the rude abuse that had been put upon David: whose merits he honestly set before her.

Ver. 15. *But the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, neither missed any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields.*] They confirm

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every word that David's messengers had told their master, (ver. 7.)

Ver. 16. *They were a wall unto us, both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping sheep.*] They add more than David's men had said of themselves, that they not only did them no hurt, but were a guard and defence to them against robbers, and against wild beasts.

Ver. 17. *Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household.*] This they understood, either from the young men whom David sent, who let fall some words signifying how highly he would resent the indignity done to him; or they concluded it from what they had observed of the nature of David; who was very kind, but would not put up rude affronts.

For he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.] So wilful and obstinate, that they durst not speak to him of this matter: fearing he would be more insolent to them than he had been to David.

Ver. 18. *Then Abigail made haste.*] For she was so prudent a woman as not to neglect the good advice of a servant.

And took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them upon asses.] This shews he was a great man, who had such plenty of provisions in his house. For it is not to be imagined, that she would rob the shearers of a festival day to gratify David.

Ver. 19. *And said unto her servants, Go before me: behold, I come after you.*] They carried the present; that David beholding it, might be a little mitigated before she came to him.

But she told not her husband Nabal.] Who, it is likely, would have persisted in his folly: or been so long before he would have been persuaded to be wiser, that it would have been too late to prevent the danger.

Ver. 20. *And it was so, as she rode upon the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill.*] By a way full of bushes, so that David saw not her, nor she him, till they met together.

And, behold, David and his men came down against her.] From another hill, I suppose.

And she met them.] In the bottom, between the two hills.

Ver. 21. *(Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missing of all that pertained to him; and he hath requited me evil for good.*] This he said to himself: or to his men, as soon as the messengers came back; or as they were upon the road to Nabal's house.

Ver. 22. *So and more also do God unto the enemies of David.*] He means to himself: but being unwilling to pronounce his own name, or any other whom he respected, together with a curse, he transfers it to an enemy: by a figure called *euphemismus*. Or, as some take it, the meaning is, *let my enemy destroy me, if I let Nabal and his family escape.* But the former is the plainest interpretation; it being common in the Jewish language (as Joh. Cocceius observes), when they speak of any evil to themselves, to translate it to another person. Of which he gives instances out of Maccoth, and Bava Bathra. (See him upon the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 4. sect. 18. annot. 1.)

If I leave to him before the morning light.] He intended to fall upon them in the night, when they were in a dead sleep, after great jollity.

Any that pisseth against the wall.)] That is (as the generality of interpreters think), *so much as a dog;* this being, they take it, like that saying of Aurelian, mentioned by Vopiscus, who, going to a city, and finding the gates shut against him, said in his wrath, "Canem in hoc oppido non relinquam;" *I will not leave a dog in this town.* But Bochartus excepts to this interpretation, that all dogs do not piss against the wall, but only the males; and that not till they be six or eight months old, as Aristotle and others observe. And therefore (to omit his other reasons) he takes this phrase to be a periphrasis of a man, as the Hebrews expound it, particularly Ralbag. So that it is as much as to say, *I will not leave a man alive.*

Ver. 23. *And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground.*] Both out of reverence to him as a great man, and as an humble supplicant, for pardon of a great offence.

Ver. 24. *And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be.*] She applies herself to him, in a speech full of art and prudence; and first begs, like a kind wife, that she might suffer, not her husband, who was not so wise as he should be.

And let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thy handmaid.] She desires him patiently to hear her reasons.

Ver. 25. *Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.*] She represents him as a man that offended out of folly rather than malice; which might a little excuse his rudeness. There are many such allusions in Scripture, as there is here of Nebala and Nabal. (See Gen. v. 25. xlix. 8. 16. 19. Zeph. ii. 4.)

But I, thine handmaid, saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.] If any were to be punished, she had desired it might be herself; yet she had this to say in her own behalf, that she knew nothing of the message sent by David.

Ver. 26. *Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand.*] This is wonderfully artificial, to presume so much upon his goodness and clemency, as already to conclude, she had diverted him from his purpose: or rather, that God had interposed, by his good providence, to hinder him from shedding blood.

Now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.] That is, may thou have no worse enemy than he. Or, may thy enemies have no more power to hurt thee, than Nabal hath. This is another argument to persuade him to mercy; that Nabal was so inconsiderable, that, as he would do him no good, so he could do him no evil.

Ver. 27. *And now this blessing.*] That is, this present or gift. The same phrase in xxx. 26. 2 Kings v. 15.

Which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given to the young men that follow my lord.] To appease their anger: or, as unworthy of David's acceptance.

Ver. 28. *I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine hand-*

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maid.] She still speaks as if she had been the offender; because she desired none might suffer but herself.

For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house.] She prays him to be good to her, as God would certainly be to him.

Because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.] She puts him in mind of all his heroical acts against the Philistines, and other enemies; and that hitherto he had been blameless, and done no hurt to the Israelites: and therefore hoped he would do none to her, and her family.

Ver. 29. *Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul.*] Saul she means restlessly endeavoured to take away his life.

But the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God.] Be preserved. For those things which we would not have lost, nor scattered about, we are wont to bind up in bundles.

And the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.] As we bind up things to preserve them from being thrown about, and lost; so we put things into a sling, that they may be cast out of sight, or a great way from us.

Ver. 30. *And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel.*] Nothing could be more obliging than this, at every word to call him her lord, and to acknowledge his title to the kingdom; and her belief that he would certainly enjoy it.

Ver. 31. *That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart to my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself.*] She reserves the most Divine argument to the last; that he would have a clear and quiet conscience, and not be disturbed with a remembrance that he had shed the blood of the innocent, or otherwise avenged himself: which belonged unto God.

And when the Lord hath dealt well with my lord, remember thine handmaid.] Thou wilt thank me for my advice.

Ver. 32. *And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me.*] He was so moved with this pathetical speech, that, in the first place, he acknowledges the good providence of God, which directed her to come so seasonably to prevent the effects of his anger. Whereby he was absolved from his oath, which he had sworn, to cut off Nabal's family. And indeed it was null in itself; for no man can oblige himself to do an evil thing; as this would have been: there being a double guilt in it, as Philo observes, if he had shed their blood. To which may be applied the words of Seneca, that in such cases, "scelus est fides," *to keep one's word, is a wicked thing.* See Grotius de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 13. sect. 6. where he observes, that Cicero mentions the like case with this in the vow of Agamemnon. And Procopius Gazæus here well resolves, that this oath of David was the effect of anger; but his sparing Nabal the effect of reason and prudent counsel.

Ver. 33. *And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with my own hand.*] Next he commends her, and her wise counsel; for which he beseeches God to bless her: for she had preserved him from a very outrageous piece of revenge; which might have afflicted him all his days.

Ver. 34. *For in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall.*] It may seem strange, that his anger should not cool in so much time as passed between the return of his messengers and Abigail's meeting him: but the affront was great, and his soldiers it is likely inflamed his rage, and he resolved to make Nabal an example to others, not to use him so rudely.

Ver. 35. *So David received of her hand that which she brought, and said unto her, Go in peace unto thy house: for I hearkened unto thy voice, and accepted thy person.*] Both she herself, and what she said, and what she brought, were most welcome to him. So happy a thing it is (as Euripides speaks in his Heraclidæ, ver. 359.) to fall into the hand of a wise, and not a foolish enemy. For the latter, if he get the better, exercises nothing but cruelty: but with the former there is room for mercy, justice, moderation, and pardon. Such an enemy Abigail met withal; unto whom Nabal's offence was not more provoking to the destruction of his family, than the admiration of Abigail's virtue to its preservation.

Ver. 36. *And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house like the feast of a king: and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken.*] Had eaten and drank too liberally, at a very great feast, which he made for his shearers.

Wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, till the morning light.] Said not a word of what had passed, because he was not capable to understand the mercy of God to him.

Ver. 37. *But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal.*] When he had slept himself sober.

And his wife told him of these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.] He fainted away, and was as cold as a stone; out of the dread of the danger which he imagined still hung over him. For it is a frigid interpretation of Rasi and Kimchi, that he was troubled to hear of the great present that his wife had made to David.

Ver. 38. *And it came to pass, that about ten days after, the Lord smote Nabal, that he died.*] It seems he lay so long dispirited, in a stupid senseless condition; and then God put an end to his life, either by some disease, or by a sudden stroke.

Ver. 39. *And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head.*] He doth not rejoice so much in his death (who was a worthless wretch) as in the justice of God: who shewed him, that, if men would have patience, they should see right done them; so that they need not go about to avenge themselves.

And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.] Being a woman of admirable prudence, as well as beauty, (ver. 3.) and one that expressed a high esteem of him, he sent some to treat with her about marriage with him.

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Ver. 40. *And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee unto him to wife.*] This was their business: which, no doubt, they delivered in many more words, which signified the great esteem and affection which David had for her; whom he knew to be a woman of such great wisdom, that she had respect not merely to his present, but to his future condition. Otherwise he would not have adventured, being now very poor, to court one that had such riches.

Ver. 41. *And she arose, and bowed herself with her face to the earth.*] In reverence to the very name of David: whom she highly honoured, as a man of an heroic spirit; and who she was fully persuaded should be king of Israel, (ver. 30.)

And she said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.] She sent him an answer in these words; which shew her humility to be as great as her other virtues: for to wash one's feet was the lowest sort of service.

Ver. 42. *And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her.*] That she might come attended suitable to her quality and his. (See Grotius, Gen. xxx. 3.)

And she went after the messengers of David.] Though she did not long deliberate about the matter, but soon consented, yet it is not likely she followed them immediately: but stayed some decent time before she went to David.

And became his wife.] She had a strong faith in God to marry a man who had nothing to live upon, but was forced to wander from place to place, and beg the assistance of his friends. But she verily believed he would at last come to the throne, as she had before expressed: and could make some provision for him out of her own estate.

Ver. 43. *David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they were also both of them his wives.*] At the same time: according to the corrupt custom of those days, wherein they had perverted the law of nature, which is admirably expressed by Euripides in his Andromache, (ver. 177, &c.)

——— οὐδὲ γὰρ καλὸν,
Δυοῖν γυναικοῖν ἄνδρ' ἓν' ἡνίας ἔχειν, &c.

It is not good for one husband to govern two wives: but he should be content with one, who would live happily.

And again, (ver. 909.)

Κακὸν δ' ἔλεξας, ἓν' ἄνδρα δίσσ' ἔχειν λέχη.

Thou hast said, it is an evil thing for one man to have two wives. For where there are more than one they seldom agree, but breed great trouble to their husband. It is commonly thought, that Ahinoam was his wife before he married Abigail. (See upon xxvii. 3.)

Ver. 44. *And Saul.*] Or rather, *for Saul*, the particle *vau* being often so used.

Had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish.] Here is the reason why David took another wife; because Saul had deprived him of his former: but it was no good reason for taking two, which were more than he had before. He was not forced from Michal, and therefore we read afterward that he took her again. And the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that this Phalti was a very pious man, and would never touch her, because she was another man's wife: which was the reason David received her again. (See 1 Sam. iii. 15.)

Which was of Gallim.] A town near Accaron, as Eusebius and St. Jerome tell us: which had its name from Gal, a heap of stones; it being, I suppose, a stony place.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1. *AND the Ziphites.*] The old enemies of David, (xxiii. 19.)

Came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?] He thought he might safely return thither, Saul having so lately made peace with him. The Ziphites also could not but hear how he had obliged Saul, and what declaration Saul had made, that he knew David would be king of Israel, (xxiv. 20.) Which David thought might discourage them from meddling any more. But quite contrary, they being afraid, if he came to be king, he would remember and revenge their ill usage of him, went to excite Saul to destroy him.

Ver. 2. *Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, with three thousand men of Israel with him.*] The same number he had the last time he pursued after him, (xxiv. 2.)

To seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.] The inconstancy, falseness, and implacable rage of this prince is inconceivable. Who, having not long ago been obliged to David for his life, and had acknowledged his error, and made David swear he would be good to his posterity, yet openly declared himself again to be his enemy, and sought to kill him.

Ver. 3. *And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way.*] That is, by the way that went to the wilderness.

But David abode in the wilderness; and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.] He thought at first his intelligence had not been true; but he was credibly informed that Saul's wrath was broke out again, and that he intended to come thither.

Ver. 4. *And David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.*] A good captain always hath scouts abroad: who assured him his information was true, and that Saul was not far from him.

Ver. 5. *And David arose, and came to a place where Saul had pitched.*] Within sight of it; where he might observe how they lay.

And David beheld where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of the host.] Who, it is likely, lay near him.

And Saul lay in the trench.] Or rather, *in his chariot*, for so the LXX. translate the Hebrew word by λαμπήνη, or as some editions have it, ἀπήνη: which signifies a chariot drawn by mules, as Bochartus shews out of Homer and other authors, par. i. Hierozoicon, lib. ii. cap. 19.

And the people lay round about him.] He was enclosed, I suppose, with the carriages; as our marginal translation is of the foregoing word.

Ver. 6. *Then answered David, and said to Ahimelech the Hittite.*] A valiant man of that nation, who was a proselyte to the Jewish religion: and not only followed David, but was always near to his person,

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And to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab.] Who were the sons of David's sister, (1 Chron. xi. 16.) whose father is no where mentioned; being a man, I suppose, of no note.

Saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp?] That is, which of these two.

And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.] Either Ahimelech declined it, as too hazardous an enterprise; or Abishai, being a hot forward young man, offered himself, while the other stood deliberating.

Ver. 7. *So David and Abishai came to the people by night.*] A bold attempt, for two men to come into the midst of an army of three thousand chosen men, who were not without a watch, though they were now asleep. But a strong confidence in God's promise that he would preserve him, overcame all fear of danger.

And, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster; but Abner and the people lay round about him.] To secure his person from any sudden assault.

Ver. 8. *Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.*] Though David would not kill him himself, when he had the like opportunity; (xxiv. 4.) yet Abishai thought he might give him leave to do it: and he undertook to stick him to the ground at one thrust, so that he should make no noise by crying out.

Ver. 9. *And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?*] Being made king by God's special appointment, he looked upon it as a high crime to do him any hurt; because he was a sacred person.

Ver. 10. *David said furthermore, As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.*] God, who made him king, after a solemn manner, could only depose him: and that he could do several ways; either by a sudden stroke, or in the course of nature, or letting him fall in battle.

Ver. 11. *The Lord forbid that I should stretch my hand against the Lord's anointed.*] What he permitted another to do, when he could hinder it, was as if he had done it himself. But he abhorred to meddle with that, which belonged to God, as he had before said.

But I pray thee, take now the spear that is at his bolster.] As a witness what they could have done, if respect to God, whose anointed he was, had not withheld them.

And the cruse of water, and let us go.] This was set there, either for him to drink, if he was thirsty, or to wash himself; which was prescribed by their law in case of many pollutions.

Ver. 12. *So David took the spear and the cruse of water.*] By the hand of Abishai: who, like an excellent soldier, was perfectly subject to his commander, to forbear, or to do whatsoever David enjoined him.

And gat them away, and no man saw it, or knew it, neither awaked; for they were all asleep: because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them.] The Jewish doctors, in Bereschith Rabba, observe, that there are three sorts of that they call *tardama*, which is the Hebrew word for *deep sleep* in this place. The first, mere sound sleep, which God sent upon Adam, (Gen. xi. 21.) The second is the deep sleep of prophecy, which he sent upon Abraham, (Gen. xv. 12.) The third is this here mentioned, which they call the sleep *marmorita* (it should be printed *marmota*, as Bochart observes), which is a little creature more drowsy than a dormouse. (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 33.)

Ver. 13. *Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off (a great space being between them).*] So that he was in safety, and yet his voice might be heard.

Ver. 14. *And David cried unto the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner?*] Art thou still asleep?

Then Abner answered, and said, Who art thou that criest unto the king?] And disturbest his repose.

Ver. 15. *And David said unto Abner, Art thou not a valiant man, &c.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *Art not thou a man?* That is, in place of authority, as well as of great courage and valour.

Wherefore hast thou not kept thy lord the king?] Observed better military discipline, for the preservation of Saul's person.

For there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.] Came into the camp with that intention, and had a very fair opportunity.

Ver. 16. *This thing is not good that thou hast done.*] A soft way of speaking: but his meaning was, that he was very faulty, as appears by what follows.

Ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed.] Guarded him better from any danger. It is probable they despised David's small forces, which made them so grossly negligent.

Now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster!] He sets before them the tokens of their carelessness; and of the opportunity he had to kill Saul.

Ver. 17. *And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David?*] He was in great confusion of mind, and knew not what more to say to him.

And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.] He humbly acknowledgeth his authority; and the allegiance he owed him: though he had done him so many injuries.

Ver. 18. *And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done, or what evil is in my hand?*] Being conscious of his own innocence, David expostulates with him in a long speech: and desires, in the first place, to know what crime he had to accuse him of: especially since he lately acknowledged that he was more righteous than himself, (xxiv. 17.)

Ver. 19. *Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of thy servant.*] Having no answer to that question, he desires him to be so patient, as to suffer him to argue awhile with him.

If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering.] For God is not implacable, but willing to be reconciled, if I have offended him. Or the meaning may be, If, for any offence against God, there be just cause for this anger, I refuse not to die, and expiate the faults with my blood. Or the words may refer to Saul, as if he had said, Offer to God some sacrifice, that he, being appeased, may free thee from this pertinacious melancholy.

But if they be the children of men, cursed be they before

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the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord.] From having any settled abode in his own country; which he foresaw he should be forced also to leave, as we read he did in the next chapter.

Saying, Go, serve other gods.] That was the effect of their actions, though they did not say so in so many words. For they banished him into a nation of another religion, as Mr. Mede expounds these words. (See book iii. p. 823.)

Ver. 20. *Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord.*] God seeing it, and being the avenger.

For the king of Israel cometh out to seek a flea.] Which was neither for his profit nor for his glory. (See xxiv. 14.)

As when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.] Hunt a poor bird from mountain to mountain, with a great deal of labour, which is not easily caught, and worth nothing when one hath it: the Hebrew word *kore* is no where to be found, but here and in Jer. xvii. 11. from both which places we learn it was a mountainous bird of no great value: in taking of which, the fowler spent his pains to little purpose. And it was one of those birds that sits upon the eggs of other birds; as the words of Jeremiah import, "She gathereth what she hath not brought forth," that is, eggs which she did not lay. From which it is apparent, that this word doth not signify a *partridge*, which is a bird of price, and doth not sit on other birds' eggs; but, as Bochart hath taken a great deal of pains to shew, was a bird with a long bill and short feet, called *rusticula*. I will not mention the opinions of interpreters about it, for they are very various, and the same men are not constant to themselves; for R. Solomon, who here takes it for a *partridge*, in that place of the prophet Jeremiah takes it for a *cuckoo*. (See Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 12.)

Ver. 21. *Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David.*] He invites him to come to the court again; which is more than he did at their former meeting.

For I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.] This is a very ingenuous confession, wherein he condemned himself as a great offender against God and against David. In which for the present, no doubt, he was very serious, and both ashamed and sorry for what he had done.

Ver. 22. *And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! let one of the young men come over and fetch it.*] He durst not venture to go and present it himself to Saul, though it was the testimony of his fidelity and affection to him. For he did not know but the evil spirit might come on a sudden upon him, and make him change his good resolution.

Ver. 23. *The Lord render to every man according to his righteousness and faithfulness: for the Lord delivered thee this day into my hand, but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed.*] He repeats what Saul had confessed, the more to affect his heart with it: and tells him he doubted not the Lord would deal with him accordingly, howsoever Saul used him.

Ver. 24. *Behold, as thy life was set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be set by in the sight of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.*] He prays God to deal with him as he had done with Saul; and then he doubted not to come out of all his troubles.

Ver. 25. *And Saul said unto David, Blessed be thou, my son David; thou shalt do great things, and also shalt still prevail.*] He perceived it was in vain to contend any longer against David, whom God designed for great things (as he saw by his most worthy and noble actions), and would still have the better of him, until he came to the throne: for possibly Saul looked upon the taking away his spear, which I observed (upon xxii. 6.) was his sceptre, as an omen the royal authority should be translated to David.

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.] To Gibeah, from whence he came, (ver. 1.) but David did not think fit to accompany him, remembering how fickle he was, and therefore, notwithstanding all those good words, not to be trusted.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1. *AND David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.*] Whose heart he believed was not altered, though he had felt lately some compunction for what he had done against him. But David had the greatest reason to believe he would never be able to compass his design, having God's promise he should be king of Israel; therefore these words were spoken in a melancholy fit, when he was under some great depression of spirit.

There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.] He thought, that as long as he remained in any part of Saul's dominions, he would never cease his persecution: but by going into an enemy's country, he would be forced to be quiet.

Ver. 2. *And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him, unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath.*] It is not certain that this was the same Achish mentioned xxi. 10. with whom David took shelter at his first flight from Saul. He seems rather to have been another, who is distinguished from the former by the name of his father. But whichsoever he was, he had either invited David to come thither for his security (hoping to make use of his valour or his prudence in his wars), or David had sent ambassadors before to treat with him, and had his royal word, that he should be protected by him. And it appears afterward, that he had David in great esteem; for he gave him a town for his own inheritance, (ver. 6.)

Ver. 3. *And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite, and Abigail the Carmelite, Nabal's wife.*] It was a very capacious place that could contain so many men and their families; some of which might be numerous. And Achish was very generous to receive so many strangers and old soldiers into his royal city, as might have made themselves masters of it. Ahinoam being here mentioned before Abigail, hath made many think she was his wife before he took the other.

Ver. 4. *And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath; and he sought no more again for him.*] Unto which, it is likely, he was inclined; if he had not found it to be in vain.

Ver. 5. *And David said unto Achish, If I have now found*

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grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?] This he said, that he might avoid envy. For perhaps he might have too much the port of a king; having so many men at his service, and being attended, no doubt, with a considerable number of them about his person. In a private town also he might more freely exercise his own religion; without any offence to the Philistines, who worshipped other gods.

Ver. 6. *Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day.*] Either out of his royal bounty, or on condition of some service he should do him.

Wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.] In the division of the land of Canaan it was first given unto the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 31.) and afterward to that of Simeon, who had a portion out of the land given to Judah, (Josh. xix. 5.) But the Philistines kept possession of it, so that neither of them enjoyed it: till now it became by Achish's gift the peculiar inheritance of David and his successors.

Ver. 7. *And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.*] How long he wandered up and down, till he settled here, we are no where told: but it is probable the persecution of Saul lasted a great while.

Ver. 8. *And David and his men went out, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezerites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.*] The Geshurites and Gezerites were both of them relics of the Canaanites, whom God commanded to be rooted out. (See Grotius.) The Amalekites who were near had been destroyed by Saul, but not these that were afar off: or, perhaps, these were some that fled into these remote parts when they heard Saul was coming against them. And the following words (ver. 11. of David's killing all) must be understood, that he left none alive whom he found in these parts: but there still were Amalekites in other places, (xxx. 1.) Abarbinel imagines all the people here mentioned were at enmity with Achish, and hated him and his people: so that when David smote them he made no complaint about it.

Ver. 9. *And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish.*] To give an account of his actions, and to present him, I suppose, with part of the spoil.

Ver. 10. *And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to-day?*] For David, it is likely, constantly kept his men in exercise upon some expedition or other.

And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.] He answers Achish cunningly, in such ambiguous words, that he might understand him as if he had assaulted the land of Judah; whereas he only fell upon those people who bordered on those parts which he mentions. For these countries lay on the south of Judah: and the Jerahmeelites were a part of Judea, and the Kenites of the family of Jethro were their neighbours and confederates.

Ver. 11. *And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.*] Who had people of some countries thereabouts; perhaps tributaries to them, and under their protection: whom they might fear David would serve in the same manner, had they known how he dealt with these.

Ver. 12. *And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.*] The enmity between him and his own people being, as he thought, irreconcilable, he must make him his friend by faithful service for ever.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass in those days.*] While David was in the country of the Philistines.

That the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel.] Mustered all their forces to invade the land of Israel, being encouraged, it is probable, by the banishment of David, the death of Samuel, and the frenzy of Saul.

And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go with me to battle, thou and thy men.] Achish seems to have been the principal person in the country, and the commander of all their forces. For we read of no other king among them but he: who required David, who was now one of his subjects, to assist him in this warfare against his own native country.

Ver. 2. *And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do.*] He answered in doubtful words, which might be taken in different senses.

And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of my head for ever.] Achish understood him that he would do his best to serve him: and thereupon promised, if he did, that he would make him captain of his guard, or some great officer, near to his person.

Ver. 3. *Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city.*] This was noted before, (xxv. 1.) but repeated here again, to shew that Saul now was sensible of his loss, wanting his advice in a time of great distress.

And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.] According to the Divine commandment, (Lev. xx. 27.) which, perhaps, he had executed in the beginning of his reign, when he was governed by Samuel: or if he did it since, it was to shew that he had some zeal for God left, whereby he kept up his authority among the people.

Ver. 4. *And the Philistines gathered themselves together.*] Met at an appointed place.

And came and pitched in Shunem.] A place in the tribe of Issachar, as we learn from Josh. xix. 18.

And Saul gathered all Israel together, and pitched in Gilboa.] A mountain near the valley of Jezreel, not far from Shunem: as that place in Joshua informs us. So that they seem to be pitched, as they were before the great battle was fought when Goliath fell, upon two mountains, with a valley between them.

Ver. 5. *And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines.*] Of which he had a full view from Mount Gilboa.

He was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.] For the Spirit of God having forsaken him, his courage very much failed him, when he saw how numerous the Philistines

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were, and heard, perhaps, that David was among them; and reflected upon all the evil he had done unto him.

Ver. 6. *And when Saul inquired of the Lord.*] This seems to contradict what is said 1 Chron. x. 14. that he *did not inquire of the Lord:* which was the reason that *he slew him.* But Kimchi and others thus reconcile these two places; that since he did not continue to inquire of him, but went to a witch, it was all one as if he had not inquired at all; for he did it faintly, coldly, and indifferently: resolving, if he was not heard there, to go to some other place for counsel. See Buxtorf, Hist. Urim et Thummim; who observes, out of Samuel Laniado, a learned Jew, that "he whose heart is perfect with God, lifts up his eyes unto him, and fixes them on him; hoping in him, though he doth not presently hear him: and perseveres in his hopes, firmly settling a resolution to wait upon him. But so did not Saul, who was remiss and negligent, saying, If God will not hear me, I will go and consult a familiar spirit."

The Lord answered him not.] Because he had killed his priests, as R. Solomon here notes. And by this means, as R. Levi ben Gersom here farther observes, had nobody capable of the Holy Spirit to consult God for him.

Neither by dreams.] By which he prayed, perhaps, that God would inform himself.

Nor by urim.] Kimchi thinks that he sent to Abiathar to inquire about the event of this war: for he had the urim with him. It is observable, that the Scripture never saith that God answered by thummim; for that is comprehended under urim: which is always put first when they are joined together, and here it is mentioned alone. (See xxiii. 6.)

Nor by prophets.] A college of which, no doubt, was still remaining at Ramah; whom Samuel had educated. It will not be amiss to observe, that the same ways of inquiry were among the gentiles, as appears by what Achilles saith, in the council of the Greeks, who met to consider about the plague Apollo had sent among them: (Iliad. i. ver. 62.)

Ἀλλ' ἄγε δή τινα μάντιν ἐρείομεν ἢ ἱερῆα,
Ἢ καὶ ὀνειροπόλον, (καὶ γὰρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διός ἐστιν)
Ὅς κ' εἴποι———

Where he reckons three sorts of men, a *prophet*, or a *priest*, or an *expounder of dreams;* who might tell why Apollo was so angry with them.

Ver. 7. *Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.*] In this he acted like a distracted man, who now approved what he had condemned. He mentions a *woman* rather than a *man;* because the weaker sex were most addicted to these practices (being most easily deceived by evil spirits), among whom such a person he thought might be soonest found.

And his servants said unto him, There is a woman that hath a familiar spirit.] There are always some flatterers in courts, who will never contradict their princes; but are ready to comply with them in their worst designs. And it appears by this, that though this sort of divination was not publicly practised, yet it was known that there were some who privately continued to consult the dead. I say *publicly*, because it is very probable that before Saul executed the law against them, there were those that made profession of having familiar spirits, as there were among the heathen. For Plutarch, in the life of Cimon, speaks of Pausanias' going to a Νεκυομαντεῖον (*an oracle of the dead*) at Heraclea, where he called up the soul of Cleonice.

At En-dor.] A place in the tribe of Manasseh, (Josh. xvii. 11.) not far from Shunem, as Salianus observes: and part of the mountain of Gilboa was over against En-dor, and another part of it against Shunem. This woman, the Jewish doctors say, was the mother of Abner.

Ver. 8. *And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and went, and two servants with him.*] He put off his royal apparel, and clothed himself like an ordinary man, having but a small attendance; that he might not be suspected to be what he was. These two servants, the Jewish doctors say, were Abner and Amasa.

And they came to the woman by night.] They could not go the direct way, for then they must have passed through the army of the Philistines: and therefore they fetched a compass, and travelled also by night, that they might not be discovered. And it is likely they went on foot, that less notice might be taken of them; and they might go and return through by-ways, which made their journey the longer. In the night also it was, that women went about such magical practices. For, as Psellus observes in his book of Demons, it is the common opinion of the Greeks, that none of the terrestrial demons dare appear in the day-time. Ἑλληνικῆς γάρ ἐστι δόξης τὸ μηδένα τῶν ἐνύλων δαιμόνων θαρρεῖν τὰς τοῦ ἡλίου αὐγάς. Nay, he saith all those things were performed after the summer solstice; when the days grew short, and the nights increased.

And he said, Divine unto me by the familiar spirits, and bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee.] This consulting the dead, was a very ancient practice among the gentiles, as appears from Homer: but long before him, mentioned by Moses himself, who forbids it in Deut. xviii. 10. Notwithstanding which, the Israelites, who had a Divine oracle, and holy prophets to guide them, fell into this foul sin, as they did into most of the gentile abominations.

Ver. 9. *And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those who have familiar spirits, and wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?*] For so the law was, (Lev. xx. 27.) And Saul seems by the woman's speech to have executed it, for she saith he had *cut them off;* whereas it is only said, that he had *put them away:* as if he had failed in his duty; and merely banished such persons, when he should have put them to death.

Ver. 10. *And Saul sware unto her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.*] An oath was so sacred a thing in those days, that they entirely relied upon it, and ventured their lives upon its credit.

Ver. 11. *Then said the woman, whom shall I bring up to thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.*] It is a wonderful thing that he should believe a woman should have power to disturb the rest of Samuel, and bring him thither at her command. But he was forsaken by God, and grown delirious.

Ver. 12. *And when the woman saw Samuel.*] Here interpreters are very much divided; some imagining it was Samuel himself that appeared; others, a spectre, which by

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the power of the devil, appeared in his likeness. Several of the ancient fathers are of the former opinion, and particularly Justin Martyr; who, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, alleges this as a demonstration of the immortality of the soul, p. 333. And most of the Roman church are now of the same mind. But Tertullian saith, (in his book De Anima, cap. 57.) "God forbid we should believe the soul of any holy man, much less of a prophet, should be brought up by the power of the devil." Of this persuasion are a great number of the ancients, particularly St. Cyril of Alexandria, who thinks it the greatest absurdity to believe that a wretched woman should call up Samuel's soul; the demons, with whom such people deal, having no such power. And so St. Jerome calls this *Samuelis phantasma*. Yet there are vast numbers of modern authors, who think that by God's permission, or dispensation, the soul of Samuel might appear; which Sir John Marsham himself takes not to be improbable. (See Chron. Canon. xiii.) But the very letter of the text seems to me to be against this opinion; which speaks of bringing him *up*, and his *coming up* out of the earth; whereas, if it had been Samuel, he should rather have come down from heaven. This apparition, therefore, was one of those fallacious spirits, whom Porphyry speaks of (lib. ii. De Abstinentia), "who put on any shape, and counterfeit (as his words are) the gods, and demons, and the souls of the dead;" Γένος ἀπατῆλης φύσεως παντόμορφον καὶ πολύτροπον, ὑποκρινόμενον καὶ θεοὺς, καὶ δαίμονας, καὶ ψυχὰς τεθνηκότων. Which a very learned person (Joh. Wagenseil) hath confirmed, by this reason, which to me seems very solid; that since God was not pleased to answer Saul (as he confessed) either by prophets, or by dreams, or by urim and thummim, but had withdrawn himself wholly from him, it is not probable, that he would send Samuel himself to him from the dead (and none else could do it), and that at the call of a witch, when he would not favour him with any revelation from a living prophet, or any other way. (Confut. Carm. Lipmanni, p. 198.)

She cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.] She cried out for fear of Saul, when she perceived, by the reverence the spectre paid him, who he was. For so Abarbinel interprets it, he bowed with his face to the ground, in honour of Saul, whereby the woman concluded he was the king.

Ver. 13. *And the king said unto her, Be not afraid.*] Do not imagine I come with any design to discover thee, and bring thee to punishment.

For what sawest thou?] But tell me what appeared to thee.

And she said, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.] By the word *Elohim* the Jews understand a *judge;* for so judges are called in Psal. lxxxii. 1. 6. Peter Martyr therefore interprets it not amiss, *a person very majestic, like a judge or a king.* And so R. Esaias, mentioned by Vorstius upon Pirke Eliezer, (p. 113.) who by *Elohim* understands "hominem insignis atque excelsæ staturæ," *a man of an eminent and high stature;* as the Scripture calls high trees and mountains, *trees and mountains of God.* And he is said *to ascend out of the earth.* For so the heathen endeavoured (as Homer, Virgil, Statius, and other ancient poets tell us) to bring up the dead out of the earth, to give them answers to their doubts. Which wicked custom prevailed long among the Jews; for Isaiah alludes to it in xxix. 4. when he saith, they should be brought so low, as to speak like a familiar spirit out of the ground, and whisper out of the dust. And it is evident likewise from Isa. lxv. 4. that they were wont to go to the sepulchres of the dead, there to consult them. For that is the meaning of *sacrificing in gardens,* (ver. 3.) for there they were wont to bury their dead.

Ver. 14. *And he said unto her, What form is he of?*] This is an argument he saw nothing, but afterward heard a voice.

And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle.] Such as kings wore, and also prophets, who had very great authority, (xv. 27. 2 Kings ii. 8. 13.) The Hebrew word *meil* signifies as much as the Greek ποδήρης, a long garment which came down to the feet.

And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.] By the description which the woman gave of him, he concluded it was Samuel; and thereupon made his reverence to him.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, and brought me up?*] This shews it was an evil spirit, personating Samuel, who spake these words. For it is not in the power of witches to disturb the rest of good men, and to bring them into this world when they please. And Samuel, we may be sure, would never have acknowledged such a power in magical arts, the credit of which the devil endeavoured to support.

And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known to me what I shall do.] Some think he omits inquiry by urim, because, in truth, he neither did nor could make use of that: Abiathar having carried it away to David. But this doth not agree with ver. 6. which supposes he did inquire by urim. He should rather, by repentance, and prayer, and sacrifices, and doing right to David, have besought the favour of God, as Pellicanus here well observes.

Ver. 16. *And Samuel said to Saul, Wherefore dost thou ask me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and become thine enemy?*] Nothing could be more senseless than to imagine Samuel could do any thing for him, when the Lord, whose servant Samuel was, would not regard him.

Ver. 17. *And the Lord hath done to him.*] That is, to David, mentioned in the conclusion of the verse.

As he spake by me.] Still the evil spirit personates Samuel, that Saul might be deceived into a belief that it was really he who spake to him.

For the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even unto David.] As Samuel had foretold long ago; and now it was ready to be accomplished.

Ver. 18. *Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord.*] This relates (Abarbinel thinks) to his sin in Gilgal, (chap. xiii.)

Nor executed his fierce wrath upon Amalek.] This was his next sin, whereby he highly provoked God's anger against him: for he was not sensible he had offended his express command, but justified his conduct, till Samuel

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took a great deal of pains to convince him; and then told him he would rend the kingdom from him, (xv. 28.)

Therefore hath the Lord done this unto thee this day.] He doth not mention his sin in killing the Lord's priests; because this decree of taking the kingdom from him was passed before that sin was committed.

Ver. 19. *Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines.*] Samuel himself could no more know this, than an evil spirit; unless God had been pleased to suggest it: which he might think good to do to this ghost, which personated Samuel, that he might terrify Saul. Or, he saw the Philistines to be so numerous, and Saul so feeble and dispirited, that he doubted not the victory would be on the Philistines' side; and therefore confidently pronounced it. But the former is more probable, that God used this evil spirit to declare his mind at this time: so that he spake nothing but by his direction.

And to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.] If we take the word *to-morrow* strictly, Eustathius, archbishop of Antioch, his argument against Origen is good, that this could not be Samuel who spake, because his words are false: there being more than a day between this and the fight, as many have clearly proved from the story itself. But the meaning may be no more, than very shortly thou shalt be as I am, that is, dead. For, as many have well observed (particularly Hackspan, in his disputation concerning Angels and Demons), by these words, *be with me*, "mors simpliciter notatur, non vero peculiaris mortem secutus status;" *death is simply noted, but not the state which follows after death.*

And the Lord shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.] He would not have him think his army should be able to defend him. Abarbinel observes, that he reckons up three judgments, in the very order wherein they fell out (which shews all was spoken by God's order); first, that the host of Israel should be delivered into the hand of the Philistines; then, that Saul and his sons should be slain; and, lastly, that the Philistines should come and dwell in their cities, (xxxi. 7.) which he takes to be the sense of the last words, which otherwise are only a repetition of the first.

Ver. 20. *And Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.*] No wonder he fainted away, being weak in body for want of food; and extremely afflicted in mind by this dismal message, which Samuel, he thought, brought him from God.

Ver. 21. *And the woman came unto Saul.*] These words suggest that Saul was in some private room, where he alone heard the words that were spoken by the apparition.

And saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thy handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in thy hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.] She had exposed herself to extreme danger: for what we carry in our hand may easily fall out, or be snatched from us.

Ver. 22. *Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee, and eat; that thou mayest have strength when thou goest on thy way.*] For without some refreshment she saw it would be impossible for him to get to his camp again.

Ver. 23. *But he refused, and said, I will not.*] He chose rather to die there than by the Philistines.

But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him.] Pressed him so hard, that he yielded to them.

And he hearkened to their voice.] Who knew nothing of what he had heard, but thought he had fainted away only for want of food.

So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.] As the manner (I observed before) then was; and not to lie along when they ate.

Ver. 24. *And the woman had a fat calf in the house.*] The Hebrew word *marbek* is well translated *fat*, as Bochartus confesses, though it properly signifies (as he demonstrates) a calf that treads out the corn, and is fatted up by that means. (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 31.)

And she hasted, and killed it, and took flour and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof.] Because there was no time to let it ferment.

Ver. 25. *And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they arose up and went away that night.*] Before the break of day; that none might discover they had been with such a woman.

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1. *NOW the Philistines gathered all their army to Aphek.*] There were three places of this name; one in the tribe of Judah, another in Manasseh, and a third in Asher. Which last seems to be here meant, where the sons of Eli were slain. (See iv. 1.)

And the Israelites pitched by a mountain which is in Jezreel.] A valley which was overlooked by the mountain Gilboa: from whence the Israelites came down (xxviii. 4.) to draw up their army here.

Ver. 2. *And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds and by thousands.*] When they took a view of their army, the great men appeared, some at the head of a hundred, some of a thousand soldiers.

But David and his men passed on in the rear-ward with Achish.] Who seems to have been the general of the army: and to have made David and his men his life-guard, according to his resolution, xxviii. 2.

Ver. 3. *Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here?*] Who they were afraid would prove false to them, and take part with their own countrymen.

And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who hath been with me these days, or these years.] The meaning is, *I may say years, not days:* for he had been with him part of two years: and, if he had not formerly known him, his predecessor had, (xxi. 10.) and it is likely he had held correspondence with him before he came to him.

And I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?] This intimates, that he looked on him as revolted from Saul; and, by the experience he had of his fidelity, he thought he might be still trusted.

Ver. 4. *And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him.*] In an angry tone.

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Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him.] At Ziklag, which they were contented he should possess.

And let him not go down with us to the battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us.] And thereby do them more mischief than the army of the Israelites.

For wherewith should he reconcile himself to his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?] That is, of the Philistines. They reasoned wisely, according to the common practice of mankind; and well it was for David, that they were such politicians: for hereby God delivered him out of a very great strait; either of being an enemy to his country, or false to his friends, and to his trust. And by the same good providence he was sent back to rescue his wives, and the wives and children of his men, who were taken captive.

Ver. 5. *Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?*] They remembered that he was their old enemy, who killed Goliath: and was highly magnified for it above Saul himself.

Ver. 6. *Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the Lord liveth.*] He swears by the God whom David worshipped, that he might be the more believed: or, perhaps, he had learned something from David of the true God, though he worshipped others with him.

Thou hast been upright, and thy going out and coming in with me in the host is good in my sight.] He commends him as an unblameable person in his private conversation; and as an excellent commander in his army.

For I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day.] A very honourable testimony from a foreign prince.

Nevertheless the lords favour thee not.] Unto whom Achish was forced to yield: for he was not an absolute king; but the lords of the country still retained a great authority.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.*] From the effects of whose envy and jealousy he could not preserve him.

Ver. 8. *And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant, so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?*] He had told him before that he found not the least fault in him: therefore this question may seem impertinent. But David was to act his part handsomely upon this occasion; so that, though he was inwardly pleased, he would not have them suspect he was glad to be dismissed: and therefore, since the king was satisfied with his fidelity, asks why he might not be trusted to fight against his enemies, and that his lords would give him a reason? But Abarbinel thinks he never intended this; but being chosen by Achish to be *the keeper of his head*, (xxviii. 2.) he resolved only to discharge this office; but not to join in the battle against Israel.

Ver. 9. *And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God.*] He had learned something, as I observed before, (ver. 6.) of the Hebrew religion: and it appears by this, of their language also. And the meaning is, he looked upon David as a man sent down from heaven to him: all things prospering that he took in hand.

Notwithstanding, the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go with us to battle.] They seem to have made such an order in council: which the king durst not contradict.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore now rise up early in the morning.*] Lest any mischief should come to him, if he delayed his departure.

With thy master's servants that are come with thee.] This intimates, that the lords of the Philistines would not trust them, because they looked on them still as Saul's subjects.

And as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.] He advises them to lose no time, but, as soon as they could see their way, leave the army, and march to Ziklag.

Ver. 11. *So David and his men rose up early in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines.*] For now they were in the Philistines' camp, in the land of Israel, at Aphek, (ver. 1.)

And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.] To the battle to the Israelites, who were pitched there, (ver. 1.)

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day.*] So many days' journey it was from the camp of the Philistines to this place. (See the beginning of the next book, ver. 2.)

That the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smote Ziklag, and burnt it with fire.] To revenge themselves for what David had done to them, (xxvii. 8.) which they might easily do, when he and his men were absent; and but a small, if any, guard left in the place.

Ver. 2. *And had taken the women captives that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.*] Towards their own country. This may seem strange, that David having killed all he could meet with, and spared none, neither men nor women, (xxvii. 9. 11.) they should not serve his people in the same kind. But though they sought revenge, yet they desired booty much more: being a poor and very covetous people; who intended to sell them for slaves, and make money of them.

Ver. 3. *And David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burnt with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captive.*] This befel David when he seemed to be in the greatest security: having escaped the fury of Saul, and also the service of the Philistines; who were likely to make Saul pay very dear for his ill usage of David. But such is the state of this world, we are often surprised with sudden unexpected troubles; and, as the proverb is, "Many things fall out between the cup and the lip."

Ver. 4. *And David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no power to weep.*] For such calamities are enough to break the heart of the most courageous and undaunted spirits.

Ver. 5. *And David's two wives were taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelite, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.*] This is set down distinctly, to aggravate David's loss.

Ver. 6. *And David was greatly distressed: for the people*

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spake of stoning him.] As the cause of this calamity, in leaving the city unguarded: or in provoking the Amalekites so grievously as he had done, in the slaughter of all he could find.

Because the soul of the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters.] Grief took away the use of their reason.

But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.] Who had never failed him in the greatest distresses: but done great things for him, and promised to do greater.

Ver. 7. *And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, Bring me hither, I pray thee, the ephod.*] From these words Petrus Cunæus (lib. i. de Rep. Heb. cap. 14.) concludes, that the kings of Israel might make use of the *ephod*, as well as the high-priest: because David saith, *Bring me hither*, &c. But this doth not signify that he himself meant to use it; but only that he desired it might be used for him: according to what is said of Joshua, in Numb. xxvii. 21. that he should stand before Eleazar the priest, *who should inquire for him*, &c.

And Abiathar brought thither the ephod unto David.] From these words the same Cunæus, in an epistle of his to Caspar Barlæus, (Epist. Ecclesiasticæ, 506. p. 767.) argues for his forenamed opinion, because it is not said he brought it *le David*, but *el David;* the former of which, he thinks, might have signified for his use; but this denotes, it was for him to use himself: which he endeavours to confirm from the high privilege which the king had above other men, of sitting in the house of God, &c. But this is confuted lately by a man very learned in these matters, (John Braunius, lib. ii. de Vest. Hebr. Sacerd. cap. 20. n. 32.) who well observes (as Buxtorf also doth), that in the foregoing words David doth say, Bring the ephod, *li*, i. e. *pro me*, or *mea causa*, *for me*, or *in meam gratiam*, *for my sake*.

Ver. 8. *And David inquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop?*] He inquired by Abiathar. So all the Hebrew doctors, as Buxtorf observes in his Hist. Urim. cap. 3.

Shall I overtake them?] This shews it is a vain observation of the Jews, that they were not to ask two questions together: for David still continues to do so here, as he had done at Keilah: though God, they say there, had set him right in his inquiry, and taught him to do otherwise.

And he answered him, Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.] He answers both questions at once, and tells him also more than he asked; that he should regain all that he had lost: which, no doubt, was a mighty encouragement unto him in his pursuit.

Ver. 9. *So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed.*] They that were left to look after the stuff, (ver. 24.) who were so tired, that they were not able to march any farther.

Ver. 10. *So David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, who were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.*] Grief, it is likely, made them neglect to take necessary refreshment before they came out.

Ver. 11. *And they found an Egyptian in the field.*] They knew him to be so by his habit: or, perhaps, they did not know whence he was, until he came to himself and told them. But finding him in the garb of a soldier, they thought he belonged to the Amalekites.

And brought him to David.] Half dead.

And they gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water.] Natural compassion might move them to this: but they had another motive, which was the hope of making some discovery, by his means, where the enemies were.

Ver. 12. *And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins.*] Did all they could to comfort him up, and revive his spirits.

And, when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.] Having nobody near him to look after him: and being so sick, he could not look after himself. This is to be understood as Matt. xii. 40. of one whole day, and part of two others: as appears from the next verse, where he saith, *Three days ago I fell sick.* In the Hebrew, *I fell sick this third day; i. e.* this is the third day since I fell sick.

Ver. 13. *And David said, To whom belongest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.*] A barbarous act, to leave him there to perish, when they had camels good store for the carriage of men, as well as of their spoil, (ver. 17.) But this inhumanity cost them dear: for by this means they lost their own lives. Such is the wonderful providence of God (as Conr. Pellicanus here piously observes), which governs all the desires, and thoughts, and counsels, and works, and whatsoever is done among men, both the good and the bad.

Ver. 14. *And we made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites.*] They are the same with the Philistines. For the Arabians call their country (as Bochartus observes) Keritha, and the Syrians call it Creth. Whose inhabitants the Hebrews call Crethi, or Crethim. And to put all out of doubt, *the south of the Cherethites* here mentioned, is, in the sixth verse explained, *the land of the Philistines.* Who were excellent archers, as we may gather from xxxi. 3. (See there.)

And upon the coast that belongeth to Judah.] The south coast of that tribe.

And upon the land of Caleb.] We read no where else of this land: which, in all probability, signifies that south part of Judah which was given to Caleb, and which his posterity inherited, (Josh. xiv. 13.)

And we burnt Ziklag with fire.] With which they seem to have ended their expedition.

Ver. 15. *And David said, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hand of my master.*] Who, it is likely, had otherwise been cruel to him: and, therefore, he had no mind to serve him any longer. Besides, his service, I suppose, was no better than slavery.

And I will bring thee down to this company.] For he heard them say, it is likely, where they would stay and rest themselves.

Ver. 16. *And when he had brought him down.*] Who had given him security, no doubt, by his oath, as he desired: and that, as I observed before, was such a sacred thing in ancient times, that all men relied upon it.

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Behold, they were spread abroad upon the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of the great spoil they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.] They had laid aside their arms, and were feasting and making merry; as men are wont to do, when they have had great success in their enterprises.

Ver. 17. *And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day.*] He came upon them in the evening, when they were refreshing and resting themselves with mirth and jollity: being secure that no danger was near them; because the Israelites and the Philistines (among whom they thought David was) were ready to engage; so that he could no more come to revenge himself, than the Philistines could for the injuries done to them. And it is probable David let them fall asleep, when they had eaten and drunk liberally; and at peep of day fell upon them, and hunted them until the evening, which begun the next day.

And there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, that rode upon camels.] The country of Arabia, where this people lived, abounded with camels: one sort of which run very swiftly. They were used also by some nations in battle: as Vegetius observes, lib. iii. de Re Militari, cap. 23. (See Stewechius's Annotations on him.)

Ver. 18. *And recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away; and David rescued his two wives.*] Which are here particularly mentioned, because he had the greatest concern for them.

Ver. 19. *And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither son nor daughter, neither spoil, nor any thing they had taken to them.*] According to the word of God, (ver. 6.)

Ver. 20. *And David took all the flocks and the herds.*] Which had been taken by the Amalekites from the Philistines, and other places.

Which they drave before those other cattle.] His soldiers drave them before those cattle that had been taken from David and his men.

And said, This is David's spoil.] Not that he challenged it all to himself: but that it was acquired by his valour and conduct; which they now magnified, who lately spake of stoning him. For some think they sung a triumphant song, and that this was the burden of it: which they repeated at the end of every verse.

Ver. 21. *And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom he had made also to abide at the brook Besor.*] That they might look after their stuff.

And they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him.] To congratulate their happy success: and to receive their wives and children, who had been carried captive.

And when David came unto the people, he saluted them.] He was glad to see them, and inquired how they did (as it is in the margin), for he had left them very weak.

Ver. 22. *Then answered all the wicked men, and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said.*] It is likely David told these two hundred men, when he saluted them, that they should lose nothing by their not being able to go along with him: which made these men, who had no conscience, but were only greedy of prey, to say what follows.

Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil which we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that he may lead them away, and depart.] This was a savage resolution of such as feared not God, nor regarded men: since it was not the choice of their brethren to stay behind, but mere necessity and inability to travel further.

Ver. 23. *Then said David.*] Who still preserved his authority over the most wicked among them.

Ye shall not do so, my brethren.] He overrules them: but thought fit to do it in a friendly manner.

With that which God hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.] As much as to say, When God hath been so good to us, we ought not to be unkind to our brethren.

Ver. 24. *For who will hearken unto you in this matter?*] No equal persons, he was confident, would be of their opinion, if the matter was referred to them.

But as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: their parts shall be alike.] Polybius explains the order of dividing the spoils of war, (as Grotius observes, lib. iii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 6. sect. 17.) some of which was allotted those who remained in the camp. But the proportions were various in several places. In some, a simple portion was given to a footman; a double to a centurion; and a treble to a horseman. In other places they varied from this: but howsoever the division was made, the commander-in-chief was allowed to take the best of the spoil to himself: as David perhaps now did: and then left the rest to be equally divided among his men. But the Talmudists say, that, in aftertimes, the king had all the royal furniture that was found in the tent of the conquered prince given unto him for his share.

Ver. 25. *And it was so, from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.*] The equity of this law appears from hence: that by common consent these two hundred men were left behind to look after their baggage: and they were part of the same body of men, linked together in the same common society: and were hindered by mere weariness from going to fight, which otherwise they would have done; and their will was accepted for the deed; and they were in the same common danger; for if the four hundred had been routed, their enemies would soon have cut them off.

This law may seem to have been ordained before by God himself in Numb. xxxi. Which if it were, it may be thought strange that David should not allege that law to quiet the present contention. But it is evident this was a very different case from that: for threescore thousand who stayed at home, had no more among them than the twelve thousand had who went to the battle, (ver. 27. of that chapter.) And what was then done was not ordained to be observed as a statute through all generations. This therefore was a new law, but perpetually continued to the time of the Maccabees; as appears from the second book of their history, chap. viii. ver. 28. 30. And Osiander observes, that it pleased the Romans to do the same, as Festus tells us. (See Josh. xxii. 8.) But the most ancient custom among the Romans was (as Godescalcus Stewechius shews at large, upon Vegetius de Re Militari, lib. ii. cap. 7.) to burn part of the spoils, as an offering to their

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gods; and for the rest, sometimes the soldiers were permitted to keep what every man had got to himself: and sometimes, if the necessities of the commonwealth required, they were all brought to the quæstor, to be put into the public treasury. Out of those which every man kept to himself, they were wont, when they came home, to have some of them upon the posts of the gates to their houses: which it was lawful to remove when a house was sold to another man.

Ver. 26. *And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah, even to his friends.*] By this it seems plain, that he had reserved some part of the spoil to himself: out of which he made presents to his friends: some of which were of the best quality in the tribe of Judah.

Saying, Behold, a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord.] In the Hebrew, *a blessing for you*, &c. So he calls the *present*, because it was a token that he wished all prosperity to them: who had been kind to him in his banishment, and helped to maintain and protect him: and whom he was desirous still to oblige, that they might more readily receive him, when he had a right to take possession of the kingdom.

Ver. 27. *And to them which were in Beth-el.*] This seems to be the same place with that which is called Baalath and Kirjath-baal, Josh. xv. 9. 60.

And to them which were in South Ramoth.] A place in the tribe of Simeon, (Josh. xix. 8.) called *Ramoth in the south*, to distinguish it from Ramoth-Gilead, which lay northward. By which it appears he had other friends, who sometimes gave him shelter, or subsistence, besides those in his own tribe.

And to them which were in Jattir.] A town in the mountainous part of the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 48.)

Ver. 28. *And to them that were in Aroer*, &c.] Not that on the other side Jordan, (mentioned in Numb. xxxii.) but some other place, in the tribe of Judah, or some neighbouring tribe, where the other places here mentioned were: for we no where read, that David ever fled, during Saul's persecution, into the country beyond Jordan.

Ver. 29. *And to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites.*] These people lay on the south of Judah, (xxvii. 10.) where, it is likely, Rachal also was.

And to them that were in the cities of the Kenites.] Who were near to the Jerahmeelites, it appears from the forenamed place.

Ver. 30. *And to those that were in Hormah.*] This was a city in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 30.) afterward given unto the tribe of Simeon, (Josh. xix. 4.)

And to them that were in Chor-ashan, and to them that were in Athach.] It is probable that these two places were also in the same tribe.

Ver. 31. *And to them which were in Hebron.*] Which was certainly a city of Judah: (Josh. xv. 54.) where David was first made king, and reigned over that tribe, (2 Sam. ii. 1, 2, &c.)

And to all the places where David and his men were wont to haunt.] Either to lurk among them, or to get provisions, or intelligence from them.

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1. *AND the Philistines fought against Israel.*] *i. e.* Gave them battle: and as they began the quarrel, (xxix. 1.) so they seem to have begun the fight.

And the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa.] They fled thither from the valley of Jezreel, and were there slain in great numbers.

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons.*] Who were the leaders of the army: which the Philistines thought would never rally again, if they were slain or taken.

And the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons.] It seems Ish-bosheth was not there, being no warlike man; or he escaped out of the battle by flight, as Abner and other great men did: or perhaps he was left at home to manage domestic affairs. Jonathan seems to have deserved a better fate: but the providence of God suffered him to be slain, that David might more easily come to the throne. For though he had freely consented to it, yet he was such a favourite of the people, that many of them might have stickled for him.

Ver. 3. *And the battle went sore against Saul.*] They pursued him so close, that there was no hope he could escape.

And the archers hit him; and he was sorely wounded of the archers.] In the Hebrew the words are, the archers *found him:* which signifies, in that language, to rush upon one on a sudden. Bows and arrows were the principal weapons of this nation; in the use of which they were very dexterous, and did terrible execution. Which is the reason, some think, that David, when he came to the throne, taught the Israelites the use of the bow, (as we read in the next book, chap. i. ver. 18.) that they might not be inferior to the Philistines, nor fall into the like disaster that Saul had done. And when he had made peace with the Philistines, he took some of their archers, with whom he was well acquainted, to be the keepers of his body: which are those so often mentioned in the following books, under the name of *Cherethites*, 2 Sam. viii. 18. xv. 18. xx. 7. 1 Kings i. 38. 44. 1 Chron. xviii. 17. in all which places, where the Hebrew hath the word *cerethi*, the Chaldee paraphrast interprets it *archers*. (See Bochartus, in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 15. p. 459.)

Ver. 4. *Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith.*] For though he had received many wounds, yet they were not mortal; at least, not for the present.

Lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me.] He was afraid they might put him to some ignominious death, or make sport with him, as they did with Samson.

But his armour-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid.] Dreaded to think of killing his king.

Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.] And killed himself, as appears by the next words.

Ver. 5. *And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.*] Some of the Jews think this was Doeg.

Ver. 6. *So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-*

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bearer, and all his men, the same day together.] That is, all the men that attended upon his person.

Ver. 7. *And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley.*] Of Jezreel.

And they that were on the other side Jordan.] Or rather on *this side Jordan;* for the Hebrew word signifies either side. And there was no occasion for those beyond Jordan to flee.

Saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled.] Being afraid, I suppose, to be carried captive.

And the Philistines came and dwelt in them.] The consternation being so great, that there were none to oppose them.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in Mount Gilboa.*] It was contrary to military discipline, presently to fall upon the spoil, which they did not till the next day.

And they cut off his head.] As David had done the head of Goliath.

And stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about.] They sent the news of this great victory; and perhaps his head and armour in token of it.

To publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people.] That they might give thanks to their gods for the victory they had obtained.

Ver. 10. *And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth.*] As the sword of Goliath was laid up in the tabernacle.

And they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.] To expose it, as we do the bodies of great malefactors, to public shame and reproach. And thus it appears, by ver. 12. they did with the bodies of his sons.

Ver. 11. *And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul.*] They lived on the other side Jordan; for the people on this side were fled.

Ver. 12. *All the valiant men arose, and went all night.*] To avoid discovery.

And took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, from the wall of Beth-shan.] Which was a city in the tribe of Manasseh, not far from Jordan and the sea of Gennesaret: out of which the Manassites could not expel the old inhabitants, (Judg. i. 27.) To this place they of Jabesh might march in a night's time, and accomplish their design. Aristotle reports, in the fifth book of his Ethics (as Strigelius here observes), that the temples of the Graces were built in the very midst of the cities of the Greeks, that all men might be admonished to be grateful. Of which virtue the men of Jabesh-Gilead gave a most noble example: who, being delivered by Saul in the beginning of his reign from the Ammonites, when they were in danger to lose their eyes, (chap. xi.) now repay his care of them when he was dead, by not suffering his carcass to want the honour of burial.

And came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.] Some think they burnt their flesh, which was rotten and putrid: others, that they poured upon their flesh aromatic hot spices, such as Joseph ordered for the embalming of his father: or, as the Targum understands it, *they burnt upon,* or *over them.* Where Kimchi notes, that the paraphrast had respect to the custom delivered down from their ancestors, of burning the beds and other utensils of the dead upon their graves; or to the burning of spices. Certain it is, there was no such custom as this among the Jews, of burning the bodies of the dead. Though some think that these people imitated the heathenish custom, affecting singularity, as appears from the story of the Benjamites, Judg. xxi. 8. where we read, they alone would not come to the assembly of the whole nation. Such a singularity Gierus thinks they were now guilty of: and, therefore, in a parallel place to this, 1 Chron. x. 11. there is no mention made of this *burning:* either because it was an unwonted practice, or unworthy to be remembered.

Ver. 13. *And they took their bodies, and buried them under a tree in Jabesh.*] In this also there seems to be some of the superstition of the gentiles: among whom trees were accounted sacred things.

And fasted seven days.] Expressed great sorrow: of which this was a token. Lucian saith, in his book de Lucta, that the Greeks were wont in their funerals neither to eat nor drink for three days. But this is not to be so understood: but that they fasted for seven days together till the evening (as the manner of fasting was among the Jews), and eat nothing all day.

THE

SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass, after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites.*] The fight between Saul and the Philistines fell out, when David was in pursuit of the Amalekites.

And David had abode about two days in Ziklag.] Which it seems the Amalekites had not quite burnt; contenting themselves with the spoil.

Ver. 2. *It came even to pass on the third day.*] After his coming into Ziklag.

That, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head.] As the manner of deep mourners was. (See 1 Sam. iv. 4.)

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And so it was, when he came to David, that he fell on the earth, and did obeisance.] Honoured him as his king.

Ver. 3. *And David said, From whence comest thou? And he said, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.*] Some of the Jews have a conceit, that this was Doeg's son; of which, though there was no proof, yet the objection against it is of no value. For Doeg was an Edomite, and this person an Amalekite, which seems inconsistent with his being the son of Doeg. But it is to be considered, that all Amalekites were also Edomites: though all Edomites were not Amalekites. For Amalek was Esau's grandson, by his son Eliphaz, (Gen. xxxvi. 15, 16.)

Ver. 4. *And David said, How went the matter? I pray thee tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.*] He relates the matter very orderly; that first the Israelites were routed and fled; and then in the pursuit of them many were slain; and in conclusion, Saul and Jonathan his son. Which two he only mentions; thinking that David was principally concerned in them.

Ver. 5. *And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan are dead?*] He might easily know that the Israelites were beaten; but not so easily that these were in the number of the slain.

Ver. 6. *And the young man that told him, said, As I happened by chance upon Mount Gilboa.*] One would think by this, that he was not a soldier, but a countryman, who had occasion to go that way.

Behold, Saul leaned upon his spear.] Endeavouring to run it through his body.

And, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.] So that he feared he should fall into their hands, before he could dispatch himself.

Ver. 7. *And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me: and I answered, Here am I.*] He looked round about him, to see if there were any near him of his servants.

Ver. 8. *And he said unto me, Who art thou? and I answered, I am an Amalekite.*] He did not dissemble his country, though he knew Saul had no reason to be a friend to it.

Ver. 9. *And he said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me.*] He would have him lean so hard upon him, with the whole weight of his body, that the spear might run through him; which he had not strength to make it do. This is not a likely story: for Saul, in all probability, would have been as unwilling to be killed by an Amalekite, as by a Philistine.

For anguish is come upon me.] The Hebrew word *schabatz* is variously translated. By some, *trembling;* by others, *convulsions;* by the LXX. σκότος, *darkness.* Kimchi saith it was a disease, which some say was the *cramp:* but in Scripture, as Braunius observes, (lib. i. de Vestitu Sacerd. Hebr. cap. 17. sect. 9.) it never signifies any one of these things, but some ornament in a garment. And therefore our marginal translation is better, *my embroidered coat* hinders the spear from going far into my body: or his *coat of mail,* as Diodate translates it: for it consisted of little rings one within another, which made it hard to penetrate. And thus Ralbag among the Jews understands it.

Because my life is yet whole within me.] He was not mortally wounded.

Ver. 10. *So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure he could not live after he was fallen.*] This is contrary to what Saul said just before, that *his life was whole in him* (unless he meant that the Philistines would instantly come upon him and kill him), and it was as false that he slew him; for it appears by the foregoing relation, that Saul killed himself: and that not with a spear, but with his sword, (xxxi. 4.) But this the young man said to excuse himself, if David did not approve the fact.

And I took the crown that was on his head, and the bracelets that were on his arms, and have brought them hither unto my lord.] Saul was the first that had the ensigns of royal authority; for the judges had none; but were mere ministers of God (during his pleasure), who was their king and governor. And it is not likely that Saul wore his crown when he was in the fight (for that had been to set out himself a mark for the Philistines to shoot at), but it was carried along with him into the field, by some that attended him; to be ready to put on, if he had gotten the victory, and triumphed. The Jews think that Doeg, his armour-bearer, had it in his custody: who, before he killed himself, gave it to his son (this young Amalekite), and bade him carry it to David; hoping he might thereby ingratiate himself with him.

Ver. 11. *And David took hold of his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him.*] That is, all his attendants. Every one knows that this was a token of very great sorrow, and of a violent passion: which all nations used, as we learn from Homer, Herodotus, Virgil, and other ancient authors.

Ver. 12. *And they mourned and wept.*] The whole company made great lamentations, and shed many tears.

And fasted until even.] Till the evening sacrifice was offered: though Buxtorf (in his Synag. Judaica) thinks they abstained from all meat and drink till the stars appeared.

For Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.] He had great reason to mourn for Jonathan, who was his great friend; but some think he should have rejoiced to hear of Saul's death, who was his bitter enemy. But there were many reasons for his bewailing his death, as a public person, who was lately reconciled to him; and might possibly have returned to a better mind, if he had lived longer. However, the manner of his death very much affected him; and the more, because he heard perhaps of his being just before to consult a witch, and gave no tokens of his repentance. The Jews say, in both the Talmuds, that he mourned for Saul, as the prince of the great Sanhedrin; and for Jonathan, as the father of it. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 16. sect. 4.)

Ver. 13. *And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he said, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.*] He had told David once before who he was, in the relation he made of his discourse with Saul, (ver. 8.) But being astonished at the news, he did not attend unto that circumstance, or had forgot it. Besides, a good judge ought to examine things strictly, and not to trust unto the first answer.

Ver. 14. *And David said, How, wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thy hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?*]

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Who, it is possible, might have recovered, and been carried off by some of his own men; the Philistines, by some extraordinary providence of God, being diverted from their pursuit. And it was the greater presumption of this young man to do it; since one of Saul's own servants durst not venture upon such a fact.

Ver. 15. *And David called one of the young men.*] One of the guards of his body.

And said unto him, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.] There was a known law, that no man should be condemned out of the mouth of one witness: and the Jews tell us, that no judge was to sit alone, but to have some other joined with him: and that no man's testimony was to be taken against himself. But this was the singular prerogative of their kings, that they might alone hear any man's cause, and condemn him; and that out of the mouth of one witness, or from his own confession. Of which Maimonides gives this case of the Amalekite as an instance: which he looks upon as an extraordinary example, and as the king's process. (See Schickard, de Jure Regis, cap. 4. Theor. 14. and my notes upon Josh. vii. 25.) But after all, it looks something hard, that a man should be put to death for doing what Saul himself desired, and when he was sure (if this man said true) that he could not live. Abarbinel therefore thinks, that this man being an Amalekite, David supposed he might kill Saul out of revenge, for the slaughter he had made of his people.

Ver. 16. *And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head: for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed.*] That is, thou art the cause of thy own death; or, the blood thou hast shed is the reason of thy death.

Ver. 17. *And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son.*] He and his servants had lamented them before, (ver. 12.) but now David composed a song for a public and universal lamentation.

Ver. 18. *(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah.*] Among whom he now was; and over whom he first reigned. This comes in as a parenthesis between the former verse and what follows; to shew his early endeavours to promote the good of the people.

The use of the bow.] While he made lamentation for the dead, he did not neglect the care of the living: that they might be provided with better means to defend themselves. For they now looking upon him as the king God designed should rule over them, he ordered they should immediately learn the skill of using bows and arrows, in which the Philistines excelled them. (See what I have noted, 1 Sam. xxxi. 3.) Some indeed make this the title of the following song, which they were to sing among their military exercises: but the former seems a more natural interpretation; which Conradus Pellicanus proposed in the beginning of the Reformation. The Jews, saith he, hitherto used only slings and swords; but now were taught to shoot with bows and arrows: for it did not misbecome them to learn the art of defending themselves from infidels. And indeed the benefit of having good archers in an army is so great, that Cato took the pains to describe it in his book of Military Discipline, as Vegetius tells us: who says, that Scipio hoped for no success in Africa against the Numantines, "nisi in omnibus centuriis lectos sagittarios miscuisset," *unless he had mingled some choice archers with every company of soldiers, commanded by a centurion,* (lib. i. cap. 15.) And as this was done among the footmen, so in the next book he makes it the qualification of a captain of horse, "sagittas doctissime mittere," *to shoot arrows most skilfully,* (lib. ii. cap. 14.)

Behold, it is written in the book of Jasher).] That is, this order for teaching the children of Judah the use of the bow was more largely recorded there. But what book this was is very uncertain: yet Victorinus Strigelius adventures to say, "Haud dubie fuit historia ecclesiastica, qualis nunc est Eusebiana, aut Theodoretica:" *Without doubt it was an ecclesiastical history, like that which we now have of Eusebius or Theodoret.* (See my notes upon Josh. x. 13.) I should rather say, that *Jasher* signifying *right,* it was a book concerning the right art of making war: upon which subject the ancient Romans wrote many books: particularly Cato, Cornelius Celsus, Frontinus, and Paternus; which were abridged, as he himself tells us, by Vegetius de Re Militari, lib. i. cap. 8. Procopius Gazæus thinks these words declare, "Hanc historiam ex multis libris collectam esse;" *that this history was gathered out of many prophetical books.*

Ver. 19. *The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places.*] The flower of the nation; their choice young men: together with Saul and his sons.

How are the mighty fallen!] What a slaughter is made among the valiant men!

Ver. 20. *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon.*] The city Gath seems to have been the metropolis of the Philistines' country; and Askelon next to it. Where it was in vain to wish this might not be published: for it was done already. Therefore these are only expressions of great sadness and sorrow, that this overthrow should be published, which he could not but wish had never been heard of.

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.] According to the manner of those countries; where the women celebrated, with songs and dances, the victory of the men over their enemies. (See Exod. xv. 1, &c. Judg. xi. 34.)

Ver. 21. *Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings.*] Fruitful fields, from whence offerings might be brought to the house of God. These are poetical expressions, from the common language of mankind: who are wont to speak with abhorrence of those places, and to curse them, where any calamity hath befallen their friends.

For there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away.] They were forced to throw away their shields, that they might run the faster away; which was a great disgrace to them.

The shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.] As if he had been a common soldier. So these words are generally interpreted, as spoken of Saul. But the words, *as though he had,* are not in the Hebrew; where there is only, *not anointed with oil:* which may as well relate to the *shield,* as the Jews interpret it, and thus explain it:—By the holy oil men were set apart for some great office; as that of priests, and sometimes kings. Now when any person, in a sudden danger of the state, was chosen to be captain-general of their army, they were wont to anoint him: that by this sight he might be animated to

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fight the Lord's battles courageously. And such a person was called, *The anointed of war:* nay, sometimes (they say) their armour was anointed, to increase their confidence: just as the vessels of the tabernacle were which the priests used: unto which they think David alludes in these words. See Guil. Schickardus, cap. 1. Theor. 4. of his Jus Regium: where Carpzovius observes, that these words Isa. xxi. 9. favour this interpretation: and are alleged by Rasi and Ralbag, as parallel to this place. But he confesses he can find no where that their shields, or other warlike instruments, were anointed with holy oil, to make them fight with greater boldness.

Ver. 22. *From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back.*] By this it appears, that Jonathan was a very skilful archer (as perhaps some other great men were), though the common people were not trained up to the use of the bow. Which Jonathan so well managed, that as he always hit his mark, so his arrows pierced into the very entrails of the most mighty men.

And the sword of Saul returned not empty.] Always did great execution (as we now speak) upon those whom he fought withal.

Ver. 23. *Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives.*] Courteous and kind to their people: which is a great virtue in princes. To David, indeed, Saul expressed a great deal of ill nature: but that proceeded from Saul's jealousy, and fear that he would supplant his family, and place himself in the throne. And this highly advances the glory of David, that he commends his greatest enemy for what was praiseworthy in him: as Cæsar, they say, could not but shed some tears when Pompey's head was brought to him, though we read of nothing that he spake in his praise.

And in their death they were not divided.] Jonathan stuck close to his father in the battle; and demonstrated he was engaged in no conspiracy against him, as he had sometime charged him.

They were swifter than eagles.] In pursuing their enemies. For this, I have often observed, was a requisite quality in an excellent warrior: therefore, in the choice of soldiers, Vegetius saith, "Et velocitas requirenda est et robur;" *Both swiftness and strength were to be required,* (lib. i. de Re Militari, cap. 8.) The great advantages of being a swift runner, he enumerates in the next chapter.

They were stronger than lions.] In overthrowing their enemies, when they overtook them.

Ver. 24. *Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights; and put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.*] He would have the women bear a part in this lamentation over Saul, who adorned them with the rich spoils of their enemies. The word *other* before *delights* is not in the Hebrew; but the meaning seems to be, that they delighted in fine clothes, which they did not want while Saul lived. And *scarlet* was every where accounted the most precious colour: the emperor's mantle being of scarlet, as Braunius observes, lib. i. cap. 15. de Vestitu Sacerd. Hebr.

Ver. 25. *How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places!*] Of his own country, which he valiantly defended.

Ver. 26. *I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me.*] His grief was as great for his death, as the pleasure had been which he took in his company while he lived.

Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.] No less ardent, sincere, and sweet, than the highest conjugal affection. Which ought to be (as Strigelius here glosses) ardent without simulation, sincere without any suspicions, and sweet without morosity or disdain.

Ver. 27. *How are the mighty fallen.*] This is repeated three times in this song: being an interlocutory verse.

And the weapons of war perished!] All military glory gone from Israel.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, that after this David inquired of the Lord.*] By Abiathar the high-priest, as he had often done before, (1 Sam. xxvi. 9. and other places.)

Saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?] Which was his own tribe, where he had most friends; and therefore it was proper, he thought, to address himself to them, who were best affected to him. But though he had a right to the kingdom by God's designation, yet he would not enter into possession, nor take upon him the administration of affairs, without God's advice and direction.

And the Lord said, Go up.] He approved of his going up into that tribe; and thereby gave him hope of success.

And he said, Whither shall I go up?] He asked these questions distinctly, as the Jews say the manner was to do, and not two questions at once. (See upon 1 Sam. xxiii. 11. and see what I have further noted, xxx. 8.)

And he said, Unto Hebron.] Which was a principal city in that tribe; and in the middle of it: where the people might more conveniently and easily resort to him, than in Ziklag. Which was his own town by the gift of Achish, and at first in the lot of Judah. (See 1 Sam. xxvii. 6.)

Ver. 2. *So David went up thither, he and his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite, and Abigail, Nabal's wife, the Carmelite.*] Who being hitherto companions in his troubles, were now advanced to be partakers of his prosperity. This Theogena the wife of Agathocles (as Strigelius observes) made the character of a good wife, who in marriage enters into society with a husband, in all things, both good and evil.

Ver. 3. *And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household.*] He took care to provide for his followers, and their families, according to every one's merit. But this, it is likely, was not done till he was settled: for to go up with so many armed men, had been to frighten them into compliance.

And they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.] Which was given to the priests to be a city of refuge, (Josh. xxi. 11, 12.) and therefore could not contain all David's followers; but only him and his court. The rest were disposed of in the cities depending upon Hebron.

Ver. 4. *And the men of Judah came.*] The principal persons, who represented the rest.

And there they anointed David king.] Who had been anointed privately by Samuel some time ago; but that was only a designation of him to the kingdom: into which he was now solemnly inaugurated by this public unction.

Over the house of Judah.] Who would not presume to

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know the sense of all Israel: though they hoped they would follow this example; as they afterward did, and anointed him again, (chap. v. ver. 3.)

And they told David, That the men of Jabesh-Gilead were they who had buried Saul.] Which it seems he had not heard of while he was in Ziklag; but now (by some discourse about Saul's death) that noble action was related to him; which is recorded, to their honour, in 1 Sam. xxxi. 11—13.

Ver. 5. *And David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, saying, Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have shewed this kindness to your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.*] This demonstrates, both the great piety and the great prudence of David. For he testified the true kindness he had for Saul, though his virulent enemy: and by wishing so heartily the men of Jabesh might be rewarded for what they had done, he invited them (who were Israelites on the other side of Jordan) to own him for their king.

Ver. 6. *Now the Lord shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.*] He doth not content himself merely with praying God to reward them (which he repeats again), but promises that he would take care of them, by defending them from the Philistines, if they should offer to invade them, for entering their country without leave, and taking from thence the trophies of their victory.

Ver. 7. *Now, therefore, let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant.*] As they had been to a high degree, (1 Sam. xxxi. 12.)

For your master, Saul, is dead.] Or, *though your master, Saul, be dead.*

And also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.] He would not have them discouraged, because they wanted one to head them; for he, being invested with the royal dignity by the tribe of Judah, would look upon himself as bound to protect them also: though they had not owned him for their sovereign.

Ver. 8. *But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host.*] A man of the greatest authority in Israel, after Saul was dead, being general of all their forces.

Took Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul.] Called Esh-Baal, 1 Chron. viii. 33. as there are several other names which end indifferently, either in *Bosheth*, or *Baal*. For instance, Gideon is called Jerubbaal, Judg. ix. 1. and Jerubbesheth, 2 Sam. xi. 21. and Mephibosheth is called Meribbaal, 1 Chron. viii. 34. For *Bosheth* signifies *shame* and *confusion;* and Baal being an infamous idol, the Holy Scripture makes these names end promiscuously either in *Baal*, or *Bosheth*, or *Besheth*.

And brought him over.] The river Jordan.

To Mahanaim.] A place in the tribe of Gad, (Josh. xiii. 26.) So called from the appearance of a host of angels to Jacob, as he came to Padan-Aram, with his household, (Gen. xxxii. 1.) Here Abner thought he might most securely do what follows, being at a distance from David, under whom he could not promise himself that command and authority, which he hoped to maintain under Ish-bosheth.

Ver. 9. *And he made him king over Gilead.*] Over all the tribes on the other side Jordan; which are comprehended under this name.

And over the Ashurites.] The Chaldee paraphrast understands hereby, the tribe of Asher; who, though remote from Mahanaim, were forward to acknowledge him.

And over Jezreel.] A large and noble valley, on the borders of Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali: who are all comprehended under this word.

And over Ephraim, and over Benjamin.] Under whom the Simeonites are comprehended.

And over all Israel.] All the tribes on this side Jordan, save the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 10. *Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign.*] Therefore he was born that very year in which Saul was made king; for he reigned forty years, as St. Paul tells us, Acts xiii. 21.

And reigned two years.] Before there was any hostility between him and David. So Ralbag expounds it, who makes this cohere with ver. 12. it being a mere fancy of the Jews, in Seder Olam Rabba, that the throne was vacant, and there was no king in Israel for five years. Victorinus Strigelius's conjecture is far better; who, after he had given the foregoing interpretation of Ralbag, adds, that after the war broke out between David and Ish-bosheth, and David waxed stronger and stronger, (iii. 1.) Ish-bosheth being an unactive prince, and unfit to command, Abner took the administration of the government upon himself, and managed the war the other five years which passed before David came to the throne of Israel. These five years the Scripture doth not reckon as a part of Ish-bosheth's reign; because he had the mere name of a king, but no authority at all.

But the house of Judah followed David.] Stuck close to him, and were entirely at his command.

Ver. 11. *And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.*] So long, therefore, Ish-bosheth reigned over Israel. Unless we will suppose, either that the Israelites were five years deliberating whether he or Mephibosheth should be king (whose right it was by the laws of succession), or that he reigning two years immediately after the death of Saul, they were five years deliberating whether they should own David or not: neither of which is probable, as Ralbag thinks; who judiciously observes, that those words, *he reigned two years*, are to be joined with ver. 12. *And Abner, the son of Ner, went out*, &c. That is, saith he, the two first years of his reign there was no war between the house of Saul and David: and there had been no open war, if Abner had not been the author of it, &c.

Ver. 12. *And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul.*] The principal officers about the king.

Went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.] They passed over Jordan into the country of Benjamin, where Gibeon was, (Josh. xviii. 25.) to fight with Judah, and to bring them into the obedience of Saul's son. It is observable, that David did not begin any hostility; but waited to see how God would dispose things in his favour.

Ver. 13. *And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out.*] To oppose the designs of the Israelites; for Joab was the chief commander of David's forces; whom the principal officers of his household attended.

And they met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.] The two armies faced one an-

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other (as we now speak), being parted only by the pool that was between them.

Ver. 14. *And Abner said unto Joab.*] I suppose David had commanded Joab not to begin the quarrel, but only stand upon his defence. For he had sworn to Saul, that he would not cut off his seed; and therefore would not willingly engage against Ish-bosheth, (1 Sam. xxiv. 21.)

Let the young men arise, and play before us.] He desires that some soldiers might be picked out from the rest, and make the two armies sport, as the gladiators were wont to do in aftertimes among the Romans: whereby also they might make a trial of their courage and strength. So Josephus saith, Abner was desirous to learn, πότερος αὐτῶν ἀνδρειοτέρους στρατιώτας ἔχῃ, *which of they two had the bravest soldiers.*

Ver. 15. *Then there arose, and went over.*] The pool of Gibeon.

Twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul.] They still were forward to begin the hostility; and Abner chose this number out of Benjamin, for the honour (I suppose) of his own tribe, and because they were a valiant sort of people, as appears by the story in Judg. xx.

And twelve of the servants of David.] Whose valour, no doubt, had been tried in other exploits.

Ver. 16. *And they caught every man his fellow.*] That is, the servants of David, last mentioned, caught each of them every one of the Benjamites that was his opposite.

By the head.] That is, by the hair of his head, which they wore very long in those days.

And thrust his sword in his fellow's side.] That is, David's men killed every one of the Benjamites with whom they were engaged: so, some say, Josephus understood it; though I can find no such thing in him.

So they fell down together.] All the twelve men of Benjamin fell down dead together.

Therefore was the place called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon.] The Hebrew words signify, *the field of strong men;* as hard and firm as a rock.

Ver. 17. *And there was a very sore battle that day.*] The men of Israel, enraged at the loss of their valiant men, maintained a furious fight the rest of that day.

And Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.] But still success followed the men of Judah.

Ver. 18. *And there were three sons of Zeruiah there.*] She was David's sister: and therefore these were his nephews.

Joab, Abishai, and Asahel.] All three very valiant men, and great commanders, as appears from 1 Chron. xxvii. 7. where the last of them is mentioned as one of David's twelve captains over four-and-twenty thousand men. (See also chap. xi. 26. of that book.)

And Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe.] I noted in the foregoing chapter, and in other places, that to be swift of foot to pursue an enemy, was a quality highly esteemed in warriors. And therefore Plato, I remember, would have this to be one of the exercises wherein youth should be trained up, *viz. racing:* Ἔστι γοῦν πάντων πολεμικώτατον ἡ σώματος ὀξύτης πάντας· ἡ μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν ποδῶν, ἡ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν χειρῶν, &c. (lib. viii. De Leg. p. 852. edit. Serrani.)

Ver. 19. *And Asahel pursued after Abner.*] Being desirous of the glory, either of taking or killing the greatest man in Israel.

And in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.] Nothing could turn him aside to pursue any other design: but he went right forward, having Abner only in his eye.

Ver. 20. *Then Abner looked behind him, and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am.*] He speaks to him civilly, having no mind to kill him.

Ver. 21. *And Abner said unto him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take his armour.*] That he might not return without some spoil, he bids him take one of his attendants, his arms and all; and be content with this glory of carrying away such a prisoner. Thus Kimchi expounds it. Others think he bids him try his valour upon one of his servants, and disarm him, and not venture to encounter him, who was an old soldier.

But Asahel would not turn aside from following him.] Being possessed with a vain desire, of more glory than it was reasonable to expect.

Ver. 22. *And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how shall I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?*] Who was a fierce man, and he knew would study revenge.

Ver. 23. *Howbeit he refused to turn aside: so Abner, with the hinder end of his spear, smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him.*] Pierced quite through his liver and bowels. (See xx. 10.) So R. Johannes, in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 6. sect. 7. saith the fifth rib is the place where the liver and the gall are seated.

And he fell down there, and died in the same place.] He died immediately upon the spot (as we speak), not being able to go so much as one step further. So dangerous it is to confide in a man's own natural strength, or to refuse offers of peace, or despise a flying enemy, as Pellicanus here observes. The old saying was, "If an enemy fly, make way for him."

And it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.] Ceased the pursuit: fearing perhaps the same fate; or that Asahel's body should be exposed to any indignity.

Ver. 24. *Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner; and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah, by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.*] They were not so nimble as Asahel, and therefore could not overtake Abner: yet so furious, that the death of Asahel could not stop them till they came to this place.

Ver. 25. *And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together to Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of a hill.*] Some of this tribe, of which Abner was, and who were valiant people, as I observed before, rallied, as we now speak; and stood in a body, as if they would renew the fight.

Ver. 26. *And Abner called to Joab.*] Who was on the top of another hill, (ver. 24.)

And said, Shall the sword devour for ever?] There ought to be a measure set to our anger: which ought to go down with the sun, as the apostle speaks.

Knowest thou not that it must be bitterness in the end?] In civil wars, as Cicero speaks (in his fourth book of his familiar Epistles), all things are miserable, and nothing more miserable than victory itself: which makes the con-

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queror do many things against his will, to satisfy those by whom he conquers. Therefore he saith in another place, "Extremum omnium malorum est belli civilis victoria;" *victory in a civil war is the greatest of all evils.* Such was this; as he puts him in mind in the next words, that they who killed one another were brethren.

How long shall it be ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?] They were all descended from one common father: and all worshipped one and the same God.

Ver. 27. *And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.*] He wishes he had been of this mind in the morning; for then there had been no fighting at all, if he had not desired it, (ver. 14.) So Dr. Lightfoot paraphrases this verse, *If thou hadst not said what thou didst in the morning* (Let the young men arise, and play before us), *surely the people had gone every one from his brother; and there had been never a blow struck, but that thou didst provoke it.*

Ver. 28. *So Joab blew the trumpet.*] Caused a retreat to be sounded.

And all the people stood still, and followed after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.] Neither at that time, nor any other.

Ver. 29. *And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan.*] They made all the haste they could home: being fearful to trust themselves near to the army that had beaten them.

And went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.] Some think by Bithron is meant the mountain of Bethor, mentioned Cantic. ii. 15.

Ver. 30. *And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together.*] Returning from the pursuit, every one resorted to the company to which he belonged.

There lacked of the servants of David nineteen men and Asahel.] This is an argument that the twelve men of Judah, who began the fight in a combat with as many of Benjamin, were not killed: for if they were, then there would have been no more than seven men killed in the battle: which is not probable.

Ver. 31. *And the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died.*] This loss was not great in itself: for it is likely David had given order his men should be as sparing as they could, in killing their brethren; who were, he knew, to be his subjects.

Ver. 32. *And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Beth-lehem.*] I think Josephus takes this right: who saith, Joab and his men lodged all night in the place of battle, and buried their dead; and then next morning carried Asahel to be buried among his ancestors.

And Joab and his men went all night.] Having buried Asahel, they marched all the next night towards Hebron.

And they came to Hebron at break of day.] Where they gave David an account of all this action.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *NOW there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David.*] Their enmity continuing throughout the whole reign of Ish-bosheth, it is likely there were many bickerings and skirmishes between Israel and Judah; but no pitched battle that we read of. The contrary rather seems to be affirmed in the foregoing chapter, ver. 28.

But David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul weaker and weaker.] In all their rencounters (as we now speak) David had the better: and it is likely many of the Israelites fell off to him: which very much added to his strength, and weakened the house of Saul.

Ver. 2. *And unto David were sons born in Hebron.*] He had no children it seems during his exile: or, if he had, they were daughters.

His first-born was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess.] She was his wife before Abigail, and brought forth his first-born son: who proved a great affliction to him.

Ver. 3. *And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.*] Of whom we have no further account any where: only he is called Daniel in 1 Chron. iii. 1. And the Hebrew doctors give this reason of both names: He called him, say they, when he was born, Daniel (which was his *fundamental*, that is, his primary name), because, said he, *God hath judged* or *vindicated* me from Nabal. And afterward he called him Chileab, as much as to say, *like to his father:* because in his countenance he resembled David. And this he did, for this reason, to silence the mockers of that age: who said Abigail had conceived by Nabal, whose son this was. For the confuting of which calumny, God was pleased to order that the fashion of his face should be perfectly like to David's.

And the third, Absalom, the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur.] We read of the Geshurites in the foregoing book, (xxvii. 8.) upon whom, it is there said, David made an inroad; and brought away this fair captive, a little before Saul's death. And when he came to Hebron, and she was sufficiently instructed and prepared to be a proselyte, he made her his wife. Thus the Jews tell the story: which doth not seem to be true, because it is said in that invasion he slew all the women. We must look therefore for other Geshurites, whom we find in the north, as the forenamed were in the south. (See Deut. iii. 14. Josh. xii. 5.) How David came by the daughter of the king of these people, it is not easy to tell. Perhaps he thought it policy to make a friend of the king of Geshur, who lay near to Ish-bosheth, and might be a curb to him, and give him a diversion, if he attempted any thing against Judah: and therefore married his daughter.

Ver. 4. *The fourth, Adonijah, the son of Haggith: the fifth, Shephatiah, the son of Abital.*] Of the former of these, we read in the beginning of the next book, how his ambition led him to destruction (as Absalom's did), but nothing of the other.

Ver. 5. *The sixth, Ithream, by Eglah, David's wife.*] This only being called his wife (though the rest were so likewise) hath led the Jews into an opinion, that Michal, who was his first wife, is here called Eglah: because she was a lovely woman, in whom he much delighted, when he first married her. It is said, indeed, in vi. 23. *she had no child until the day of her death:* but the meaning of that is, she was barren after she had taunted David for dancing before the ark; not that she never had a child before that time.

These were born to David in Hebron.] During the six

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years and a half that he reigned there. I do not know what weight there is in the observation of Conradus Pellicanus on this place, but leave it to the judgment of the reader: God so dispensed things, that men in those days, of many wives, seldom produced many children, "quasi natura reclamante rei indignitatem," *as if nature abhorred the indignity of the thing*, and approved the conjunction of one man with one woman. He did well to say *seldom*; for we read of one who had threescore and ten sons by many wives (*viz.* Gideon), though they came to nothing.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul.*] Went up and down through all the tribes of Israel, to strengthen his interest, and confirm them in their allegiance to Ish-bosheth: as the same Pellicanus expounds it.

Ver. 7. *And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Ajah.*] By whom he had two sons, (xxi. 8.)

And Ish-bosheth said to Abner, Why hast thou gone in to my father's concubine?] The Jews look upon it as a very great crime for any man, though never so great, to marry the widow of the king: for it was esteemed an affectation of the kingdom; as appears in the case of Adonijah. Therefore Ish-bosheth had reason to be angry with Abner, though he was so unseasonably.

Ver. 8. *Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth.*] He was grown so haughty, and thought his merit so great, that he thought he might do any thing without reprehension.

And said, Am I a dog's head.] He thought Ish-bosheth used him not as a captain of the host of Israel, but as if he had been a keeper of dogs. So the word *head* signifies, as the Jews generally explain it. Rasi for instance; *I am treated as if I was a commander that hath only the custody of dogs.* To the same purpose Kimchi: and R. Esaias more largely (as Bochart observes), *When I am leader of all Israel, thou hast cast contempt upon me, as if I was only set over a company of dogs.* So the Syriac here translates *dog* in the plural: *captain of a pack of dogs.* Which was a vile employment, because a dog is generally accounted the vilest animal, (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 56.)

Which against Judah do shew kindness this day to the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David.] He insolently reckons up his great services to him and to his family, when he could have ruined him, if he had pleased, by making David king, as easily as he had done him.

That thou chargest me with a fault concerning this woman?] He upbraids him with ingratitude, in taking notice of such a small fault (as he accounted it) of lying with Rizpah. For, as Peter Martyr thinks, he did not intend to have her for his wife; but used her as his harlot.

Ver. 9. *So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him.*] These words shew he knew very well God had unalterably resolved to bestow the kingdom of Israel upon David; and yet his ambition led him hither to oppose not only David, but the Lord himself.

Ver. 10. *To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.*] A wonderful change! which the study of revenge wrought in him: that he who lately went about the country, confirming the Israelites in their opposition to David, now resolved to bring them all over to him. "Such is the genius of many great courtiers, who are irritated upon slight occasions: and rather rule over kings, than are ruled by them." They are the words of Conradus Pellicanus.

Ver. 11. *And he could not answer Abner again; because he feared him.*] He was afraid to provoke him to a higher degree, by answering him again: and therefore now was silent when it was too late.

Ver. 12. *And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf.*] Having thus incensed his master, he thought it not safe to delay the execution of what he had threatened. Yet thought it neither safe nor prudent to go himself to David, until he tried his inclinations by messengers, whom he privately sent to treat with him.

Saying, Whose is the land?] This was as much as to say, that he owned him to be lord of all the country, by God's special gift.

Saying also, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel to thee.] He desires all enmities might be forgotten, and that David would make a league of friendship with him: and then he undertook, having a great power over Israel, to make them all his subjects.

Ver. 13. *And he said, Well, I will make a league with thee.*] He soon agreed to the motion; with which he could not but be well pleased. But some think he did ill, to make a league with such a wicked man; especially since he did not inquire of God, whether he should do it or not. But this is more than any body can tell; for many things were done that are not recorded.

But one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.] This was a very reasonable condition, if Abner was able to effect it; both upon David's own account and hers: for she was his first and beloved wife; and she was by force given to another man: who could not lawfully enjoy her; David having given her no bill of divorce. And therefore Phalti, the Jews think, being a good man, never knew her: (as I observed on the foregoing book, xxv. 44.) so that she lived unhappy, in a double state of separation, from David and from her present husband. There was something of policy also in this demand; that he might ingratiate himself with the Israelites, by shewing great love to the house of Saul.

Ver. 14. *And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying.*] We do not read what answer Abner gave to David, when he required the forenamed condition of him. But it is probable he let David know, as the truth was, that it was not in his power to bring Michal without Ish-bosheth's consent, whose sister as well as subject she was: at least, it was not safe to attempt it; and therefore he advised him to send to her brother, who could not easily deny what he desired: which Abner also, it is likely, undertook to represent as a most just demand.

This counsel of Abner David followed, and it had the success he wished.

Deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.] Whom he purchased of Saul with the hazard of his life.

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Ver. 15. *And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband.*] He is called *her husband,* says the Gemara Sanhedrin, (cap. 7. sect. 2.) because he loved her with a conjugal affection: though he did not enjoy her. This was an honourable action of Ish-bosheth, to restore David his lawful wife: like to which Strigelius here notes in several great men. Particularly in the famous Scipio, who restored Allucius's wife to him, who had been taken by his soldiers: and Pausanius, general of the Lacedemonians; who, after the fight at Platea, sent Coa, who was a captive, unto her relations.

Even from Phaltiel the son of Laish.] Called Phalti in 1 Sam. xxv. 44. The word *el* is here added, say the Jews, because God interposed all the time he had her to keep them from sin. For he put a sword between Michal and him when he went to bed to her, signifying he should be cut off if he lay with her. Kimchi and Ralbag follow this fancy of the Talmudists: but others dislike it, and think that David had given her a bill of divorce. Unto which he being compelled by Saul's violence, and not doing it willingly, they think it was null; and that David might lawfully take her again, though Phalti had enjoyed her. But Abarbinel confutes both these opinions, and thinks that Saul was not so impious as to take a wife from her husband, aud give her to another: nor David in such need of a wife as to send for Michal, if she had lived in wedlock with another man. And therefore he observes, that Saul is not said (in 1 Sam. xxv. 44.) to *give her to wife* unto Phalti, but only *to give her:* that is, to commit her to his care and custody in the absence of her husband, that she might live virtuously, and not follow after David. For he supposes Phalti to have been an old, grave, and pious man, who might be trusted with her, as he was with the children of Merab, the other daughter of Saul, who sent them to Phalti to be educated, and to bear Michal company. As for his being called *her husband* (in this verse and the next), he observes the word is not *baalah,* but only *ishah,* which is used, he saith, for one that is the keeper and overseer of another person.

Ver. 16. *And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim.*] Being very loath to part with her company, which was delightful to him.

Then said Abner unto him, Return. And he returned.] Abner intended to have the honour of presenting her unto the king: and would not have the old man appear to disturb their meeting with his tears.

Ver. 17. *And Abner.*] Having seen David, and given him assurance of his fidelity, as David him of his friendship.

Had communication with the elders of Israel, saying.] Went back to persuade all to do as he had done: and by bringing over the great men to David, he doubted not the multitude would follow.

Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you.] For after the slaughter of Goliath he was very gracious in the eyes of all the people, and was much beloved by them, (1 Sam. xviii. 5. 16.) And when he was forced to fly, a great many of Israel came over to him while he dwelt at Ziklag: of the Benjamites, 1 Chron. xii. 2, &c. and the Gadites, ver. 8, 9, &c. and the Manassites, ver. 19, &c. and after he came to Hebron more went over to him out of all the tribes of Israel, ver. 23. and the following part of that chapter. And it is highly probable, that as soon as Saul and Jonathan were dead, they all generally inclined to make David their king: if Abner, by his great authority, had not set up one of the family of Saul.

Ver. 18. *Now then do it.*] Fulfil your own desires and intentions.

For the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.] We no where read these words recorded; but, it is likely, Samuel had often spoken them: if not at length, yet they are included in the words of God to Samuel, when he commanded him to anoint David king over Israel; (1 Sam. x. 1. 12.) for this was the intention of giving them a king, that he might fight their battles, (1 Sam. viii. 29.)

Ver. 19. *And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin.*] Where he had more interest than among the rest, being of that tribe: whom it was necessary to take some pains withal to gain their affection to David. Therefore he seems to have spoken, not only with their elders, but to have gone through the several families in the tribe: who were much devoted to the house of Saul, and had stuck close to it; and were the first that attempted any thing against David, (ii. 15.)

And Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel.] He went and reported to David privately the sense of all the people.

And that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.] Particularly he related how all Benjamin stood affected to him: whom he brought over so effectually, that they never forsook the house of David when all the rest of the tribes did.

Ver. 20. *And Abner came to David in Hebron, and twenty men with him.*] Now he appeared publicly, and declared himself for David.

And David made Abner, and the men that were with him, a feast.] Not merely as a token of kindness, but to make a league with him, (as he had desired, and David promised, ver. 12, 13.) Into which it had been an ancient custom to enter by eating and drinking together, Gen. xxvi. 30. xxxi. 44. and other places.

Ver. 21. *And Abner said, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel together unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee.*] He intended to bring all the chief men of Israel to own him for their king, as he had done; and promise to be his faithful subjects: which he knew he could effect, because they had already declared their mind in the private conferences he had had with them, (ver. 17, &c.)

That thou mayest reign over all that thy heart desireth.] That is, over all the tribes of Israel.

And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.] They parted as good friends do, with wishes of all happiness on both sides.

Ver. 22. *And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from pursuing a troop, and brought a great spoil with them.*] In those times of distraction between Judah and Israel, we may well think their neighbours, who were enemies to both, the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, and others, made many inroads upon the country to get spoil. When Joab and the great men about David watched, and at this time had overtaken them, in their return home, and recovered a great booty from them

But Abner was not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.] Though Abner

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was not there when Joab returned victorious, yet he seems to be but just gone a little way out of the city, (ver. 26.)

Ver. 23. *And when Joab and all the host that were with him were come.*] That is, the captains of the host, or principal officers, were come to give an account of their success.

They told Joab, saying, Abner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.] Some officious courtiers informed him of what had passed in his absence: as it is likely they were wont to do of all that the king did. For he that commanded all the forces, had in effect every body else at his command.

Ver. 24. *Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?*] He chides the king, as if he did not understand his own interest; but was to be taught by him. Which high presumption he was constrained to endure, because of his great power with the military men.

Ver. 25. *Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out, and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.*] It is likely that Joab himself did not believe, that Abner came with a design only to learn how David's affairs stood, and to make his advantage of it: but he would have David believe so, that he might have the better colour for his wicked design of dispatching Abner.

Ver. 26. *And when Joab was gone out from David.*] He seems to have gone out in a huff; not staying for an answer.

He sent messengers after Abner.] In the king's name, I suppose, as if he had something further to communicate to him: for otherwise it is not credible that Abner would have returned.

And brought him back from the well of Sirah.] It is not certain where this well was: but it is probable not far from Hebron. Josephus saith, twenty furlongs distant from thence.

But David knew it not.] Gave him no such order, as he pretended.

Ver. 27. *And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab.*] Who waited for him at the entrance of the city.

Took him aside in the gate.] Which being a public place, where men met to do business, and where the courts of judgment sat, it made Abner suspect no danger.

To speak with him quietly.] Especially since he took him by the hand in a friendly manner, to have some discourse with him.

And smote him under the fifth rib, that he died.] Immediately, without speaking a word. (See the foregoing chapter, ver. 23.)

For the blood of Asahel his brother.] This was one reason; but the chief was, his fear that Abner would overtop him, if he brought all Israel to submit to David; being a man longer versed in military affairs than himself; and who had governed Israel in the time of Saul's distraction, and since Ish-bosheth was made king by him. So Josephus: He was afraid lest Abner should receive from David, *πρώτην τάξιν, the highest place above himself.* Upon which he makes this reflection, *ὁσάκι πηλίκα*, &c. *What will not men dare to do, who are covetous, ambitious, and will be inferior to none, for to obtain what they desire? They will commit a thousand crimes: and rather than lose what they have got, they will not fear still to commit greater wickednesses.*

Ver. 28. *And afterward, when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner.*] He lifted up his hands to God (as Josephus explains it), and with a loud voice cried out publicly, that God knew he was innocent in this matter: and therefore trusted he would not let him and his kingdom suffer for it.

Ver. 29. *Let it rest on the head of Joab.*] The guilt and punishment lie upon him; who was the sole committer of this murder.

And on all his father's house.] His indignation at the fact seems to have transported him too far; making him wish all Joab's family might suffer for it: which was against the law of God, (Deut. xxiv. 16.) that children should not suffer for their father's sin. It may be looked upon, therefore, as a prophetical prediction, rather than as a private imprecation: or as words spoken in a great passion; which made him think the punishment could not be too sore, or too lasting, for so horrid a crime. In the guilt of which Joab endeavoured to involve the king, by sending for Abner back in the king's name (as Josephus takes it), and so might be thought to have killed him by his order.

And let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue.] Which was such a very noisome disease, that, by the law of the Jews, it made the very bed on which a man, that had it, lay, or the seat on which he sat, unclean. In short, he was no less abominable among them than a menstruous woman. (See Lev. xv.)

Or that is a leper.] How filthy he was accounted, see Lev. xiii. where by the law he was secluded from all society.

Or that leaneth on a staff.] By reason of some great weakness, or lameness: having the gout, as Pellicanus takes it.

Or that falleth on the sword.] This, in our language, signifies *that maketh away himself.*

Or that lacketh bread.] Is a beggar, and ready to starve.

Ver. 30. *So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.*] It seems Abishai was near at hand, ready to assist in the murder; if there had been any need of his help.

Ver. 31. *And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him.*] To the whole court.

Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner.] These were all outward expressions of very great sorrow: which Joab himself was forced to make a show of.

And David himself followed the bier.] Was the chief mourner. In which the Jews think David's passion made him again exceed his bounds: for Maimonides saith, it was not lawful, by their constitutions, for a king to accompany a dead corpse to the grave; but he ought to mourn at home. This is their doctrine in Sanhedrin, cap. 2. sect. 13. and the Gemara there, cap. 2. n. 5. (See Cocceius's Annotations.) But a famous writer among them (Mikotzi) saith it was indifferent: the king might do as David did, if he pleased: for which he quotes R. Jehuda. Therefore, though perhaps it was not commonly done, yet David, to purge himself from all suspicion of this crime, and to shew his extreme great grief for it, thought fit to do Abner this

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public honour. (See Guil. Schickardus, in his Jus Regium, cap. 4. Theor. 13.)

The word we here translate *the bier*, is, in the original, *the bed:* on which persons of quality were wont to be carried forth to their graves, as ordinary people were upon that which we call a *bier*. And kings were sometimes carried out upon beds very richly adorned; as Josephus tells us Herod was, in the latter end of his first book of the Jewish Wars, Κλίνη μὲν ὁλόχρυσος, &c. *The bed was all gilded, set with precious stones, and a purple cover curiously wrought*, &c.

It is but a fancy that they were wont to follow the *bier*, and not to go before it: to signify that they looked upon their dead friends not as lost, but only gone before them, "Præmissi, non amissi," as Seneca speaks.

Ver. 32. *And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.*] By this it appears he was buried in pomp, and with a long train of people attending his corpse, as there did the widow's son in Luke vii. 14. When they came to the grave, and laid the corpse there, it was the custom to make great and loud lamentations; which are sometimes called *howlings* in the prophetical language. And commonly before the word *weeping*, there is mention in Scripture of *lifting up the voice* in doleful cries. This is as ancient as Abraham's time; (Gen. xxi. 16.) and we find Joseph weeping so loud, upon a different occasion, that all the house of Pharaoh heard him, (Gen. xlv. 2. 14, 15.) The forms of lamentation are noted by the prophets, (Jer. xxii. 18. Micah v. 16.)

Ver. 33. *And the king lamented over Abner, saying.*] Josephus looks upon what follows as a kind of epitaph upon Abner, whom David buried magnificently, as he speaks, Θάψας δ' αὐτὸν μεγαλοπρεπῶς καὶ ἐπιταφίους συγγραψάμενος ᾠδήνους, &c.

Died Abner as a fool dieth?] By a *fool* in Scripture is often meant a wicked man, a malefactor; and so the sense, according to this translation, is, Did he die by the hand of justice, for some notorious crime committed by him? Or, Did he die by his own folly? No such matter. But the words may be translated out of the Hebrew, *How like a fool died Abner?* Or, *Should Abner have died like a fool?* That is, what pity is it, that such a valiant man should die on this fashion! By treachery, without any power to defend himself.

Ver. 34. *Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters.*] He was not a prisoner, but had both hands and feet at liberty, and yet could make no use of them for his own preservation. Victorinus Strigelius thinks that David, in these words, distinguishes him from those criminals, whose hands being tied behind them, are carried to execution; and from those idle soldiers, who, being taken captive in war, have fetters clapped upon their legs, to keep them from running away. He was none of these; neither a notorious offender, nor a coward: but perfidiously murdered by one in seeming friendship with him. But the plain meaning seems to be, that if his enemy had set upon him openly, he had been able to make his part good with him.

But as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou.] That is, before a secret murderer.

And all the people wept again over him.] Upon this speech of the king, which was mournfully spoken, they were so affected, that it drew tears more plentifully from them.

Ver. 35. *And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day.*] This was a custom among the Hebrews, whose friends were wont to come, after the funeral was over, to comfort those who had buried their dead, and send in provisions to make a feast. It being supposed, that they themselves were so sorrowful, as not to be able to think of their necessary food. (See Jer. xvi. 5. 7, 8. Ezek. xxiv. 17. and Grotius upon that place.)

David sware, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else, till the sun be down.] He resolved to keep a strict and rigid fast, which did not end till the sun was set. Hence it appears that they buried their dead in the day-time.

Ver. 36. *And all the people took notice of it.*] Of his great grief.

And it pleased them; for whatsoever the king did, pleased all the people.] They were pleased with the honour he had done this great man: whereby he so ingratiated himself with the people, that they were disposed to put a kind construction upon all his actions, as wise and well becoming him.

Ver. 37. *For all the people.*] Of Judah, or all those that were about the king.

And all Israel, understood that day, that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.] That he neither ordered it, nor consented to it, nor any way approved it, but was heartily grieved for his death.

Ver. 38. *And the king said unto his servants.*] Who, perhaps, were not sensible enough of this loss; or thought he bewailed it too much.

Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?] He bids them consider his birth, and his power, authority, and valour, with all his other excellent qualities: and they would not think it strange that he buried him with so much pomp, and mourned so heavily for him.

Ver. 39. *And I am this day weak.*] In the Hebrew it is *tender;* that is, his kingdom was young (as we speak), and not settled and confirmed.

Though anointed king.] Or, as the words may be translated, *and anointed king.* That is, not born to a kingdom, but newly called to it, without any hereditary right to the authority; which made it more slender, than if it had been of long standing. This seems to have been the reason why he did not punish Joab for this murder, because he himself was not well established. He had also been very faithful, and stuck close to him in his adversity; and had a mighty power among the military men (as I said before), and was also an excellent soldier himself; which made him very necessary to David in a time of civil war and discord between Judah and Israel. Therefore prudence made him defer his punishment till a better opportunity. As God himself ordinarily doth not call men to an account immediately for their sins, but takes a time to do it more severely, than if it were done presently.

And these men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me.] He and his brother had got such an interest in the soldiery, and among the people both in the court and country, that he knew not how to deal with them. Yet he not only sufficiently shewed that he detested their actions, but that he

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did not stand in awe of them. For he commanded Joab to attend Abner's funeral, with his clothes rent, and in sackcloth: and to his face commended Abner highly, and condemned his murder of him, (ver. 31. 33, 34.) which was a great mortification to him; and a kind of penance which he made him do for his crime.

The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.] He was confident God would punish him as he deserved, if he could not do it himself. And this may be looked upon as a prayer, that God would not suffer him to escape his vengeance.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *AND when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble.*] Having lost his supporter and defender; and hearing he was gone over to David, as appeared by his dying in Hebron.

And all the Israelites were troubled.] Because by his death the treaty with David was broke off; or there was none to manage it with such authority and prudence as Abner had: and they foresaw some great change (which they knew not how it would end) by the loss of this great man. For so Plato observes, from long experience, Ὅταν μέλλει κακῶς πράττειν πόλιν, ἐξαίρεῖ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας ἐκ ταύτης τῆς πόλεως ὁ Θεός: *When any calamity is to befal a city, God is wont to take away excellent men out of that city.*

Ver. 2. *And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands.*] Captains, perhaps, of two companies of guards about the king.

The name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the tribe of Benjamin.] The king's own tribe, which made him repose the greatest trust and confidence in them.

For Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin.] Though it was now in the hand of the Philistines, yet it belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, (Josh. xviii. 25.)

Ver. 3. *And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim.*] When Saul was slain, several Israelites left their cities and fled, and the Philistines took possession of them: among which, this city, it seems, was one forsaken by its inhabitants, (1 Sam. xxxi. 7.) There was a place called Gittaim, in the same tribe of Benjamin, (Nahum xi. 53.) But it is not likely that was the place here mentioned: for the Beerothites would, in all probability, fly further off from the Philistines.

And were sojourners there to this very day.] When this book was written, they were not returned to their own country: being commodiously settled, I suppose, in the other place. Why this is here related, it is hard to say: perhaps it was to shew that these were two soldiers of fortune (as we now speak), whose necessity forced them to seek for a support; which they met withal at the court of Ish-bosheth, where they came to preferment.

Ver. 4. *And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan.*] That is, the tidings of their death, mentioned 1 Sam. xxxi.

And his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee.] Being in a very great fright.

He fell, and became lame; and his name was Mephibosheth.] This seems to be related, to shew what it was that emboldened these captains to do what follows: because he who was the next avenger of blood was very young; and besides was lame and unable to pursue them.

Ver. 5. *And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon.*] As the manner was, and still continues, in hot countries.

Ver. 6. *And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat.*] In the Hebrew, *carrying wheat.* Which they either brought into the king's granaries, for the use of his household, or carried forth for the supply of their soldiers, who were maintained at the king's charge.

And they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.] They gave him a mortal wound, and nobody suspecting them, they easily made their escape.

Ver. 7.] *For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber.*] In a private room; into which he was wont to retire from company, when he had a mind to repose himself.

And they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head.] The privacy of the place gave them the opportunity to do all this without discovery.

And gat them away through the plain all night.] From Mahanaim to Hebron it was, for the most part, a flat country, till they came to ascend the mountain, on whose side Hebron stood.

Ver. 8. *And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.*] For they were all now extinguished, except his grandson Mephibosheth, who was of no account because of his lameness.

Ver. 9. *And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite.*] One of them only spake to the king, but related what they both had done, and therefore he directed his speech to them both.

And said unto them, As the Lord liveth, who hath delivered my soul out of all adversity.] Together with his thankful acknowledgment of God's care of him hitherto, in all his straits, he suggests to them that he needed not the help of such men as they, for his future preservation and preferment by wicked acts.

Ver. 10. *When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead (thinking to have brought good tidings), I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought I would have given him a reward for his tidings.*] He put them in mind of the story of the Amalekite (chap. i. of this book), which they could not but have heard, and thereby might have learnt what reception they were likely to find with David.

Ver. 11. *How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person.*] For so Ish-bosheth was, in respect of them: to whom he had done no wrong; but preferred them to a place of trust and honour.

In his own house upon his bed?] This aggravated their crime; and made it vastly different from that of the Amalekite.

Shall I not therefore require his blood at your hand, and take you away from the earth?] As persons unworthy to

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live; who had slain their master, and he a king, in his own house, when he was taking his repose under their safeguard.

Ver. 12. *And David commanded his young men.*] Who were of his guard; ready at hand to execute his commands.

And they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet.] By David's order, no doubt; they having slain their master with their *hands*, and made their escape from justice with their *feet*.

And hanged them up over the pool of Hebron.] Exposed them in an open, public place.

But he took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.] It seems David had done Abner the honour to make him a particular sepulchre: where he privately interred the head of Ish-bosheth. Whose body, no question, was buried by the Israelites, with such honours as were suitable to his dignity.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *THEN came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron.*] That is, ambassadors were sent from every tribe, by a common agreement among them.

And spake, saying, We are thy bone and thy flesh.] They were not overcome by the arms, but by the piety and justice of David, to acknowledge him their king: for which they gave several reasons. The first is general; that he was qualified by the law of God, (Deut. xvii. 15.) which required they should choose one of their brethren, and not a stranger. Now he was of the same blood with them, being descended from the same common father, Israel.

Ver. 2. *Also in time past, when Saul was king, thou wast he that led out and brought in Israel.*] They were induced also by his valour and conduct, which he had shewn, they well remembered, in the reign of Saul: when he was so successful in many expeditions, that he became the darling of all the people, (1 Sam. xviii. 5. 15, 16. 30.)

And the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be captain over Israel.] This was the chiefest argument of all; that God they knew had designed him long ago to be their king: having said by the prophet Samuel, that he should *feed*, that is, rule and govern them, and fight their battles. We do not read these words any where recorded before now: but Samuel having anointed him, no doubt frequently spake of his office, under the name of the *pastor of the people*.

And it is the first time we find a governor described by this name in Scripture: though much used afterward by the prophets, who speak in this language; particularly Ezek. xxxiv. 23. and many other places. Whence our Lord Christ is called the *good Shepherd*, and *the great Shepherd;* that is, ruler of his people: and both the Greeks and the Romans have borrowed this word, to express a supreme governor. And truly such rulers as take care of their people, as a shepherd doth of his flock, are Divine blessings: whom Isaiah calls *nursing fathers*, xlix. 23. On the contrary, they who lay heavy burdens on their people, fleecing, or rather flaying, them by cruel oppressions, are called by the prophets *roaring lions, hungry bears*, and *devouring wolves*, Ezek. xix. 2. xxii. 27. Nahum ii. 11, 12. Habak. i. 8. Zephan. iii. 3. Prov. xxvii. 15.; *companions of thieves*, Isa. i. 23.; *whales, dragons*, or rather *crocodiles*, Ezek. xxix. 3. Psal. lxxiv. 13, 14.; *leopards*, Jer. v. 6. and such-like odious names.

Ver. 3. *So all the elders of Israel came to the king in Hebron.*] He gave the messengers such a kind reception, and so thankfully declared his acceptance of the offer they made him, that, upon their return with his answer, the elders of Israel came to wait upon him. By whom some understand the senators of the great Sanhedrin: but that is a fancy which I have often confuted. The plain meaning is, that the chief persons of authority, in every tribe, came in the name of the rest of that tribe, whom they represented.

And king David made a league with them in Hebron.] It is not said what the contents of this league or contract was. The Jews think it was principally, that there should be an act of oblivion of all the injuries which the people of Israel had done to Judah, or they to them, in the reign of Ish-bosheth. But this is too narrow a sense: it is more probable, that he assured them he would govern them justly and kindly, according to the law of God; and they promised to obey him sincerely and faithfully, according to the same law.

Before the Lord.] The ark of God's presence was not in Hebron; and therefore it is a question how it could be said, that he made a league *before the Lord*. But see what I have said of this, Judg. xx. 1.

And they anointed David king over Israel.] They desired the high-priest to anoint him, whose office it was: and thereby expressed their consent he should reign over them. So Procopius Gazæus interprets these words, (as he doth ii. 4.) *Iterum suffragiis*, &c. All the tribes again chose him, by their votes, to be their king. He was anointed three times; first by Samuel, in his father's house; (1 Sam. xvi. 13.) then when the tribe of Judah owned him for their king; (chap. ii. of this book, ver. 4.) and now when all Israel did the same. For which Abarbinel gives this reason: "David's unction was repeated so often, that it might be the foundation, and root, and principle, of all his posterity;" who needed no unction, being anointed in him: unless there was any controversy about the succession.

Ver. 4. *David was thirty years old when he began to reign; and he reigned forty years.*] It is uncertain how old he was when he was first anointed by Samuel; and how long after he came to the court of Saul; and how long he was in exile from it. About which men's opinions are very different: for some think, as the Jews do in Seder Olam Rabba, that he was near nine-and-twenty years old when Samuel first anointed him: and consequently but one year in exile. Others (which is the truer opinion) that he was twenty years old at his first unction, and so almost ten years in exile. But it is sufficient for us to know, what we are here told, that he was thirty years old at his second unction in Hebron, immediately after Saul's death.

Ver. 5. *In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.*] By this it appears, that immediately after his third unction, he made his attempt upon Jerusalem, as it here follows, otherwise he could not have reigned there so long.

Ver. 6. *And the king and his men went to Jerusalem.*] His first warlike enterprise, after he was their king, was against Jerusalem, which he resolved to reduce out of the

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hands of the Jebusites; who hitherto possessed a noble part of it, *viz.* the fort of Zion, which they held, though the Israelites dwelt in the other part of the city.

Unto the Jebusites, the inhabiters of the city.] That is, of that part of the land. (Josh. xv. 63. Judg. i. 21. xix. 10, 11.)

Which spake unto David.] When he came to set down his army against the fortress.

Saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.] They imagined their fortress to be so impregnable, that, by way of contempt and scorn, they told him, the blind and the lame were able to defend it against him, and all his forces. So Bochartus translates these words, "Non huc accedes," &c. *Thou shalt not come up hither, but the blind and the lame will drive thee away;* i. e. the most feeble and cowardly among us. Which he thinks is so plain a sense, that he wonders men of great learning should seek for any other. (Lib. iv. Phaleg. cap. 36.) But so it is, a great many by *the blind and the lame* understand the images of their gods (particularly our learned Gregory hath a whole dissertation about it). As if they had said, Our gods, whom ye call blind and lame, that have eyes and see not, feet and walk not, (as it is Psal. cxv.) they shall defend us: and you must overcome them, before you overcome us. Luther himself thus explains the sense: "These blind and lame (saith he) were the idols of the Jebusites; which, to irritate David, they set upon their walls, as their patrons and defenders: and they did as good as say, Thou dost not fight with us, but with our gods; who will easily repel thee." As for the fancy of R. Eliezer, in his Pirke, cap. 36. it is altogether groundless; which is, that when Abraham bought the burying-place, in Machpelah, of the children of Heth, he sealed a covenant with them, that when his seed should possess the land of Canaan (as they believed they would), they should not possess the city of Jebus. Which covenant they now engraved upon brazen statues, and set them upon their walls; saying, Thou canst not enter here, unless thou break the oath of Abraham. (See also Bartoloccius, in his Kirjath-sepher, par. ii. p. 89, &c.)

Ver. 7. *Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.*] Their taunts and jeers did not discourage David, but he assaulted the fort and took it, and made it his royal seat.

Ver. 8. *And David said on that day.*] When the assault was made.

Whosoever getteth up into the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, &c.] i. e. *Cuts off their pipes of water,* or their cisterns into which the water fell; for the Hebrew word *tzinnor,* which we translate *gutter,* is no where found but in this place, and in Psal. xlii. 7. and by St. Jerome is translated *fistulæ.* But I know not how we come to transpose the words, *he that smiteth the Jebusites,* behind the other, which in the Hebrew are first. *He that smiteth the Jebusites, let him throw down into the ditch* (which was by the wall) *both the blind and the lame, which David extremely hates.* Thus Bochart translates the words in the place abovenamed, which, if it be admitted, there is no need to add those words (out of 1 Chron. xi. 6.) to make out the sense, *he shall be chief and captain:* for the sense is complete without them.

Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not enter into the house.] Or, as it is in the margin, *Because they had said, even the blind and the lame, He shall not come into the house.* That is, because they had taunted him with the blind and lame, as if they could defend the fort, and hinder him from coming into it; therefore he was highly provoked to wish they might be thrown down headlong from their walls into the ditch. And then by *the house* is meant, neither the house of David, nor the house of the Lord (as many take it), but that very fort wherein the Jebusites had dwelt; from which hereafter they were excluded. And indeed it is a very large word in the Hebrew, signifying any place. If we could admit the fancy of R. Eliezer, that the Jebusites engraved the oath of Abraham upon brazen statues, whereby they pretended that fort was secured to them and their posterity, such an abominable forgery must needs highly incense David, whose soul hated such impudent frauds.

Ver. 9. *So David dwelt in the fort, and called it, The city of David: and David built round about, from Millo and inward.*] The fort was not wide enough to contain the whole court, and all his guards, and others that had occasion to come hither: and therefore he built round about it from Millo. Which some take for that low place which lay between the fort and the city: which was now filled with people, and thence called Millo.

Ver. 10. *And David went on, and grew great.*] He proceeded to enlarge his dominions, as well as his royal city.

And the Lord God of hosts was with him.] This was the cause of his great prosperity, that God, who commands all the armies of heaven and earth, directed and blessed him in all his enterprises.

Ver. 11. *And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers unto David.*] To compliment him upon his succession to the throne, and taking Jerusalem. Which was a great honour; for Hiram was a potent prince, and yet courted David's friendship; because he saw how prosperous he was. And this friendship continued all David's days, unto the reign of Solomon. When his son, of the same name, expressed the same affection to him, that his father had done to David.

And cedar-trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David a house.] Hearing David intended to settle in the fort he had taken, Hiram sent him both materials and artificers to build him a palace. For the Jews being given to feeding cattle, and husbandry, were not very skilful in manufactures.

Ver. 12. *And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel.*] For he had both subdued his enemies, and raised him up friends.

And that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.] It is an excellent reflection which Conradus Pellicanus made long ago upon these words: "This is the greatest grace of a king, that he certainly believes himself to be made a king by God, for the sake of the people: and let him often call to mind, the people were not created or ordained by God for the king."

Ver. 13. *And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron.*] The difference between a wife and a concubine, the Talmudists generally say, was, that the latter had neither dowry settled upon her, nor was taken with all the rites and solemnities of marriage: yet was a wife of a lower rank, as well as the former which had both. See Selden, lib. de Successionibus, cap. 3. and what I have already noted, Gen. xxii. 24

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and elsewhere. How many David had of both sorts, it is not certain: but we read of six *wives* he had before, iii. 2, &c. And the Jews, after their way, endeavour to prove from xi. 8. of this book, that he had eighteen in all: which number it was not lawful for the king to exceed; unless he divorced any of them, and took others in their room. (See Schickard, de Jure Nepo, cap. 3. Theor. 9. and Grotius, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 5. sect. 9. and my notes on Deut. xvii. 17.)

And there were yet sons and daughters born to David.] It was looked upon as a piece of political wisdom in princes, to endeavour to have many children: that, by matching them into many potent families, they might strengthen their interest, and have the more supporters of their authority.

Ver. 14. *And these be the names of them that were born to him in Jerusalem; Shammuah, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon.*] These are the very same names with those in 1 Chron. iii. 5. only a little variation in the first.

Ver. 15. *Ibhar also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia.*

Ver. 16. *And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphalet.*] Here are only seven sons mentioned in these two verses: but in 1 Chron. iii. 8, &c. there are nine. Of which Kimchi gives this account; that here he mentions only the sons he had by his *wives;* but there are some added which he had by his *concubines:* which doth not well agree with what there follows, (ver. 9.)

Ver. 17. *But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel.*] So that now Israel and Judah were united under one head, they thought it behoved them to bestir themselves: whereas they seem to have been quiet while the war lasted between Israel and Judah in the time of Ish-bosheth, hoping they might destroy one another.

All the Philistines went up to seek David.] They raised all the forces they were able, to find out David and fight him, before he was settled in his new kingdom. The friendship between him and king Achish was so great, that one would have thought they should have lived in peace. But either Achish was dead, or the lords of the Philistines, who were very powerful, overruled him, as they did when they forced him to send David out of their army, (1 Sam. xxix. 6, &c.)

And David heard of it, and went down to the hold.] Intelligence being brought him of their motions, he went from the fort of Zion, to some other strong place below; where his army might conveniently have their rendezvous.

Ver. 18. *The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.*] Which in Josh. xv. 8. we translate the *valley of giants,* lying westward of Jerusalem; which perhaps they thought to assault.

Ver. 19. *And David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into my hand?*] Though David went into a strong hold, he did not trust to that, nor intend merely to stand upon his defence: yet would not give them battle, till he was encouraged by God to do it.

And the Lord said, Go up; for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thy hand.] A full assurance of victory took away all fear of their great numbers, which is expressed by their *spreading* themselves in the forenamed valley.

Ver. 20. *And David came to Baal-perazim.*] For thither the Philistines marched from Rephaim, where they first pitched: as appears from 1 Chron. xiv. 11.

And David smote them there.] Routed their army, and slew a great many of them in that place.

And said, The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters.] Overpowered and scattered them; as waters, when they make a breach in a bank, overflow and carry all before them.

Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.] That it might put him and his posterity in mind of God's great power and goodness, which he shewed in this place, where the Philistines were put into such a consternation, that they forgat, when they fled, to carry away their gods with them; as it here follows.

Ver. 21. *And there they left their images.*] Which they had brought into the field with them; to be carried before their host, as a token of the presence of their gods with them. Thus we read in 2 Chron. xxv. 14. that the Edomites had their gods along with them when they fought with Amaziah. And perhaps they learnt this from the Israelites, who carried the ark (the symbol of God's presence) in their army when they went to fight with these Philistines: who saw it, and took it, as the Israelites now did their images, 1 Sam. iv. 4, 5, &c. But behold here the difference between the ark and these images. For when the ark fell into the hands of the Philistines, it sorely plagued them, as we read in the foregoing book: but their images had no power to hurt the Israelites, nor secure themselves from being burnt by them, as it here follows.

And David and his men burnt them.] According to the command of God, Deut. vii. 5.

Ver. 22. *And the Philistines came up again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.*] They saw that their all lay at stake, and therefore they mustered up their whole strength; and perhaps procured the assistance of other people, to try their fortune (as we now speak) in another battle. So Josephus relates, that the Syrians and Phœnicians joined them, and came up, τριπλασίῳ στρατῷ, *with an army three times as big as the former.*

Ver. 23. *And when David inquired of the Lord.*] Though he had been so successful, yet he would attempt nothing without God's direction; to whom, he knew, he owed the former victory.

He said, Thou shalt not go up.] That is, not directly; to fight in a pitched battle, as they did before. So the following words explain it.

But fetch a compass behind them.] Where they suspected no danger.

And come upon them over against the mulberry-trees.] A place well known to David; who was taught by God himself, not to expect victory always by main strength; but sometimes to make use of stratagems.

Ver. 24. *And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees.*] In the Hebrew it is *beroshe,* which should not be rendered *in the tops* (for men do not walk on the tops of trees), but *in the beginnings:* in the very entrance of the place, where the mulberry-trees were planted; where God intended to make a sound, as if a vast number of men were marching to fall upon the Philistines. There is no doubt but the Hebrew word *rosch* signifies not only the *head,* but the beginning of any thing. So Bochart observes, in his Phaleg. lib. iii. cap. 22. as in Nahum iii. 10. *the top* (as we translate it) the head *of every street,* is the beginning of those streets.

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And Isa. li. 20. Jer. xxii. 6. Gilead is called *the head of Libanus*, because Libanus begins where Gilead ends.

Then bestir thyself.] Fall upon the Philistines.

For then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.] By making such a noise of a mighty host coming to assault them, that they should be amazed, and have no apprehension of David's army coming behind them.

Ver. 25. *And David did so, as the Lord commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.*] He pursued them to the very confines of their own land; for Josephus saith concerning Gazer, ἥδε ἐστὶν ὅρος αὐτῶν τῆς χώρας, *that it was the border of their country.*

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *AGAIN, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.*] Having defeated the Philistines, and enjoying some peace, he thought it a seasonable time to fetch up the ark, and settle it in an honourable place: and for that end summoned the principal persons in Israel to attend it. Or, as others will have it, the most mighty men in all Israel, to the number of *thirty thousand;* to be a guard to it, in case any of their enemies should attempt to disturb the solemnity he intended.

Ver. 2. *And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him.*] Not only those thirty thousand, but a vast number of the common people, as we learn from 1 Chron. xiii. 2. 5.

From Baale of Judah.] Which is the same with Kirjath-jearim, 1 Chron. xiii. 6. called Baalah, Josh. xv. 9. and Kirjath-Baal, Josh. xv. 60. xviii. 14. and here *Baale of Judah,* because (as this place shews) it belonged to that tribe. But some think there is a great difficulty here, where it is said they went *from Baale,* when in 1 Chron. xiii. 6. it is said they went *to Baalah.* But there is no disagreement in these two places: for they must go to it, before they could come from it: and here he speaks of their motion from thence, after they had gone to it.

And brought from thence the ark of God.] Where it had been a long time in the house of Abinadab, whose son was sanctified to attend it. (See 1 Sam. vii. 1.)

Whose name is called by the name of The Lord of hosts.] Or, *because of which the name is proclaimed, the name of the Lord of hosts.* For by reason of the mighty miracles which were done before the ark, the name of the Lord was highly extolled and magnified, not only among the Israelites, but the Philistines. And by this, saith Abarbinel, it was made known, that God dwelt among the Israelites: so that not only the Philistines were affrighted when this ark of God's presence came among them, (1 Sam. iv. 7, 8.) but the men of Beth-shemesh also, (vi. 20.)

That dwelleth between the cherubims.] The learned Lud. de Dieu thinks the most simple and genuine construction of all these words to be, by referring the word *ascher (which)* not to the ark, but unto God, and translating them thus: *who is called the name, the name of the Lord of hosts, sitting on the cherubims, upon it.* Which, saith he, is an egregious commendation of the ark, that it is the ark of that God, who, being incomprehensible and unbounded in his essence, is called absolutely *the name,* (see Lev. xxiv. 11. 16.) even the name of the Lord of hosts, who sitteth on the cherubims over the ark.

Ver. 3. *And they set the ark of God upon a new cart.*] Which ought to have been carried upon the shoulders of the Kohathites; (Numb. vii. 9.) for which reason no waggons were allowed to them, as there were to the rest of the Levites, to carry several parts of the tabernacle. And so David himself saith afterward it ought to be carried, 1 Chron. xv. 2. 15. And so, after the following miscarriage, it is plain from the thirteenth verse of this chapter it was so carried. How they came to forget themselves now, so as to put it upon a cart, one can but conjecture. They seem to have imitated the custom of other nations, who were wont to carry their mysteries in a chest upon a cart, drawn by oxen, or kine, as the Philistines did the ark itself, (1 Sam. vi. 7, 8.) Who not being punished for putting it upon a *new cart,* the Israelites followed their example the more securely. And, that they were wont also to carry their mysteries in a great deal of pomp (as David here did, ver. 5.) is manifest from abundance of authors. Sanchoniathon mentions an image in a shrine in Phœnicia, drawn after the same manner; in Eusebius's Præpar. Evangel. lib. i. cap. 15. (See our very learned Dr. Spencer, p. 816.) But that they learnt this from the Jews, not the Jews from them, seems to me most probable: though I can give no account how they came to put the ark now upon a *new cart,* unless it were in imitation of the Philistines.

And brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah.] Or, on the hill, as we read 1 Sam. vii. 1.

And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.] It seems Eleazar (who was sanctified to take care of the ark, as we read in the abovenamed place) was dead, or stayed at home to look after his father, who was now grown aged: so these two took upon them to be the *bubulci* (as Bochart calls them) who drave the oxen.

Ver. 4. *And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God.*] That is, when it was brought out of his house, the people flocked together to attend it.

And Ahio went before the ark.] He led the oxen, I suppose; and Uzzah went behind the cart, to take care the ark fell not out.

Ver. 5. *And David, and all the house of Israel, played before the Lord.*] Who was present where the ark was.

On all manner of instruments made of fir-wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.] Where Rasi notes, that these words *becol atze beroshim,* do not signify any particular instrument, but (as we translate it) the wood of which the following instruments are made; *viz.* either fir or box. As for the instruments themselves, it will be to no purpose to describe them. The learned reader may see an account of every one of them, in Bartoloccius's Kirjath-sepher, tom. ii. p. 190, &c.

Ver. 6. *And when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor.*] It is commonly thought that Nachon was the name of a man: but Bochartus thinks it rather the name of a place; so called by anticipation, for the stroke upon Uzzah. For *nacha* signifies *to smite,* and *Nachon* signifies *percussion;* so this floor was called ever after *the floor of percussion;* because God smote Uzzah in this place. And accordingly in 1 Chron. xiii. 9. it is called *the floor of Chidon;* which is the very same: for *Chid* signifies *destruction.*

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Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.] There is no greater difference among interpreters about the signification of any word, than this word *sametu*, which we translate *shook it*. That which is nearest to the truth, Bochartus thinks, is our marginal translation, *they stumbled*. Yet this is mere guessing, for it hath no foundation either in the Hebrew or the neighbouring languages. But from the Arabic he takes this to be the sense; that the oxen, coming into a dirty place, stuck in the mire; and could not get out their feet: which Uzzah seeing, and fearing the king and the people, by this accident, might be stopped too long in their procession, *took hold of the ark:* intending, perhaps, to carry it, together with his brethren, to Mount Zion, which was not far off: but this should have been done at first; and because he did it not, he was punished by God.

Ver. 7. *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error.*] Or, *for his rashness*, in touching the ark: some think it was because he was not a Levite, and therefore should not have touched it. But it is pretty plain that he was; being the brother of Eleazar, who was consecrated to look after the ark: which was the office of a Levite, (1 Sam. vii. 1.) But being a Levite, he was guilty of a double error: first, in not carrying the ark upon his shoulders, together with his brethren; and secondly, in touching it; which he ought not so much as to have seen: but it being covered by the priests, the Levites were to take hold of the staves, and carry it, (Numb. iv. 15.)

And there he died by the ark of God.] Or, *before the Lord*, as it is expressed 1 Chron. xiii. 10. because the ark was the symbol of God's special presence. Some think he was suddenly choked; others that his arm and his shoulder, upon which he should have carried the ark, were dried up; others that he was blasted with lightning. But all these, and the like conjectures, are uncertain: it is enough to know, that he died suddenly, not from any natural cause, but struck by the hand of God. See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 13. who truly observes, that though his intention, perhaps, was good, yet that would not excuse an offence against the express law of God. Abarbinel also adds this as a cause of his punishment, that he wanted faith in God: who would not have suffered his ark to fall into the dirt; but supported it himself, without Uzzah's help.

Ver. 8. *And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah.*] He took it very heavily: and was angry (as the word signifies), that there was any cause for such a breach; that is, such a destruction. For it detracted much from his authority and esteem, to have such an accident in the beginning of his reign, and at such a solemnity of great joy: which was hereby disturbed and interrupted. Perhaps he was troubled, being afraid that he also might suffer, for taking no better care about the carrying of the ark.

And he called the name of the place Perez-Uzzah to this day.] In memory of this dreadful stroke: whereby the Levites and all others might be admonished of their duty.

Ver. 9. *And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?*] By this it appears he had some fear, that he himself was in danger: and therefore durst not bring the ark into his city. Either thinking, in great humility, that he was unworthy to have it so near him: or that he did not sufficiently understand how to treat it. Which he understood better afterward, as we learn from 1 Chron. xv. 2. 13—15.

Ver. 10. *So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David; but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.*] He is not called a Gittite from his being born or dwelling in Gath (which was a city of the Philistines), but from Gath-rimmon, a Levitical city, (Josh. xxi. 24, 25.) For it is certain Obed-Edom was a Levite, (1 Chron. xv. 18. 21. 24. xvi. 5.) who, I suppose, was willing to entertain the ark: resolving to treat it with such reverence, that he might not offend the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 11. *And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-Edom three months.*] A short time, in comparison with that which it continued at Kirjath-jearim. But all this time it was without the tabernacle. Which from Gilgal being removed to Shiloh, after the death of Eli, was carried to Nob; and after the death of Samuel, to Gibeon: where it remained till Solomon's temple was built, and then carried thither, as we read 1 Chron. xvi. 39. and 2 Chron. i. 3.

And the Lord blessed Obed-Edom, and his household.] Made them exceeding prosperous in all their affairs.

Ver. 12. *And it was told David, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that pertaineth to him, because of the ark of God.*] They could not tell to what to impute the extraordinary happiness that attended him, but to his religious care about the ark.

So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom into the city of David.] Hoping God would bless him, and his city, as he had done Obed-Edom, and his house.

With gladness.] All the people, I suppose, again accompanied him, playing on all manner of musical instruments, as they did before, ver. 5.

Ver. 13. *And it was so, that, when they that bare the ark had gone six paces.*] Without any mark of God's displeasure, as before, ver. 7.

He sacrificed oxen and fatlings.] As a thanksgiving to God for his goodness, upon an altar erected on purpose, on this extraordinary occasion. Some think he repeated these sacrifices seven times, at the end of every six paces. The word we translate *fatlings*, is, in the Hebrew, *meri:* whose signification is uncertain. For some take it for a *lamb*, others for a *ram*, and others put a different meaning on it. But Bochartus, with great probability, thinks it was a kind of ox, being commonly joined with oxen in Scripture, not only here, but in 1 Kings i. 9. 19. 25. Isa. i. 11. xi. 6. Nor doth 1 Chron. xv. 26. contradict this, where it is said, they offered *bullocks and rams*. For those are not the same sacrifices as these, which were offered by David; whereas those in the Chronicles were offered by the Levites. (See his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 19.)

Ver. 14. *And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.*] He laid aside his royal ornaments, and was girded only with a simple ephod: which was, I observed upon 1 Sam. ii. 18. an honorary garment, used by those who were no priests. He is said to dance *before the Lord*, because the ark was the symbol of the Divine presence. And from hence, it is

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probable, the heathen learnt to dance before their gods: as Callimachus mentions the *chori*, and dancings of youth at the altar of Apollo. And as there were παιδικοὶ χοροὶ, so there were also ἀνδρικοὶ, and among the Lacedemonians of old, men also. And Plato observes, that, among the Egyptians, all kinds of music, and songs, and dances, were consecrated to their gods, (lib. iii. de Legibus, p. 799.) See that great man, Ezek. Spanhemius's observations on Callim. Hymn. in Apollinem, ver. 8.

Ver. 15. *So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.*] Such Ὀλολυγμοὶ, as the Greeks call them, were used before their gods: of which the great man now mentioned, gives a large account in his observations upon Callimachus's hymn ad Delum, ver. 258. where he observes, that ὀλολύζειν anciently signified to shout for joy: and in like manner the Latin word *ululare* is used by Statius for *exultare*. And this sort of rejoicing is at this day used by the Abyssines, in the evening of our Lord's resurrection: when men and women clap their hands, and dance to several instruments of music, till morning light: and all this in their churches. Which in all likelihood came from the Jews, who still dance in some of their festivals. See Ludolphus, in his comment upon his Historia Ethiopia. p. 381. where he observes, that David, in all probability, did not now dance alone, but in company.

Ver. 16. *And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked out through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.*] Imagining that he debased himself, by stripping himself of the ornaments of majesty, and dancing among the common people. But she understood not, as Procopius Gazæus here glosses, *ardoris stimulos, those stings of Divine love* which David declared to her afterward.

Ver. 17. *And he brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it.*] The ancient tabernacle made by Moses remained still, as I observed before, at Gibeon: from whence David did not think fit to fetch it, because he intended shortly (as Pellicanus well observes) to build a temple to settle it in. For the present, therefore, he only hung some curtains round about it, after the fashion of the tabernacle. (See vii. 2.)

And David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord.] To implore the continuance of his mercies to them; and to thank him for those they had received,

Ver. 18. *And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord.*] He prayed God to bless them; and pronounced them blessed in his name.

Ver. 19. *And he dealt among the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.*] The Talmudists have a conceit, that the Hebrew word *eshpar*, which we translate *a good piece of flesh*, signifies the sixth part of a bullock: deriving it from three words put into one; *viz. echad* one, *shesh* six, and *par* a bullock. But every one sees this is a very forced fancy; and it is not in itself credible, that he could, among such a multitude, deal a sixth part of a bullock to every one; or that they could well carry it away, with the bread and wine. Bochartus more reasonably thinks (as some of the Jews do) the word is derived from *shapar*, which signifies *decorus:* and so the meaning is, as we translate it, he gave to every one a *handsome* or *decent* portion of flesh. (See his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 18.)

So all the people departed every one to his house.] Well satisfied with their prince's bounty to them, and his piety to God.

Ver. 20. *Then David returned to bless his household.*] As he had done the people.

And Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet him, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day.] This she spake ironically, by way of derision and contempt.

Who uncovered himself to-day.] Stripped himself of his royal robes, and put on a linen ephod, (ver. 14.)

In the eyes of the handmaids of his servants.] The women, perhaps, bare a part in these dances, as they did in Exod. xv. or at least were spectators of all the solemnity: from which none were excluded, though ever so mean.

As one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!] Throws off all his clothes, and cares not who sees him, nor with what company he dances. This was spoken by way of reproach, that he mixed himself with the multitude; and seems to intimate that he had immodestly exposed himself, as shameless fellows do: which is not credible. But thus in a fit of passion she aggravates this action as very mean, yea, base, and much below himself. For no doubt David kept himself within the rules of modesty, when he was thus jocund, being about a sacred business; and did according to the command of God, who required the Israelites to rejoice in their feasts, (Deut. xii. 7. xvi. 1.) not with a futilous, lascivious, and petulant joy, but with a pious and moderate: as having God himself present. And thus Plato observes, lib. vii. de Legibus, that some dances are ἐμμελῶς, *with modest and decent motions of the body:* others πλημμελῶς, *immodest and wanton.* The latter of which, none can imagine David would be guilty of before God: but danced with composed and decent, not desultorious and light motions, such as vain fellows are wont to use. For as it is joy that excites men to leap and dance, so Divine joy moves them to do it after a manner becoming the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 21. *And David said to Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, and appointed me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord.*] Who had done so much for him, that he thought he could not shew himself thankful enough to so great a benefactor. He thought fit to take down her pride, by putting her in mind, how God had rejected all her family, and advanced him to the throne of Israel.

Ver. 22. *And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in my own eyes.*] He thought nothing too mean for him to stoop unto; if thereby he could do any honour unto God. Otherwise, to dance in the streets before all the people had been very unbecoming the majesty of a king: as Nero (we are told by Suetonius) and Caligula were condemned for it, among the Romans. For among them it was not usual, nor was it done in honour of their gods. Whereas in David's time the greatest persons thus expressed their joy and thankfulness to God, by public leaping, dancing, shouting, and clapping their hands.

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And of the maid-servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.] The more he humbled himself to do honour unto God, the more he was confident he should be magnified, and had in honour by his people. The esteem of the meanest of which, upon that account, he valued far more than all the vain-glorious praises Michal could bestow on him, for taking state upon him, and neglecting God's service.

Ver. 23. *Therefore Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death.*] Which is thus explained, in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 2. sect. 8. She had children before this fact, but none after it as long as she lived. (See iii. 5.) David, perhaps, quite left her bed.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies.*] Enjoyed himself in the palace Hiram had built for him, (v. 11.) having no disturbance from the Philistines, or other neighbouring nations.

Ver. 2. *That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.*] Like a religious prince, he spent much of his time in pious meditations: and among other things reflected upon the meanness of God's habitation, in comparison with the splendour of his own. Which he thought ought not to be endured, and therefore resolved to build a stately house for God to dwell in.

Ver. 3. *And Nathan said unto the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart: for the Lord is with thee.*] He spake that as a prudent man, not as a prophet. For (as Procopius Gazæus here observes) the prophets did not see all things; but those only which the Divine grace revealed to them: as Samuel was ignorant which of Jesse's sons was to be anointed, till God told him. But Nathan had great reason for what he said, because he observed that the Lord had an extraordinary kindness for David, and prospered him in all that he went about. And David withal being a prophet as well as himself, he might presume this intention was suggested to him from God.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying.*] God would not suffer him long to remain in an error; but corrected it the very next night.

Ver. 5. *Go and tell my servant David.*] He speaks very kindly of him: though he did not approve of his design.

Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me a house for me to dwell in?] The meaning is, he should not build one. But this manner of speech declared his mind something sharply: to reprove him for his forwardness (without asking God's consent), not only in designing, but in making a vow, that he would forthwith build God a house. For it is probable, that upon Nathan's approving his intention, he made that vow mentioned Psal. cxxxii. 3—5. "Surely I will not go up to my bed, nor give sleep to mine eyes, &c. till I have found out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

Ver. 6. *Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, unto this day.*] As much as to say, How comest thou to design me a fixed house, since neither I, nor any one else, thought of one from the time you have been a people?

But have walked in a tent and a tabernacle.] Contented myself with a moveable house, consisting of a tent and a tabernacle: in which I was always present to conduct and lead my people from place to place. By a *tent* is meant the inward hangings of the house, which were of curious work: and by the *tabernacle*, the boards to which they were fastened; and the badgers' skins, &c. wherewith all was covered.

Ver. 7. *In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel.*] That is, *of the judges of Israel*, as it is interpreted, 1 Chron. xvii. 6. For the word *shibte* signifies not only *tribes* but *sceptres;* and, consequently, supreme governors and rulers: such as the judges were who had the supreme authority in Israel. And so the following words explain it.

Whom I commanded to feed my people Israel.] He did not command the tribes, but the supreme governors of them, to *feed*, that is, to rule his people, and take care of their happiness. Here, again, *feeding* is governing; (as I observed, v. 2.) and the Hebrew word for *feed* being *raga*, as some pronounce it (in the Syriac, *rega*), very learned men thence derive the Latin words *regere* and *reges:* kings being designed by God to be the pastors of their people.

Saying, Why build ye me not a house of cedar?] God was the properest judge what house was agreeable to him, and he never signified that he disliked his present, and desired a more stately habitation.

Ver. 8. *Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David.*] He would not have him think he took it ill that he should design what he never signified to be his desire; but owned him to be his faithful servant, and therefore accepted his pious intentions: as we read expressly 1 Kings viii. 18. which is signified in this message.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people Israel.] Therefore he needed not to make any doubt, but that God accepted his gratitude in designing to make him a house.

Ver. 9. *And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest.*] In the time of his banishment, when he was remarkably preserved by God.

And have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight.] Both those in Israel and those in the neighbouring countries.

And have made thee a great name, like to the name of the great men that are in the earth.] Famed in all the countries round about as a potent prince and a mighty warrior: and perhaps as a holy prophet, greatly beloved of God and of all his people.

Ver. 10. *Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel.*] Or, *I have constituted* (or established) *a place for my people; viz.* the land of Canaan.

And will plant them.] Make them take root there.

That they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more.] No longer wander, as they did in the wilderness.

Neither shall the children of wickedness.] The idolatrous people round about them.

Afflict them any more, as beforetime.] When they were in the land of Egypt.

Ver. 11. *And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel.*] In whose days they were

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sorely afflicted by the Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, and other people.

And have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies.] Given him a quiet possession of the whole kingdom of Israel; which never was in so happy a condition as now. A flourishing people is a great blessing to the king that governs them: and therefore mentioned in this verse, as God's kindness to David. But this promise was with some exceptions, in case they became disobedient: which provoked God to chastise them.

Also the Lord telleth thee, that he will make thee a house.] A family, or royal offspring, that shall reign for many generations; which was a special favour of God to David: there being none of the Roman emperors, till the time of Antoninus, whose children from the reign of Julius Cæsar succeeded them in the empire, but only Vespasian.

Ver. 12. *And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee.*] To sit upon his throne.

Which shall proceed out of thy bowels.] This shews that he speaks of one who was not yet born, *viz.* Solomon: and that Absalom, Adonijah, and the rest who pretended to the kingdom, were not designed for it: being already proceeded from him.

And I will establish his kingdom.] He reigned a long time himself; and so did his posterity after him.

Ver. 13. *He shall build a house for my name; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.*] The latter part of this verse can belong to none but the Messiah; if the words *for ever* be taken in their full extent.

Ver. 14. *And I will be his father, and he shall be my son.*] This the apostle shews is meant of Christ, Heb. i. 5. For though Solomon was called Jedidiah, in token that he was beloved of God, yet, in the complete sense of the words, Christ only is intended: who *is God's beloved Son, in whom he is well-pleased.*

If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.] This is a mixed prophecy, some part of which belongs to Christ, and the other part to Solomon, and his successors in the kingdom of Israel: who, it is plain, is solely intended in these words. And by *the rod of men, and the stripes of the children of men*, is meant gentle correction; such as parents give their children.

Ver. 15. *But my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.*] He promises not to translate the kingdom into another family; as he took it from Saul, to give it to David: but the kingdom shall continue in his line.

Ver. 16. *And thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.*] That is, saith Kimchi, for a long time, between four and five hundred years, which was a rare thing, and seldom known, that the kingly authority continued in any one family so long. But this is chiefly intended of the kingdom of Christ, as Procopius Gazæus here observes: from whence the Jews said, (John xii. 34.) "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever." This is confirmed by the rule which Maimonides lays down in his More Nevochim, that though *olam* alone doth not necessarily signify eternally, yet when it is joined with *ath*, either before or after it, it doth so signify. And that is the case here; this kingdom is said to be established *ath olam*: which can belong to none but Christ; for David's kingdom had an end, but Christ's hath none; (par. ii. cap. 28.)

Ver. 17. *According to all these words, and according to this vision, so Nathan spake unto David.*] This shews the integrity of the prophet; who was not ashamed to retract his own words when he was better taught of God. And, as Dionysius observes, in an epistle to Novatus, μεῖζον ἔσται τοῦ σφάλματος τὸ κατόρθωμα, *the correction of his fault was more eminent and remarkable than the fault itself.*

Ver. 18. *Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord.*] That is, before the ark; which, as I have often said, was the symbol of his Divine presence. Sitting, among the heathens, was thought a posture proper enough in the Divine service; as Vossius hath observed, lib. ii. de Orig. et Progressu Idololat. cap. 34. "Quippe index animi magis compositi, et hoc agentis;" *being an indication of a more composed mind, and attending to what they were about.* But among the Israelites none were allowed to sit in the temple, except the king: unto whom this was indulged, if we can believe the Talmudists: whose general maxim was this, "It was not lawful for any one to sit in the court of the house of God; but only for the king of the house of David." (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedriis, cap. 13. sect. 4.) But they have framed this notion merely from this single passage; there being no other place in the whole Scripture to support this assertion, that the king might sit at prayer: but, on the contrary, on the sabbath, and on festival days, when he came to the temple, he stood by the exterior pillar of the inward court of the house of God; as may be learnt from Ezek. xlvi. 1, 2. compared with 2 Kings xi. 14. and 2 Chron. xxiii. 13. Nor is there any other posture of worship mentioned in Scripture, but standing, or kneeling, or falling on the face. And therefore Abarbinel ingenuously confesses, that this is not the opinion of all their doctors, several of which in this forsake the Talmudists; and allege a weighty reason for it: because the angels themselves, who are higher than kings, are not permitted to sit before the Lord: but Isaiah saith, vi. 2. that the seraphim stood about the throne; and Micaiah saith, he saw the host of heaven stand before the Lord, 1 Kings xxii. 19. and see Zech. iii. 7. From which they conclude, if there be no sitting allowed above, by what right was it granted to the kings of David's family here below? Many great men, therefore, translate the Hebrew word *jashab*, not *sat*, but *remained* before the Lord: particularly Vetablus, upon 1 Chron. xvii. 16. And others, who allow the king might sit in the temple, yet confess he might not sit at prayer: and therefore expound this place thus: *He took his seat in the tabernacle before the ark;* and then he made the following prayer, standing up, as the manner was, when they worshipped God.

And he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?] He begins his address to God in a very becoming manner; with a most profound debasement of himself, and confession of his own unworthiness, to receive such blessings as God had already bestowed on him.

Ver. 19. *And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come.*] Next, he magnifies the loving-kindness of God, who did not think it enough that he had made

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him a great king, but promised his posterity, and at last the Lord Christ, should sit upon his throne. So Abarbinel himself expounds these words, *a great while to come:* intimating, saith he, the Messiah, the son of David.

And is this the manner of men, O Lord God?] He acknowledges there was no example of such kindness to be found in this world: where kingdoms are not perpetuated, as Abarbinel observes; but this is the manner of angels, who always continue in their dignity.

Ver. 20. *And can David say more unto thee?*] There was nothing he could desire beyond this. (See 1 Chron. xvii. 18.)

For thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant.] But he thought he might leave all to God, who loved him and took care of him (for that is to *know him*) as his faithful servant.

Ver. 21. *For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things.*] For God, he knew, would fulfil his own promise made by Samuel and by Nathan: to the making of which he had no other motive but his own good will; from whence alone all the great things proceeded which he had done for him.

To make thy servant know them.] That David might know how much God loved him by what he did for him.

Ver. 22. *Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God.*] He could not therefore but acknowledge his omnipotent power and the greatness of his goodness, which bestows such benefits upon unworthy creatures.

For there is none like the Lord, neither is there any god besides thee.] According to what Hannah had said in her song, wherein she prophesied of him, (1 Sam. ii. 2.)

According to all that we have heard with our ears.] Which their forefathers had reported of the wonders he had done, by Moses and Joshua, and in the time of the Judges.

Ver. 23. *And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people unto himself.*] He seems to imitate the words of Moses in Deut. iv. 7. 34.

And to make him a name.] That all the world might know how powerful he was.

And to do for you great things, and terrible, for thy land.] To introduce them into the land of Canaan.

Before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?] Some understand by *gods* their rulers: but their gods were no more able to save the nations whom he drove out, than their kings and rulers were.

Ver. 24. *For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God.*] This is the sum of the covenant (as P. Martyr observes) between God and them: that they should be his obedient people, and he would bless them, and bestow all manner of good things upon them.

Ver. 25. *And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.*] After his thankful acknowledgments, he makes his humble prayer to God, that he would perform his promise to him. For though he did not doubt of it, yet it became him to make it his request.

Ver. 26. *And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.*] Yet he did not desire it merely for his own sake; but that God might be glorified in what he did for him: and men might always acknowledge, that the God of Israel was the Lord of heaven and earth; and faithful in his promise to the house of David.

Ver. 27. *For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.*] That he might not be thought too bold in his request, he professes he should not have taken this confidence, if God himself had not encouraged it, by his own most gracious promise to him.

Ver. 28. *And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant.*] He professes his belief of the unchangeableness of God's nature, and of the truth of all that he said: upon which he relied with an unshaken faith.

Ver. 29. *Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue before thee for ever: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it; and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.*] Since God had been so gracious as to make such promises, and his word could not fail; he grows more confident to repeat his petition, which he had made before. Which is not the vain repetition, condemned by our Saviour: but proceeded from the abundant affection of a heart devoutly affected; which could not sufficiently acknowledge the goodness of God, and express his full assurance that he would fulfil his word. To this purpose Abarbinel; David did not multiply prayer for want of faith, because he distrusted the power of God; or thought his will was mutable; or that he doubted of his prophecy concerning him: but rather, this shews that he steadfastly rested assured of all this.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *AND after that it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them.*] In the beginning of his reign they invaded him twice, (v. 17. 22.) But now David invaded their country, and made a conquest of it: and brought it in subjection to the Israelites.

And David took Metheg-Ammah out of the hand of the Philistines.] That is, the famous city of Gath, and the territories thereof, (as it is expounded, 1 Chron. xviii. 1.) which is called Metheg-Ammah, because it stood upon Mount Ammah: and was as a bridle to the whole country, whereby it was kept in obedience. So our translators understand the word *Metheg* in the margin of our Bibles. But R. Solomon takes it for a goad, or a staff; this city domineering over the Philistines. For we read of no king in any of their other cities: either in Gaza, or Ashdod, or Ekron, or Askelon; but only in this: where Achish formerly reigned, but, it is likely, was dead. There are several other interpretations in Bochart's Hierozoicon, lib. ii. cap. 18. par. i.

Ver. 2. *And he smote Moab.*] Now was fulfilled the prophecy of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 17.

And measured them with a line.] Having conquered the whole country, he took an exact survey of every part of it.

Casting them to the ground.] Laying level their strong holds and fortified places.

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And with two lines measured he to put to death.] He divided the country into three equal parts; condemning two of them to be destroyed.

And with one line he saved alive.] A third part he preserved, that he might not be quite dispeopled. This severity, the Jews say, he exercised because they had slain his parents, and his brethren, whom he committed to the custody of the king of Moab during his exile, (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4.) But, in truth, because the Moabites had always been implacable enemies to the Israelites: their kindness to David, beforementioned, proceeding from their hatred to Saul.

And so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.] And paid David a constant tribute, which continued all his days, and in the reign of Solomon: and after the kingdom was divided, it was paid to the kings of Israel; till after the death of Ahab they refused to pay it, as we read 2 Kings iii. 4, 5.

Ver. 3. *And David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob.*] Who is called also Hadarezer: for the change of these two letters, *daleth* and *resch*, is very frequent, as Bochartus hath shewn in many instances, par. ii. Hierozoicon, lib. ii. cap. 7. Nicolaus Damascenus, in a fragment of his, recorded by Josephus, (lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 6.) simply calls him Adad: which was a common name of the kings of Syria: who, according to the manner of the eastern princes, took their titles from the celestial bodies, as Sir John Marsham observes; and Adad was the name of the most glorious of them, *viz.* the sun, as Macrobius tells us: who truly saith, it signifies *unus*, one.

King of Zobah.] Zobah was a part of Syria, whose eastern border was Euphrates, as the western was the land of Canaan, and the kingdom of Damascus. It is frequently called Aram-Zobah in Scripture; of which Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 7. where he observes the nearness of Zobah to Judea, from the frequent wars the Israelites had with that people, in the days of Saul, 1 Sam. xiv. 47, and David, chap. x. of this book; and Solomon, 2 Chron. viii. 3. and they of Damascus came to help them, which is a sign they were near them (ver. 5. of this chapter), and Rezin fled from thence to Damascus, (1 Kings xi. 24.) And especially he observes, that the cities Solomon built in the wilderness, *viz.* Palmyrene, and others, (1 Kings ix. 17, 18.) are said to be in Hamath, 2 Chron. viii. 4. which shews the situation of Zobah.

As he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.] That is, as David went to extend the limits of his kingdom (according to the ancient prophecy, Gen. xv. 18.) towards the river Euphrates, he smote this king, who came out, perhaps, to oppose him. See 1 Chron. xviii. 3. where it is said, *he went to establish his dominions by the river Euphrates:* which seems to relate to David, not to Hadadezer.

Ver. 4. *And David took from him a thousand chariots.*] The word *chariot* is not in the Hebrew: but it is well supplied by our translators, out of 1 Chron. xvi. 4. in which book many things are explained, which are briefly related here.

And seven hundred horsemen.] Here again is an ellipsis, as in the foregoing words: for in 1 Chron. xviii. 4. it is said seven thousand. But as after *a thousand* something is to be understood, *viz. chariots:* so after *seven hundred* something is to be understood, *viz. captains* (as Abarbinel explains it), under whom a great many others served; so that commanders and soldiers made, in all, seven thousand. Such an ellipsis is observed in this very book, v. 8. *whosoever smites the Jebusites, and the blind, and the lame,* &c. It is not said what shall be their reward; which is plainly mentioned 1 Chron. xi. 6. where it is said, *he shall be chief.* (See L'Empereur on Bava-kama, cap. 7. sect. 7.)

And twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot horses.] Here again is the same ellipsis, for there is no word in the Hebrew for *horses.* Yet the meaning can be nothing else, but that he cut the hamstrings of the horses that drew their chariots, and made them unserviceable hereafter. (See Josh. xi. 9.) Thus, in x. 18. David is said to have slain seven hundred chariots; that is, the horses of so many chariots: and in Psal. lxviii. 18. by *the chariots of the Lord,* some understood *horsemen:* and lxxvi. 6. *the chariot and horse,* &c.; that is, as well the horses that drew the chariot, as they that rode in it. (See Bochartus, in his Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 6.)

But reserved of them for a hundred chariots.] For his guard, I suppose, not for war: God having commanded them not to multiply horses, Deut. xvii. 16. (See there.)

Ver. 5. *And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah.*] For they were neighbours to him, as I observed on ver. 3.

David slew of the Syrians of Damascus twenty thousand men.] Which facilitated the conquest of their country: which follows in the next verse.

Ver. 6. *Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus.*] *Aram-Damasek,* which we translate *Syria of Damascus,* was that part of Syria which lay between Libanus and Antilibanus; whose chief city was Damascus, situated in a valley called by several names in Scripture, as Bochartus notes; *viz.* Hoba, Gen. xiv. 15. the valley of Aven, and Beth-eden, *i. e.* the place of pleasure, Amos i. 5. and Hadrach, Zech. ix. 1. It was watered by five rivers; the two principal of which descended from Mount Hermor, *viz.* Abana and Pharphar, (2 Kings v. 12.) The last of which ran by the walls of Damascus; the other ran through it, and divided the city into two parts.

And the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts.] In token of their subjection to him.

And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.] Kept him from all the dangers to which he was exposed in these wars.

Ver. 7. *And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.*] The Hebrew particle *el,* which we translate *on,* may better be translated *with;* that is, in the custody of Hadadezer's servants, who were officers in his treasury: for it is not likely they brought them into the field of battle.

Ver. 8. *And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, David took exceeding much brass.*] These two cities are called by very different names in 1 Chron. xviii. 6. though perhaps of the same signification in the language of that country, with these in the Hebrew language. Or there were four cities, perhaps, from whence he took much brass; two here mentioned, and two in the book of Chronicles. It is the opinion of some learned men, that these cities were situated at the foot of the Mount Libanus, between Emath and Damascus: which mount, they say, abounded with brass. But Bochartus could find no mention of the brass of Libanus in any ancient or modern writer. And the

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kingdom of Sobah lying about Palmyra, he takes the city called Berothai to be the same with that which Ptolemy calls Βαράθημα in Arabia Deserta; which is very remote from Libanus, (par. ii. Hierozoicon, lib. vi. cap. *ult.*)

Ver. 9. *When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer.*] This city was also in Syria, and was called afterward Epiphania, as St. Jerome says, and lay north of Judea. (See Bochart, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 37.)

Ver. 10. *Then Toi sent Joram his son.*] Called Hadoram, 1 Chron. xviii. 10.

Unto king David.] At Jerusalem, I suppose.

To salute him, and bless him.] To congratulate his good success in the war with Hadadezer; and to wish him continued prosperity.

Because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him (for Hadadezer had wars with Toi).] And was too hard for him.

And Joram brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass.] As a present to king David: whose friendship he sought by this embassy.

Ver. 11. *Which also king David did dedicate unto the Lord.*] As he did what he took from Hadadezer.

With the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all people that he had subdued.] These words seem to import, that he was so far from multiplying silver and gold to himself, (which Moses forbade, Deut. xvii. 16.) that he put all this spoil, or the greatest part of it, into God's treasury: for the building of the temple, which he designed, and his son was to accomplish, (vii. 13.)

Ver. 12. *Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.*] Here he reckons up all the countries, besides Hadadezer's, from whence he brought spoil to the treasury of God.

Ver. 13. *And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting the Syrians.*] His victory over that people, (mentioned ver. 5.) when they came to succour Hadadezer, gained him a great reputation, as a potent prince, and a mighty warrior.

In the valley of Salt, being eighteen thousand men.] There is nothing in the Hebrew answering to the word *being:* which therefore should be translated, *in the valley of Salt eighteen thousand men.* That is, he slew of the Edomites so many, besides the two-and-twenty thousand of the Syrians. So we read expressly, 1 Chron. xviii. 12. and in the title of the sixtieth Psalm it is said, they were Edomites, not Syrians, who were slain in this valley. Only in that place of the Psalms, there is mention of no more than twelve thousand slain: which makes some think it speaks of a distinct battle from this. But Abishai, who began the fight, perhaps, slew six thousand, and then Joab, coming in with his reserve, slew twelve thousand more; which, in all, make eighteen thousand. By the *valley of Salt,* Epiphanius understands the Dead Sea, which was formerly a famous valley, or rather it was a valley near that sea. But neither of these opinions has any good foundation, as Salmasius shews: who takes this *valley of Salt* to have been in the country of Edom, where this battle was fought; and to be called by this name, either from the salt springs which were therein, or from the salt that was digged up there. (See his Exercit. Plinianæ, cap. 35. p. 613, 614.)

Ver. 14. *And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons.*] Having conquered the whole country, he garrisoned the strongest places in it, with his own men; to keep them in subjection to him. Some of the Jews translate these words, *he put captains or commanders in Edom;* that is, great men to govern them, and, as his deputies, to keep them under and raise tributes, &c.

And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.] God's providence continued still over him to protect him, as formerly, (ver. 6.) in all these expeditions.

Ver. 15. *And David reigned over Israel.*] He had no disturbance at home, whilst he made wars abroad: but all Israel obeyed him.

And David executed judgment and justice to all his people.] And having finished his foreign wars, he applied himself to the civil government of his people, according to the law of God: which he executed duly by himself, or by his judges. Or rather, while he was engaged in so many wars abroad, he did not neglect his people at home; but took care that justice should be administered to them. And so he performed both parts of such a king as the Israelites desired, (1 Sam. viii. 20.)

Ver. 16. *And Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was over the host.*] According to the promise made to that person, who should first enter the strong fort of Zion, when he assaulted it, (1 Chron. xi. 6.)

And Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was recorder.] The Hebrew word *mazkir,* importing something of keeping in memory, or bringing to remembrance, moved our translators to render it *recorder,* or *remembrancer,* as if he wrote the acts of every day, which afterward were digested into annals. But this sure was not so considerable an employment as to make him that had it the prime civil officer in the kingdom, as Joab was the military. Therefore Victorinus Strigelius takes him to have been the chancellor of the kingdom: which is more likely than their opinion, who take him for the master of requests, who presented petitions, and put the king in mind of them.

Ver. 17. *And Zadok, the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, were the priests.*] These two were the chief of the family of priests; next to the high-priest, which was Abiathar: called *second priests* in 2 Kings xv. 18. The former was of the family of Eleazar, (1 Chron. vi. 5.) the other of Ithamar. And Zadok is put first, as more acceptable to David than the other: and therefore, it is likely, constantly attended at court; the family of Eli now beginning to decline, as in the next reign the other was advanced to the high-priesthood, and Abiathar and his posterity quite thrown out. (See Selden, lib. i. de Success. ad Pontific. cap. 4.) Cornelius Bertram hath a peculiar conceit, that as Abiathar was always acknowledged by David as God's high-priest, and accordingly took care of the ark at Jerusalem, so Zadok, as principal priest among the rest, was set over the tabernacle at Gibeon. But Abarbinel's opinion is farthest from truth, that Zadok was now high-priest, and Abiathar but his vicar: which is directly against the Scripture, which shews Abiathar to have been high-priest until the days of Solomon. Yet to justify this, he thinks fit to tell a fabulous story out of Joma, and other books, which say that David removed Abiathar from his office when he fled from Absalom. For commanding him to inquire of God for him, by

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urim and *thummim*, God was pleased to give him no answer; but Zadok inquiring, had an answer. Whereupon David concluded the Spirit of God was gone from Abiathar, and that it was time to fulfil the prophecy against the house of Eli: and so thrust him out of his office. For which they have no other ground but this, that David spake first to Zadok, chap. xv. of this book, ver. 24. (See J. Wagenseil upon Sota, p. 1608, 1609.)

And Seraiah was the scribe.] Secretary of state, as we now speak; or, as others imagine, clerk of the council, who set down all acts and decrees; others, the keeper of the public accounts. But the Hebrew word *sopher* (which we translate *scribe*) importing something of learning (as the word *scribe* in the New Testament doth), I take him to have been his prime counsellor in the law, who always attended him. Constantine L'Empereur thinks there were two sorts of scribes, an ecclesiastical and a civil; and here understands the latter: and would have him signify no more than the *muster-master* of the army. (See his Annot. on Bertram de Repub. Jud. p. 383, &c.)

Ver. 18. *And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites.*] Or, the *Crethites* and the *Plethites*, as some pronounce these words. What they were is variously conjectured. The most idle conceit is that of some of the Jewish doctors, who take them for the members of the great Sanhedrin, nay, for *urim* and *thummim*. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 15. p. 601. and cap. 16. p. 668.) Certain it is that they were soldiers, as appears from xv. 18. xx. 7. 1 Kings i. 34. where they are mentioned as present at the proclaiming king Solomon against Adonijah: which could not have been done safely without some armed force; and if they were not the persons, there were none. Yet they were not common soldiers, but the constant guards of David's person; like the prætorian bands among the Romans. So Josephus calls them σωματοφύλακες, *keepers of the body*, who never departed from the place where the king was: as we may be satisfied by this, that they had a peculiar commander, and were not under Joab, the captain of the host; but are distinguished from his soldiers, xx. 6, 7. Some make them men of a gigantic stature, but I know no ground for that; though, no doubt, they were proper men, as we speak, robust, and of tried fidelity: who, in the rebellion against David, did not desert David, but stuck close to him, (xv. 18.) It is further probable, that they were selected out of a certain nation or family. For the Cherethites inhabited part of Palestine, and were indeed the same with the Philistines, as I observed upon 1 Sam. xxx. 14. and see Zeph. ii. 5. The Pelethites, it is likely, were a family in Israel: for we find two of the name of Peleth mentioned in Scripture: one of the tribe of Reuben, Numb. xvi. 1. another of Judah, 1 Chron. ii. 33. Their arms were bows and arrows, and slings, if we may believe the Chaldee interpreter, who calls them archers and slingers: as Procopius Gazæus calls them *jaculatores et sagittarios*. Which may be confirmed by this conjecture, that the Philistines having sorely galled the Israelites, in the fatal battle with Saul, by their archers, David took care not only to have his people instructed in the use of the bow, but also procured some archers from the Cherethites, who were a part of the Philistines, to be his guard: as some princes now get the Switzers. (See my notes upon 1 Sam. xxxi. 3. and upon the first chapter of this book, ver. 18.) The number of them may be probably gathered from the targets and shields of gold that Solomon made, which were five hundred, (1 Kings x. 16, 17.) and were for the use of his guard, (2 Chron. xii. 9—11.) and kept in the guard-chamber.

They that would see more of them, may look into a little treatise of Opitius, which is wholly upon this subject: and Fortunatus Scacchus treats largely of them in his Myrothecium, iii. cap. 16—18. where he hath this singular opinion, p. 181. that the Cherethites were inferior to the Pelethites: but, I think, with reason concludes, that they were the king's domestics, and lay in his palace, or about it, in the night: which he gathers from 1 Kings i. 33. where David bids Nathan, and Zadok, and Benaiah, take with them the servants of their lord, and make Solomon king; and accordingly they took the Cherethites and the Pelethites with them; (ver. 38.) and from the story of that brave man Uriah, who would not go to his own house to his wife, when Joab and the host lay in the field; but went and slept at the door of the king's house *with the servants of his lord;* that is, with these Cherethites and Pelethites, (chap. xi. of this book, ver. 9.)

And David's sons were chief rulers.] So the Hebrew word *cohen* often signifies, not only a *priest*, but a *prince;* as many learned men have observed: particularly Hackspan, in his Miscellanea, lib. i. cap. 5. sect. 15. but especially Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 16. p. 671, &c. where he shews, that the Hebrew word signifies *any minister*, either of God or of man: as, in the twentieth chapter of this book, (ver. 26.) Ira, the Jairite, is said to be a *cohen*, which we translate *chief ruler* about David; and so the Chaldee, and the Spanish Jews, *a principal officer*. But by the law, neither he nor David's sons could be priests. There can be, therefore, no doubt of this, that they were the principal officers in the court of David, the prime ministers of his household: such as, among us, are the lord high-chamberlain, steward, treasurer, &c. as appears from 1 Chron. xviii. 17. where this matter is thus explained, *they were at the hand of the king:* waiting on him, as chief officers in his court, or, as Cornelius Bertram explains it, " publicos et primarios ministros," *the public and principal ministers of state*. (See Bochartus, lib. ii. Canaan, cap. 17.) And this was the reason, they say, of Absalom's discontent, that he was not one of these Αὐλάρχαι; or, had not a place according to his mind.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *AND David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?*] Having ended his wars, and settled his kingdom and court, now he considers what private obligations he had; especially to the house of Saul, but above all to Jonathan. For he promised Saul, with an oath, that he would not cut off his seed, (1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22.) and had made a covenant of friendship with Jonathan and his posterity for ever; confirmed also by an oath, (1 Sam. xx. 14—17. 42. xxiii. 18.)

Ver. 2. *And there was of the house of Saul a servant, whose name was Ziba.*] He had been employed in some business in Saul's family; but being a Canaanite (as some

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of the Jews will have it), he did not recover his liberty with the death of Saul, but still continued in servitude under David.

And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, Art thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant is he.] He was in such an inferior station, that David did not know him; though some among his courtiers did.

Ver. 3. *And the king said, Is there yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet.*] Here David, like a good man, and a worthy friend, and a noble prince, thinks how he may perform his promise to Jonathan, 1 Sam. xx. 14. where he obliged himself to shew *the kindness of the Lord*, that is, great kindness, to his posterity.

Ver. 4. *And the king said unto him, Where is he? And Ziba said, He is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.*] A place on the other side Jordan, in Mount Gilead, (see xvii. 27.) where, it is likely, his friends thought him safe: being far from David; whom they looked upon as an enemy. (See ver. 7.)

Ver. 5. *Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.*] It is likely he sent Ziba to bring him to court, and to assure him of the king's kindness.

Ver. 6. *Now when Mephibosheth.*] Called also Meribbaal, 1 Chron. viii. 34. ix. 40.

The son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come to David, he fell on his face, and did reverence.] As the manner was when men came into the presence of the king, or the king's son: for thus David himself did to Jonathan, (1 Sam. xx. 41.)

And David said unto him, Mephibosheth! And he answered, Behold thy servant!] The king spake in a very friendly manner to him: and he answered as humbly.

Ver. 7. *And David said unto him, Fear not.*] This intimates that he had apprehensions David might have an evil eye upon him, as one that had a pretence to the kingdom.

For I will shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father.] Which he had purchased before he was king, or acquired afterward, or was descended to him from his father: but had been confiscated (as D. Kimchi observes) to the king's exchequer, because Ish-bosheth and the house of Saul had rebelled against David, who was the Lord's anointed. And accordingly afterward David gave all this land to Ziba, when he accused Mephibosheth of treason against him, xvi. 6. (See Selden, de Succession. ad Leges Hebræorum, cap. 25. fol. 89.)

And thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.] As one of his own children, (ver. 11.)

Ver. 8. *And he bowed himself.*] In token of his thankfulness.

And said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?] This is a high expression of his unworthiness of any favour. For a dog was accounted a vile and unclean creature, and a dead dog was of no use at all. See iii. 8. 1 Sam. xxiv. 15. where David spake thus to Saul, as Helena (Bochart observes) did to Hector. There being no greater expression of humility than this, for one to be so abject as to call himself a dog. In like manner, he that calls another so, (as Abishai doth Shimei, and Ulysses doth the wooers, to whom he calls ὦ κύνες, Odyss. x.) expresses the utmost contempt of him.

Ver. 9. *Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house.*] Some understand by his *master's son* the son of Mephibosheth, (called Micah, ver. 12.) because Ziba was not to provide for Mephibosheth himself, who was to be maintained by the king at his royal table. But it may as well be thought to be meant of Mephibosheth, who had this estate given him for such uses as he should think fit to appoint.

Ver. 10. *Thou therefore, thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruit, that thy master's son may have food to eat.*] This may seem to favour what was said before, that he was to manage the land for the benefit of Micah the son of Mephibosheth and his household, who were to be maintained out of the product of it: but the following words, I think, shew the contrary.

But Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread always at my table.] Now he declares publicly what he had said privately to Mephibosheth. Who being the person here plainly called *his master's son* (*i. e.* the son of Jonathan), it inclines me to conclude that he is understood before by that name: whose family was to be maintained by the fruit of the estate that David gave him, though he himself was to eat always with David.

Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.] Who were sufficient to manage a very great estate.

Ver. 11. *Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so will thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.*] Those words, *said the king*, are not in the original text: so that these words may be thought to be Ziba's: who said he would keep a table for Mephibosheth also, if David pleased, and entertain him royally, the land being sufficient to afford it. But I do not see how he could call it *my table;* which must be the language of David: who now repeated what he had said before, that Ziba should take no care of Mephibosheth.

Ver. 12. *And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micah.*] Who had many sons, from whom issued a numerous progeny, which lasted many generations, (1 Chron. viii. 34, 35, &c. ix. 40, 41, &c.)

And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.] And consequently accountable to him for all that they received out of the estate: which, it appears by this, was settled upon him.

Ver. 13. *So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem.*] Ziba went to take care of his land, which was at Gibeah of Benjamin, but Mephibosheth stayed with the king, that he might partake of his bounty.

For he did eat bread continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.] Though he could not go, yet he was carried thither; for so the words may be translated, *though he was lame*, &c. This defect and blemish did not hinder him from being entertained by the king with the greatest kindness: which procured him, though despicable in his person, honour from the people, as one in great favour with their king.

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CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died.*] Who, it appears by the next verse, was Nahash: to whom Saul gave a very great defeat at Jabesh-Gilead, (1 Sam. xi.)

And Hanun his son reigned in his stead.] For it seems that was an hereditary kingdom, as most were in those countries and times.

Ver. 2. *Then said David, I will shew kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, for his father shewed kindness unto me.*] All generous minds are full of gratitude and compassion, as Strigelius here observes out of several heathen authors. But there is no example of it greater than in David, who remembers ancient benefits received from Nahash, and pitied his son who had lost such a father. What those benefits were is uncertain. Some of the Jews say he fled to him, when he durst not stay with Achish, and he received him kindly; others, that he entertained his relations, when the king of Moab, to whom David committed them, slew some of them: but it is most probable, that, being an enemy to Saul, who had given him a great overthrow, he proved a friend to David when he was persecuted by him, and sent him relief and assistance, and perhaps offered him his protection.

And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father.] According to the present custom among princes, who send some of their courtiers to condole the loss of those with whom they live in friendship.

And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.] Where they had audience of Hanun, and delivered their message: which his court sinistrously interpreted, as appears by the next verse.

Ver. 3. *And the princes of the children of Ammon.*] Who bare a great sway in all public affairs.

Said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee?] They measured his affection by their own: who having no kindness for David, imagined he had as little for them.

Hath not David rather sent his servants to search the city, and to spy it out?] Nothing so well meant but may be ill interpreted; and is wont to be so by men who love nobody but themselves.

To overthrow it.] They persuade him that these ambassadors came only to observe where the city was weakest, and might be most successfully assaulted and taken.

Ver. 4. *Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off one half of their beards.*] He was not only very credulous, but very ill natured; for otherwise he would have civilly dismissed them, whatsoever his courtiers suspected, or kept them in an honourable custody till the truth had been discovered. But this was the highest disgrace that could be put upon them: for all people thought their hair a great ornament, and never shaved their heads or their beards but in case of mourning: which was forbid to the Israelites, (Lev. xix. 27. Deut. xiv. 1.) And therefore, when he had caused one half of their beards to be cut off, they abhorred to cut the other; which made them look ridiculously. (See Isa. xv. 2. Jer. xli. 5. xlviii. 37.) We learn what a foul disgrace, yea, a heavy punishment, this was in ancient times, from Nicolaus Damascenus, mentioned by Stobæus, tit. 42. who says, that among the Indians the king commanded the greatest offenders to be shaven, κελεύει κείρασθαι ὡς ἐσχάτης τιμωρίας, as the heaviest punishment he could inflict upon them. And Tacitus saith, that there were few adulteresses among the ancient Germans, whose punishment was left to the husbands: and they were wont to cut off their hair, and turn them naked out of doors, and whip them through the streets. (See Georg. Ritterhusius de Jure Asylorum, cap. 10.) And at this day this is the greatest indignity that can be offered to any man in Persia, to cause his beard to be shaved off: as Tavernier relates in his Indian Travels, p. 121. where he tells us the sophi caused an ambassador of Aurengzebe to be thus used, telling him he was not worthy to wear a beard, and thereupon commanded it to be shaved off. Which was just like this act of Hanun. And Aurengzebe most highly resented the affront that was offered him in the person of his ambassador, as David did this which was offered him in his.

And cut their garments to the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.] Long garments down to the heels were worn in those countries, especially by honourable persons: and therefore the king of Ammon still put a further indignity upon them, in cutting their garments short, even to the middle: whereby those parts were exposed which required to be covered. For the Israelites did not wear breeches, as we do: so that their long garments being cut to the middle, their nakedness might be seen. (See Isa. xx. 4.)

Ver. 5. *And when they told it unto David, he sent to meet them, because they were greatly ashamed.*] Therefore he sent, no doubt, clothes to cover them, together with the following advice.

And the king said, Tarry at Jericho.] Which was the first place to which they came in the land of Canaan: and now a private village, where they might obscure themselves, till they were fit to appear in public.

Until your beards be grown, and then return.] For it was a reproach in that country to have no beard. And though it was well known how they came to be deprived of them, yet it was not fit that persons of their quality should appear unlike all other men.

Ver. 6. *And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David,*] They wanted not intelligence how heinously David resented the barbarous usage of his ambassadors: which is expressed by a phrase, which signifies that they were become very odious to him. (See Gen. xxxiv. 30.)

The children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob.] They distrusted their own strength, and therefore hired auxiliary forces of their neighbours: particularly those of Beth-rehob, which was a city belonging to the Canaanites rather than the Syrians (as Bochart observes), who were only borderers upon it.

And the Syrians of Zobah, twenty thousand footmen.] Concerning Zobah, see viii. 3.

And of king Maacah a thousand men.] Maacah also was a city in Palestine, beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh, as Rehob was in the tribe of Asher, (Josh. xiii. 11. xix. 28.) but the Canaanites kept them out of the possession of both, (Josh. xiii. 13. Judg. i. 31.) Therefore Bochartus confutes

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those who think Aram-Maacah was the country of Comagena: for though Aram commonly signifies Syria, which was divided into many countries, yet the Scriptures shew these places were not in Syria. But the people of them were called Syrians, because they imitated their manners: as the woman in the gospel is called Syro-Phœnician, though she was a woman of Canaan, Matt. xv. 22. Mark vii. 26. (See his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 6. latter end.)

And of Ish-tob twelve thousand men.] Or, of the *men of Tob:* a country unto which Jephthah fled from his unkind brethren. (See Judg. xi. 3.)

Ver. 7. *And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and the host of the mighty men.*] He did not think it prudent to stay till they assaulted him in his own country, but went and invaded theirs.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate.*] They drew up their army either before Rabbah, the metropolis of their country, or before Medeba (in the borders of it), where their confederates were pitched, (1 Chron. xix. 7.)

And the Syrians of Zobah, and of Rehob, and Ish-tob, and Maacah, were by themselves in the field.] They kept their mercenary forces in the field, and would not let them come into their cities.

Ver. 9. *And when Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind.*] In the Hebrew, *the face of the battle,* &c. *i. e.* they had divided their forces; the Syrians appearing before him, and the Ammonites behind him.

He chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians.] He also, like an expert commander, presently divided his army into two bodies, and picked out the best soldiers to engage the Syrians, who, it seems, were the strongest, or most valiant.

Ver. 10. *And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon.*] He was also an experienced captain, who seems to have to deal with that body of the enemies which was behind them, as Joab with those before him.

Ver. 11. *And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.*] Send a detachment, as they now speak, from the strongest body to that which proved weaker.

Ver. 12. *Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God.*] The words were not spoken, I suppose, to Abishai alone; but to all the army by their officers; that they might not be disheartened at the sight of such numerous forces, as in a manner encompassed them: but be so much the more resolute, for the preservation of their country.

And the Lord do that which seemeth him good.] If they did their duty, he trusted God's providence would favour them: however, it would be some comfort, that they had done their best.

Ver. 13. *And Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.*] He did very prudently in assaulting the mercenary army first; for they that are hired to fight generally have a great care to save themselves: having no regard to the cause for which they fight.

Ver. 14. *And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled.*] On whom they principally relied.

Then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city.] They seem not to have struck a stroke; but provided also for their safety, in the city near to which their army was drawn up.

And Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.] Here is no account of the number of the slain, which, I suppose, were few or none, because they did not fight, but flee. The year also seems to have been so far spent, that it was not a season fit for laying a siege to the city. (See the next chapter, ver. 1.)

Ver. 15. *And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together.*] Fearing David would fall upon them for assisting his enemies, they resolved to be beforehand with him; and therefore levied a new army to invade him.

Ver. 16. *And Hadadezer.*] Who was the king of Aram-Zobah, in Mesopotamia.

Sent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river.] *i. e.* Beyond Euphrates; which was the bound of his territories eastward. (See viii. 3.)

And came to Helam.] A place, I suppose, on the borders of Hadadezer's country, westward.

And Shobach, the captain of the host of Hadadezer, went before them.] Commanded both his forces and theirs which came to his assistance.

Ver. 17. *And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam.*] In this expedition David seems to have commanded his army in his own person.

And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.] They seem to have begun the fight.

Ver. 18. *And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots.*] That is, seven thousand men, who belonged to those seven hundred chariots, as it is explained in 1 Chron. xix. 18.

And forty thousand horsemen.] In that place of the Chronicles it is said *forty thousand footmen.* Which teaches us how to explain the words here; *viz.* that they were mixed together, horse and foot: and that in all there were slain forty thousand of them, part horsemen and part footmen.

And smote Shobach, the captain of their host, who died there.] Was slain upon the spot (as we speak); being a valiant man, who chose to be killed, rather than fly.

Ver. 19. *And when all the kings that were servants of Hadadezer saw that they were smitten before Israel.*] There were several petty kings that were subject to Hadadezer: who was the most powerful prince thereabout.

They made peace with Israel, and served them.] As, I suppose, Hadadezer himself also did: whereby God fulfilled his promise to Abraham (which was renewed to Joshua) of enlarging the dominion of his posterity, as far as Euphrates. (See Gen. xv. 18. Josh. i. 2—4.)

So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.] But left them to shift for themselves: insomuch that, as it follows, David conquered their country.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, that after the year was expired.*] In the Hebrew, *at the return of the year:* that is,

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in the spring-time, he sent forth his armies to do that which he could not do in the conclusion of the former year; when the season was not fit for action, as I observed upon the fifteenth verse of the foregoing chapter. For the year ending with the month Adar, the next year began in the month Nisan: which was a fit time to march into the field to make war; and so commonly employed, that it seems to have had its name (as Bochartus observes) from *Nisim:* which signifies military ensigns, which were wont to be advanced in that month. And, in like manner, the month we call March, had its name among the Romans from Mars, their god of war: because then they began their military expeditions. (See his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 50.)

At the time that kings go forth to battle.] These words, *to battle,* are added for explication's sake: but they are not in the Hebrew; in which language *to go forth* signifies to go forth to war. (See Gen. x. 11. Isa. xlii. 13. Zech. xiv. 3. and other places, mentioned by the same great man, par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 2.)

That David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel.] All his soldiers.

And they destroyed the children of Ammon.] Laid waste their country, and killed all the people they could meet with.

And besieged Rabbah.] The royal city of the Ammonites, (Deut. iii. 11.)

But David tarried still at Jerusalem.] He committed the care of this war to Joab, and did not himself go out to fight: as he had done before against Hadadezer.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass in an evening-tide.*] In the afternoon, when the sun was declining.

That David rose from his bed.] Where he had lain down to sleep, in the heat of the day; as the manner was in those countries, (iv. 5.)

And walked upon the roof of his house.] To take the fresh air: for their roofs were flat. (See Deut. xxii. 8.)

And from the roof he saw a woman washing herself.] In her garden, where she bathed; or in her chamber, the casements being open. The first is most probable: and that she washed to cleanse herself from such legal impurities as are mentioned Lev. xv. 19. which is more likely than that she did it for pleasure, or merely to cool herself in a hot day, as some understand it. The fourth verse sufficiently explains this matter.

And the woman was very beautiful to look upon.] Of a delicate shape, and lovely countenance and complexion. Thus Jupiter is said to have seen Proserpina washing herself, and exposing her whole body to his view: which inflamed his lust after her.

Λουομένης ὅλον εἶδος ἐδέρκετο Περσεφονείης.

As Nonnus hath it in his Dionys. (See Spanhemius ad vers. 53. Callim. Hymn. in Lavacrum Palladis.)

Ver. 3. *And David sent and inquired after her.*] That if she was a single woman he might take her for his wife.

And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?] This seems to be the answer of him who was sent to inquire about her, that he need not trouble himself any farther, for she was another man's wife. Who is called a Hittite, because he was so by nation, but a proselyte to the Jewish religion: and for his valour made one of the king's guard among the Cherethites and the Pelethites, which was the reason, perhaps, that he had a house so near the king's.

Ver. 4. *And David sent messengers to her, and took her.*] Notwithstanding he was informed she was another man's wife, he sent messengers to her to invite her to his palace: into which he received her. This was a very great crime, being done deliberately and advisedly: and is here recorded for several great ends and purposes. First, that the best men may be sensible in what need they stand continually of the Divine assistance: which, therefore, they ought to pray for earnestly, and watch as well as pray, that they fall not into temptation. And we should all learn from hence, that they are but men whose examples are set before us; and therefore we must live by rule, and not merely by example. And that we ought to take heed of sloth and idleness: being always well employed, and not giving ourselves liberty to gaze upon temptations.

And she came in unto him, and lay with him (for she was purified from her uncleanness).] Which shews the reason why she conceived so quickly. (See Grotius.)

And she returned to her house.] Early in the morning, I suppose, that she might not be discovered. The Talmudists are so desirous to excuse their ancestors from all blemishes, that they say David committed no sin in lying with Bath-sheba: but only in causing Uriah to be killed. For, when any man went to war, he gave his wife, they pretend, a bill of divorce: so that if he was killed in the war, it was not adultery in another man, who lay with her, as soon as the bill was given. This monstrous opinion is seriously maintained by R. Samuel Laniado against Abarbinel; who honestly acknowledges, and strenuously proves, David was guilty of a very foul adultery: which was the more criminal, because it was with the wife of a faithful servant of his, who then served him in his wars. (See Buxtorf. de Sponsal. et Divort. sect. 43, &c. and Selden, in his Uxor. Hebraica, lib. iii. cap. 19. p. 441.)

Ver. 5. *And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, saying, I am with child.*] She was afraid of infamy, and, perhaps, of the severity of her husband; who might cause her to be stoned: and therefore prays David to consult her honour and her safety.

Ver. 6. *And David sent unto Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.*] With an account of the state of the war; which David, it is likely, desired.

Ver. 7. *And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.*] Some think (particularly P. Martyr) that these were such ordinary questions, as betrayed this was not the business for which he commanded him to be sent: but the last words import, that after the common questions of Joab's and the people's health, he inquired how the siege went on; what approaches they had made to the city; what hopes they had of taking it; in what time; with other things of like nature, which were of importance.

Ver. 8. *And David said, Go down to thy house and wash thy feet.*] As the manner of travellers was: this being a great refreshment after their journey.

And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king.] In token of his extraordinary favour and kindness to him: and that, eating freely of good cheer, he might be the more desirous to enjoy the company of his wife. Abarbinel thinks this was a very sinful contrivance of David, to endeavour to have

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his child thought the child of Uriah: or, at least, it was very much below his dignity, he thinks, to have one of his own progeny pass for an ordinary man.

Ver. 9. *But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.*] Like a true soldier, he lay all night in the guard-chamber (with the Cherethites and Pelethites), and not with his wife. By which means God's providence so ordered it, that the crime of this prince (who had been so admirably instructed in his duty) should not be concealed, as he intended.

Ver. 10. *And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down to his house.*] They that carried the mess of meat after him gave David this information.

David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? wherefore then didst thou not go down to thine house?] He still pretended kindness to him, and great care of him: telling him he expected no service of him here; especially after a journey.

Ver. 11. *And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents.*] It seems they still continued the custom which we read of 1 Sam. iv. 4. of carrying the ark into the field, as a token of the Divine presence with them, and favour to them: and that they might consult the Divine Majesty in any difficult cases.

And my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open field.] Where they lay upon the ground in their tents. It is an idle conceit of Laniado, beforementioned, that Uriah was guilty of treason, in calling Joab *my lord*, in the presence of David: for which he pretends David might lawfully put him to death.

Shall I then go unto my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.] These are not two oaths, but the repetition of the same: which was pronounced with such vehemence, that David's heart, it might have been expected, should have been deeply touched, to think how he had abused so brave a man: and made him reflect how vilely he indulged himself in sinful pleasure, whilst this man and the rest gloriously endured all manner of hardships, and refused the most innocent pleasure, for the service of their country: but he was so corrupted for the present, that he was troubled to find Uriah so true a soldier.

Ver. 12. *And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day and the morrow.*] He still pretended more kindness to him in giving him time to rest himself after his journey: and perhaps pretended, also, that he himself could not sooner finish his dispatches.

Ver. 13. *And when David had called him.*] Invited him to supper the night before he went away.

He did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.] The Hebrew word doth not certainly signify that he was quite drunk; but that he drank so much, that he was very merry. However, Plutarch observes, that brave men, even when they have drunk too much, preserve their modesty and gravity: just as good horses are orderly, even when their reins are let loose. This was an addition to David's sin, that he endeavoured to intoxicate Uriah, and thereby make him forget his oath beforementioned.

Ver. 14. *And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah.*] Who, if he suspected any thing of the adultery, as some think he did (and therefore, resolving it should be discovered, would not go home to his wife), yet was so trusty a servant, he would not open the letter, to find what was in it.

Ver. 15. *And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.*] Thus one sin begets many, depriving men of the use of their understanding. For he might better, as Abarbinel observes, have told Uriah the truth, and begged his pardon, and obliged him to stay with him until the child was born, and then secretly put it out to nurse: whereby the matter might have been so managed, that it should not have been commonly divulged, or not certainly believed. But his eyes were blinded; and his very nature was altered, and become base and degenerate, now he had given himself up to sensuality. For he that formerly spared Saul, when he could have destroyed him, and no one have known who did it, seeks the death of a faithful servant after a most unworthy manner.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where valiant men were.*] Ordered him to attack a part of the city which he knew would be valiantly defended: or, to make good a breach, out of which the best men they had in the city would issue out against them. Joab was herein also deeply guilty, in complying with such a command: unless we suppose that he might imagine Uriah had committed some great crime; for which David, consulting Uriah's honour, would not punish him openly.

Ver. 17. *And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab.*] They seem to have made a sally out of the city upon the Israelites, when they saw they were preparing for an assault.

And there fell some of the people of the servants of David, and Uriah the Hittite died also.] This was a further aggravation of David's sin, that he not only exposed an innocent and a valiant faithful servant to be killed, but other persons also with him, who might have lived to do good service to their country: for it is not to be imagined that one person alone was set in the forefront, where the service was hottest, (as David ordered, ver. 15.) but there was a party of stout men with Uriah, whom he led on.

Ver. 18. *Then Joab sent and told David all things concerning the war.*] How it was managed, and what ill success they had in one engagement.

Ver. 19. *And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king.*] Especially this last action.

Ver. 20. *And if so be the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?*] All good kings are careful to preserve their subjects; and therefore it must be supposed David would be angry when he heard of this loss; till he reflected upon the reason why they were exposed to such danger.

Ver. 21. *Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth?*] These are still the words the king might be supposed to say; How came Abimelech to lose his life? Was it not by venturing too near the wall? He calls him the son of Jerub-

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besheth, who in the book of Judges is called the son of Jerubbaal: of which see upon the second chapter of this book, ver. 8.

Did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? Why went ye so nigh the wall?] Having such an example, to make you more cautious.

Then say, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.] Which he knew would soon pacify him.

Ver. 22. *So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for.*] The whole process of the war hitherto, but more particularly the event of the last engagement, as it here follows.

Ver. 23. *And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.*] The account he gives of the last action is this: that the Ammonites made a sally, and were too hard for the Israelites, whom they put into some disorder; but they, plucking up their courage, rallied again, and beat the Ammonites back, following them to the very gate of their city.

Ver. 24. *And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.*] These shooters were either archers, or such as managed the machines (which perhaps they had in these days, as they had afterward among the Romans), out of which they shot arrows and stones. Vitruvius says, that out of their *catapultæ* and *scorpiones* they shot arrows, and out of their *balistæ* they shot stones. Others say the quite contrary, as Goteschalchus Stewecius shews, in his learned commentary on the fourth book of Vegetius, lib. de Re Militari, p. 446, &c.

Ver. 25. *Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee.*] That is, be not disheartened by this loss. David shewed no sign of displeasure, expecting to hear the news he desired of Uriah's death.

For the sword devoureth one as well as another.] Makes no distinction between good and bad.

Make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it.] He would have this defeat make them more resolute, to assault the city with greater force, till they were masters of it.

And encourage thou him.] *i. e.* Joab and his soldiery.

Ver. 26. *And when the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.*] But not long: for then David could not have taken her soon enough into his house to cover his adultery. The common time was seven days, (1 Sam. xxxi. 7.)

Ver. 27. *And when the mourning was past, David sent, and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.*] This whole business *was evil in the eyes* of God (as the words are in the Hebrew), not only his adultery, and the murder of Uriah; but also his taking Bath-sheba to be his wife. For, according to the Hebrew doctors, it was utterly unlawful for any man to marry the wife of one whom he had defiled. Which hath made some of the Jews so laborious to excuse David from the crime of adultery. For Laniado himself acknowledges, that if David had committed adultery with Bath-sheba, she had been perpetually prohibited, and unlawful to him, as his words are. But though this ought not to have been done, yet, being done, the marriage held good; and the children he afterward had by her were legitimate. (See Buxtorf. de Sponsalibus et Divortiis, sect. 43.)

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *AND the Lord sent Nathan unto David.*] To awaken him out of his sleep, and give him a sight of his sins.

And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.] This was a prudent and respectful way of awakening David by an apposite parable: which was so managed, that the prophet did not condemn David, but made him condemn himself. And many have very pertinently observed from hence, that there is never more use of wisdom and discretion than in the contrivance of reprehension: especially of princes and great persons, whom the ministers of Christ ought to admonish and reprove in an humble and reverend representation of their sins to them, not with rude exprobations of them, and declamations against them. It is not necessary to apply every word of this parable to David's case (as the beginning of it is exactly fitted), because in parables several things are added, which serve only to make them decorous and handsome. Yet Abarbinel (as I shall shew in the conclusion of it) hath endeavoured to give an account of every part of it.

Ver. 2. *And the rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds.*] As David had many wives and concubines, with which he might have been well satisfied.

Ver. 3. *But the poor man had nothing, save only one little ewe-lamb.*] Perhaps Uriah had only one wife, with whom he contented himself, or rather was highly pleased, she being mild and gentle as a lamb.

Which he had bought, and nourished up.] They frequently purchased their wives in those days; giving to their parents a sum of money for them. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Uxore Hebr. cap. 20.)

And it grew up together with him, and with his children: it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.] That is, was exceeding dear to him, and beloved by him. This is a resemblance not unlike the truth, unto those who understand how fond many persons were anciently, not only of lambs, but of several other creatures, which they suffered to eat with them at their tables, and to lie with them in their beds, as Bochart shews in his Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 43.

Ver. 4. *And there came a traveller to the rich man.*] This may be applied to David's straggling affection, which he suffered to wander from his own home, and to covet another man's wife. The Jewish doctors say it represents that which they call *jetzer hara, the evil disposition*, or desire that is in us, which must be diligently watched and observed when we feel its motions. For they have this ingenious observation concerning it, in Bereschith Rabba and other books: "In the beginning it is but a traveller; but in time it becomes a guest; and in conclusion, is the master of the house." For he, say they, who is called a *traveller* in the beginning of this verse, is called *isch, a man*, in the conclusion of it.

And he spared to take of his own flock, and his own herd,

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to dress for the way-faring man that was come to him.] Wherewith he might have satisfied his appetite.

But took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.] He touches not in this parable upon the murder, for that was committed to cover the adultery, which led the way to the other crime. And Abarbinel gives a reason why it is not mentioned in his explication of the parable: which is this:—The rich man, saith he, plainly signifies David; his flocks and herds, David's wives and concubines: the poor man represents Uriah, who, he thinks, was a widower, and had several children alive by a former wife, when he married Bath-sheba. Whom he compares to a lamb which he bought, because he solemnly espoused her; and with tender affection he cherished her, and she grew up with him, and with his children, which he had by his former wife. This lamb being taken by the rich man from the poor, to gratify a wanton appetite, signifies David's taking Bath-sheba and lying with her. And it would have made the resemblance more complete, if he had added, that the rich man killed the poor man, from whom he took the lamb. But this is omitted, Abarbinel thinks, in the parable, that David might not readily apprehend Nathan's meaning; and so be induced unawares to pronounce a sentence of condemnation upon himself. And then he had a fixed opportunity to shew him, that if the rich man who took away the poor man's lamb deserved death, according to his own judgment, how much more did he deserve it, who had not only taken another man's wife, but also caused him to be slain by the enemies of Israel?

Ver. 5. *And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die.*] Punishments sometimes extended beyond the law, because of the great atrocity of the crime.

Ver. 6. *And he shall restore the lamb fourfold.*] This was agreeable to the law, (Exod. xxii. 1.)

Because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.] Because he took away the lamb, he condemned him to make restitution fourfold: and because he had no pity (it being his only lamb), he condemned him to die. Kimchi will have it, that the word signifies twice fourfold; because it is in their dual number: so that this punishment also is beyond the law. But all the ancient interpreters are against him. But the Jews here observe that these words were ominous: so many of David's sons perishing, as he said the rich man should restore lambs, *viz.* the child he had by Bath-sheba, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah. (See Bochartus, in his Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 40.)

Ver. 7. *And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man.*] Who had pronounced a dreadful sentence against himself. Though reproofs of men in authority are to be managed very mannerly, as to the form wherein they are delivered; yet as to the matter they are to be plain and downright, so that they may be made sensible of their guilt.

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and delivered thee out of the hand of Saul.] Who sought to hinder his advancement to the kingdom, by destroying him. Thus he aggravates David's sin, from the obligations he had to God: who had preferred him to the highest dignity, when he was in a low, and sometimes a desperate condition.

Ver. 8. *And I gave thee thy master's house.*] His kingdom.

And thy master's wives into thy bosom.] For the wives of a king went along with his lands and goods unto his successor: it being unlawful for the widow of a king to be wife to any but a king; as appears by the story of Adonijah. But this doth not signify that David married any of them; but only that they were delivered into his possession, as all other things belonging unto Saul were. So Maimonides: and more than this, the Jewish doctors say, no subject might have so much as the horse of the king, no more than his sceptre and crown: much less his widow, or one divorced by him, who was to remain a widow to the day of her death. So the same Maimonides: The wife of a king is to be married to none else; for even the king cannot legally marry the widow of his predecessor, or one divorced by him. (See Selden, lib. i. de Uxore Hebr. cap. 10. and Carpzovius upon Schickard's Jus Regium, p. 441.) But there are those, who, to avoid all controversy about this matter, interpret the word *nase*, not *wives*, but mere *women*, belonging unto Saul.

And gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah.] Dominion over all the twelve tribes.

And if that had been too little, I would moreover have given thee such and such things.] He need but have asked, and God would have given him all that he could reasonably desire: but he ought not to have taken what he pleased himself. The Jews refer this to the wives he would have given him: and gather from hence, that their king might have eighteen wives, and no more. (See upon Deut. xvii. 17.) But it is evident these words, *such and such things*, do not signify a certain number of any thing, but indefinitely other benefits of any kind: as Theod. Hackspan observes out of many like places, particularly Isa. vii. 20. (See his Disput. 4. n. 3.)

Ver. 9. *Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight?*] These words, and David's own confession, (ver. 13.) might have ashamed the Talmudists, one would think, from framing excuses for David's sin, and absolving him from any guilt. Bartoloccius hath given a large account of their lewd prevarication in this matter, in his Kirjath-sepher, tom. ii. p. 102, 103, &c.

Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword.] For he contrived his death, which was as bad as if he had killed him himself.

And hast taken his wife to be thy wife.] After he had first committed adultery with her.

And hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.] This highly aggravated his crime, as Abarbinel observes, that he caused him to be slain by the professed enemies of God; who triumphed in the slaughter of so great a man. And in this, Laniado himself confesses David sinned, though in nothing else.

Ver. 10. *Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house.*] That is, as long as he lived there should be slaughters in his family. Which was fulfilled in the violent death of his children, Amnon, and Absalom, and (about the time of his death) Adonijah.

Because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.] Which, it appears by this repetition, was a very great offence, but not greater than his adultery, as Procopius Gazæus thinks it was.

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Ver. 11. *Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.*] That is, his own family: which was notoriously fulfilled in Absalom's conspiracy against him.

And I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.] For Absalom had a tent spread in the house-top, and there went in unto them, (xvi. 21, 22.) Which is said to be done before David's eyes, because, though he did not see it, yet it was done so publicly that he could not but know it, and yet was not able to hinder it.

Ver. 12. *For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.*] For it was notorious to all how David fled in haste from his son, and left his concubines behind him, (xv. 14—16.)

Ver. 13. *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.*] This confession was made in a few words; but, no doubt, with many sobs and great grief, compunction and contrition of heart.

And Nathan said unto David.] Not presently, but after he had bewailed his sin so bitterly that his repentance appeared to be hearty.

The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.] He was guilty of death upon a double account, as an adulterer and as a murderer, as Procopius Gazæus observes. But upon his repentance the prophet pronounces an absolution to him, thus far, that he should be pardoned the guilt and part of the punishment. That is, he should not perish eternally (as Rasi and others interpret the words, *thou shalt not die*), nor here suffer the death he had deserved. For though when God gave them a king like other nations, he did not intend that he should be above all law, and not be bound to the laws he himself had given (as Abarbinel observes), yet he was not subject to the punishment of the law, which no magistrate could inflict, because he was the supreme: but God reserved his punishment to himself, and threatens to inflict it when inferior officers could not. Which threatening did not take away from him the power of pardoning and releasing the punishment, but he left that entire to himself, and here uses it; but in such a manner, that he freed David only from the punishment of death, and the loss of his kingdom: otherwise he was to suffer a great many and sore calamities as long as he lived. (See J. Benedict. Carpzovius upon Schickard's Jus Regium, cap. 2. Theor. 7. p. 137.) Whereby it appears how false the doctrine of the Talmudists is concerning the power of the great Sanhedrin, who they say had power to scourge their kings, &c. Which we never find was attempted, though Saul and David, and especially Manasseh, committed most heinous sins, which deserved severe correction.

Ver. 14. *Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.*] This was an additional punishment, to be inflicted presently: because his sin was highly aggravated, in that the nations about them might thereby be tempted to have him and his Divine law in great contempt: which they saw no more regarded by the best men that professed it. Or, they might blaspheme God, as a respecter of persons, who had rejected Saul, and yet kept David on the throne, who had done worse than he. Or, the Ammonites, perhaps, insulted over Israel and their God, when they had killed Uriah and others with him. Yet Procopius Gazæus here well observes, there was some mercy mixed with this punishment; for if the child had lived, it would have been a standing monument of his adultery. And therefore it may be thought, that, in favour of David, God took him away, that he might remove his reproach.

But this verse suggests a wonderful thing to us, that David remained many months insensible of what he had done (so bewitching is sensual pleasure); for the child begotten in adultery was born before Nathan came to rouse him out of his lethargy.

Ver. 15. *And Nathan departed unto his house: and the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.*] Of some sudden sore distemper: which appeared, at first, as if it were mortal.

Ver. 16. *David therefore besought the Lord for the child.*] He thought the threatening might not be absolute: the will of God being not always manifested entirely at once, but he reserves still something to himself. As when he commanded Abraham to offer his son: and when he told Hezekiah he should die.

And David fasted, and went in.] To his closet, I suppose, or some place of retirement.

And lay all night upon the earth.] Humbling himself greatly for his sin, which had deserved this, and far sorer punishment. Salvian (in his second book, De Gubern. Dei) describes this admirably:—He put off his purple, saith he, threw away his royal ornaments, laid down his diadem, wholly stripped himself of his kingship, and appeared as a penitent, in a squalid, rueful garb; fasting, lying on the ground, confessing, mourning, repenting, deprecating, &c. and yet, with all his humiliation and compunction, he could not obtain a revocation of this punishment. By this, and the story of Absalom, it appears that David was a great lover of his children: many of which proved great afflictions to him.

Ver. 17. *And the elders of his house.*] The principal officers belonging to the court.

Arose, and went to him to raise him up from the earth.] By their earnest entreaties, to have a care of his own health.

But he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.] As he was wont to do at other times, when the principal persons of the court sat at table with him. But it is not to be thought that David ate nothing all the time the child was sick, but only after he began to despair of his life; or perhaps, all the time he ate nothing till the evening; and then abstained from all delicate food, and contented himself with coarser fare.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, that on the seventh day the child died.*] Either the seventh day after its birth, before it was circumcised, or the seventh after it fell sick. This was the first beginning of the Divine animadversion upon him (as Salvian speaks), "Fuit utique primum, sed non solum," *it was indeed the first, but not the alone:* for there followed a long train of exceeding great troubles.

And the servants of David feared to tell him the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice; how will he then vex himself, if we tell him the child is dead?] Thus they whispered and reasoned among themselves, so that he might not hear them, as appears by the next verse.

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Ver. 19. *And when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead.*] He guessed what the matter was.

Therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.] They would not acquaint him with it abruptly, for fear he should fall into too great a passion.

Ver. 20. *Then David rose up from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel.*] Put off the habit of a mourner, and prepared himself decently to appear before God. For it is certain the Jews were wont to wash before they went into the house of God, either their whole body, or their hands; which was usual among the gentiles also. And some have imagined the Jews learnt it from them; because we find no mention of it, as they say, till the time of Judith, xii. 7. (See Dr. Spencer, dissert. 3. cap. 2. sect. 11.) But that is a mistake; it being mentioned not only here in this place, but in the book of Psalms, xxvi. 6. For God having anciently commanded them to wash themselves, before they appeared in his presence at Mount Sinai, (Exod. xx. 20.) they thence, it is likely, concluded it was fit to prepare themselves for all their holy assemblies after the same manner.

And came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped.] This was done like a truly good man, who, before he would go to his own house, went to God's, and there gave him thanks, we may suppose, for the pardon of his sin, and not cutting him off as he had done his child. He acknowledged also the justice of God, and did not complain of his severity. He submitted to his holy will, and beseeched him, perhaps, that the remaining afflictions might be moderated, and made profitable to him.

Then he came to his own house; and, when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.] I suppose he was in some retired room of his own house, where he lay upon the earth mourning, and would not eat: from whence he would not remove to any other part of it, till he had been first at the house of God, and there worshipped.

Ver. 21. *Then said his servants to him, What is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child when he was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.*] His great officers, who sat at the table with him, I suppose, said this.

Ver. 22. *And he said, While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious unto me, that the child may live?*] They thought him preposterous in mourning while the child was alive, and cheering up himself when it was dead. But he shews what reason he had for both: it being possible God might be so kind as to reverse the sentence of death which he had pronounced against the child, upon David's humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer to him for mercy.

Ver. 23. *But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*] But now God's will being declared to be absolute, it was in vain to solicit for the child's life; which he could not hope to see restored by fasting and prayers, or any other means: but he must rather prepare to go to it, than think of bringing it back to him. Maimonides says, that they did not lament infants who died before they were thirty days old, but carried them in their arms to the grave, with one woman and two men to attend them; without saying the usual prayers over them, or the consolations for mourners. But if an infant was above thirty days old when he died, they carried him out on a small bier, and stood over him in order, and said the prayers and consolations. If he was a year old, then he was carried out upon a bed. This custom Gierus thinks David followed, in making no mourning for his child when it was dead: though there is no ground to think such customs as Maimonides describes were used in these early days. (See L. de Luctu Ebræorum, cap. 3.)

Ver. 24. *And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife.*] Who, no doubt, was deeply afflicted for the loss of her child: which was a strong bond while it lived, to tie David's affection to her: but being dead, she might fear he would no longer have any concern for her; but, perhaps, divorce her, as having been the occasion of great evil to him. It is observable, that there is not one word said of Bath-sheba in all this relation, either concerning her guilt or her punishment. She was punished, I suppose, in the calamities that befel David: who enticed her, not she him, to commit the foul sin of adultery, and was innocent in the murder of Uriah.

And went in unto her, and lay with her.] Which it was not lawful to do, as Maimonides observes, while the days of mourning lasted: for then they might not so much as marry, though they did not lie together. But those days being ended, he enjoyed her company. The same Gierus hath collected a great deal to this purpose, in the forenamed book, cap. 21.

And she bare him a son, and called his name Solomon.] Some think his mother first gave him this name, as soon as he was born.

And the Lord loved him.] As the Lord told him, it is likely, by Nathan the prophet: who comforted him, after his great humiliation, with this good hope, that notwithstanding his sin God would have a kindness for this son, and make him very famous. Such is the wonderful goodness of God to truly-penitent sinners, who testify the sincerity of their repentance by humble submission to whatsoever punishments God thinks fit to inflict upon them (as David did to the death of the former child), and thereby incline the Divine Goodness to shew further mercy to them.

Ver. 25. *And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and called his name Jedidiah.*] But David hereupon sent to give his child another name; signifying the love which he was assured God had to him. But the Scripture never calls him by this name, but always Solomon: which name the people loved, because he built the house of the Lord in peaceable times.

Because of the Lord.] Because he had so graciously declared his love to him. For the name imports, as is noted in the margin of the Bible, *beloved of the Lord.*

Victorinus Strigelius translates the first words of this verse thus, "Tradidit eum in manum Nathan;" &c. *He committed him to the hand of Nathan the prophet;* that he might educate him, and bring him up in piety, and in the knowledge of all things necessary for a prince to be acquainted withal. For the most excellent natures are apt to err in many things (as he observes) without learning; and therefore, though Hercules had a very great genius, yet he was put into the hands of learned men to instruct him; as appears by the verses of Theocritus, which recite his

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masters. Thus Alexander was bred up by Aristotle in all manner of learning: and if Constantine, together with his piety, had not been furnished with a great deal of knowledge, he could not have managed the cause of Christ against the Arians so well as he did in the council of bishops.

Ver. 26. *And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the city.*] That part of the city where the royal palace was; which lay upon the water that ran by the city, as the next verse seems to interpret it. It is not to be imagined that Joab continued the siege so long, as till David had two children by Bath-sheba: but this was done after the death of Uriah; when David commanded them to make their assault stronger against the city, (xi: 25.)

Ver. 27. *And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.*] That part of this city which lay upon the water: the other part, which was the heart of the city, being yet untaken. But it being supplied with water from this part, of which Joab had got possession, it could not hold out long, but would be forced to surrender, because Joab cut off their water from them. So Josephus understood it, τῶν ὑδάτων αὐτοὺς ἀποτεμνόμενος, lib. vii. cap. 7. And thus some learned men translate the last words of this verse, by adding the particle *mem* before *eth*, *He took from the city the waters.*

Ver. 28. *Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it; lest I take the city, and it be called by my name.*] As, from the conquest of Africa, Scipio was called Africanus. By this it appears, that though Joab had many faults, yet he loved his prince, and endeavoured to raise his glory.

Ver. 29. *And David gathered all the people together.*] All that were fit for war.

And went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.] The army being reinforced with such great recruits, they did not merely block up the city to starve it, and force it to surrender, but took it by storm, and permitted the soldiers to plunder and take the spoil of it; as Josephus writes, διαρπάσαι τοῖς στρατιώταις ἀφῆκεν.

Ver. 30. *And he took the king's crown from off his head.*] This was the king's part of the spoil: and the Talmudists also say, that all the household-stuff of the conquered king belonged to the king that was victorious. (See Grotius, lib. iii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 23. sect. 24.)

The weight whereof was a talent of gold.] Or rather, the *price*, or *value* of it: as the Hebrew word frequently signifies, and not only *weight*. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 37. p. 380.) And so it is to be taken here; for who was able to carry on his head such a weight as a talent, which they say was a hundred twenty-five pounds?

With the precious stones.] Which made the value of it so great. Josephus here saith, that there was one stone of great price, ἐν μέσῳ, *in the middle* of the crown; which he calls a sardonyx. The original of which fable Bochartus hath ingeniously conjectured in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. v. cap. 7. where he mentions other conceits of the Jews about this stone.

And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.] This passage is thus rendered by Josephus, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἄλλα σκύλα λαμπρὰ καὶ πολύτιμα εὗρεν ἐν τῇ πόλει. *He found more and other prey in the city very splendid, and of great price.*

Ver. 31. *And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kilns.*] Some of the inhabitants he caused to be sawn in sunder; over others horses drew harrows with great iron teeth; others were drawn over sharp sickles, or sharp stones, which perhaps he means by *brick-kilns:* for so some interpreters understand it, that he dragged them through the place where bricks were made; and there grated their flesh upon the ragged pieces of broken bricks. Though some will have this word *malken* to signify the place where the Ammonites offered their sacrifices to their god Moloch, or Malcome (as he is often called), and made the people there to pass through the fire. So the Vulgar translates it, *fornacem Moloch, the furnace of Moloch.* This dreadful punishment was to terrify other countries from violating the right of nations, by abusing public ambassadors. Though many have thought it too severe, and looked upon it as an argument, that David did this in the state of his impenitence: when the mild and gentle Spirit of God was departed from him, and he was become cruel and furious, as well as lustful.

And thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon.] This will not let us think that he punished so cruelly only those who advised the using of his ambassadors shamefully, or applauded it (as many it is likely did, that lived in Rabbah), for he treated all the cities in the country in the same rigorous manner.

So David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.] After they had brought all the country into subjection to him, and secured the possession of it. For it is not likely all the country people, women and children, were thus used; but only the military men, who had levied war against David, and called the Syrians to their assistance, and since put him to the trouble and charge of a long siege of Rabbah.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar, and Amnon the son of David loved her.*] Now begun a sad scene to be opened, of the calamities which Nathan foretold David should befal his house, (xii. 10.) It is the common opinion of the Jews, that in the war king David had with the king of Geshur, he took his daughter captive; who being very beautiful, he lay with her once (as they fancy the law, Deut. xxi. 11. allows), and begat of her this daughter. And afterward, she becoming a proselyte, he married her; and begat Absalom. So this daughter being begot while her mother was a gentile, they fancy she was not his legal child; and consequently Amnon might have married her. (See Selden, lib. v. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 23. and Cocceius upon the Sanhedrin, cap. 2. n. 8. annot. 7. of which more upon ver. 13. see there.)

Ver. 2. *And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin: and Amnon thought it hard to do any thing to her.*] The passion of his mind disordered his body, because he could not compass his desire: for she being a virgin, was under a strict guard (as

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virgins used to be), so that it was difficult for him to enjoy her company. For *to do any thing to her*, signifies to do what he desired: as *to do* signifies not only in the Hebrew, but in other languages.

Ver. 3. *And Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother.*] That is, his cousin-german, who are often called brothers in Scripture.

And Jonadab was a very subtle man.] To find means to compass an end.

Ver. 4. *And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son.*] And the eldest son who was next heir to the crown, (iii. 2.)

Lean from day to day.] In the Hebrew the words are *morning by morning*. For whatsoever diversions he might find in the day, he had restless nights, which made him look pale and wan when he arose.

Wilt thou not tell me?] For men are not wont to hide any thing from their friends.

And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.] From these words the Jews are wont to argue, that Tamar was nothing of kin to Amnon; for he calls her not his sister, but his brother Absalom's sister. But this is a very frivolous observation, for in the two next verses he calls her *my sister;* and ver. 7. David calls him *her brother;* and see ver. 11.

Ver. 5. *And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick.*] He advises him to feign himself to be so ill, that it constrained him to keep his bed. Instead of doing the true office of a friend, he flatters his passion to his utter undoing.

And when thy father comes to see thee.] As he knew he would when he heard of his sickness: for, as I observed before, he was a great lover of his children.

Say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.] He would have him pretend that his stomach was so nice and squeamish, that he could like nothing that his servants dressed; and therefore desired his sister, who understood how to make delicate dishes, might come and prepare something that he could relish.

Ver. 6. *And Amnon laid down, and made himself sick.*] He easily followed bad counsel, to attain a bad end.

And when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.] She was peculiarly noted, I suppose, to be very curious in making these *lebiboth*, as the Hebrew calls them: which the Greeks translate κολλυρίδας, and are by interpreters thought a delicious sort of cakes: though some take κολλυρὶς to have been an excellent broth, or some other supping meat, which cannot be meant here, because she is said, ver. 8. *to bake the cakes.*

Ver. 7. *Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat.*] He suspected no fraud; and Jonadab was so wicked as not to discover it, and thereby prevent the mischief.

Ver. 8. *So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house (and he was laid down). And she took flour, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.*] She shewed herself an obedient daughter, and a kind sister.

Ver. 9. *And she took a pan.*] Wherein they had been baked.

And poured them out before him.] Into a dish.

But he refused to eat.] Pretending he had no appetite.

And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him.] He commanded all his servants that attended him to leave him alone; that he might take some rest.

Ver. 10. *And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thy hand.*] He removed, I suppose, into an inner room (where he thought he might more privately enjoy her), and pretended to be so refreshed by the change, that his stomach was come to him.

And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother.] Her innocence made her think herself safe; especially with a brother.

Ver. 11. *And when she had brought them unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.*] She sat down it is likely, suspecting no evil, upon his bedside to minister unto him: which gave him the opportunity to lay violent hands upon her.

Ver. 12. *And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me.*] She having not strength enough to get from him, resists him with strong reasons: praying him to consider first that she was his sister. Unto which relation she hoped he would have such a reverence, as not to meddle with her, though she were willing: much less offer violence to her, which was abominable to do to a stranger.

For no such thing ought to be done in Israel.] Whatsoever other nations did (among whom idols were worshipped with filthy lusts), she prays him not to defile the church of God, whose glory was holiness and purity. The Jewish doctors say, this gave such a scandal, that the people began to speak thus one to another: If the king's daughter be thus used, what will become of the children of private men? And if men be so bold with chaste women, what will they be with those that are wantonly inclined? And at this time, they say, a decree was made, that two young people should not be alone together. (Gem. Sanhedrin, cap. 2. n. 8.)

Do not thou this folly.] That is, this wickedness. She prays him to consider the foulness of the sin; which would highly provoke the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 13. *And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?*] She beseeches him, beside the sin against God, to consider the disgrace it would be to her: who should not be able to look any body in the face; nor would any body think of marrying her.

And as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel.] Utterly lose his reputation; and be looked upon as a man void of all sense of religion, honour, or humanity.

Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.] The Jews commonly fancying that she being begot, as I said before, of a captive woman before David married her, there was no such kindred between her and Amnon, but that he might lawfully have her to wife. But others think, that she, being a young woman, unacquainted with the law, imagined that they who had not the same mother might lawfully marry; or that the power of the king was so great, that he might dispense with the law in this case: or rather, she said any thing that came into her mind, which she thought might deliver her from the present danger: and this I take to be the truest interpretation. For Abarbinel hath at large confuted the opinion of her being begotten of Maacah before

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marriage, when she was a gentile. For, as the Scripture saith no such thing, so he thinks it altogether improbable, that such a man as David would have any thing to do with her, till she became a proselyte. And therefore, he saith, she spake these words, not as if she thought it lawful for the king to give her to Amnon for his wife; but that she might get rid of his solicitations by fair speeches. For she having urged him with the foregoing arguments, *viz.* the heinousness of the action itself, the dishonour it would be to her, and no less reproach to himself, and he persisting still blindly in his wicked resolution, she adds these words to give him hope, that he might have satisfaction without acting so brutishly, if he did but ask his father's consent. As if she had said, If thou art so sick with love, that thou art ready to die, speak to the king, unto whom thy life is very dear, and he will preserve it, by granting thy desire: for though by the law thou canst not enjoy me, yet he will rather choose to let me have thee, than see thee die. This, saith Abarbinel, is the sense of these words, *he will not withhold me from thee.* Which she said to withhold and divert him from his purpose at that time. Which R. Samuel Laniado (who endeavours to support the forenamed opinion of their doctors) doth but very weakly oppose. (See Buxtorf. de Sponsal. et Divortiis, sect. 20. and my notes upon chap. iii. 3.)

Ver. 14. *Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice; but, being stronger than she, he forced her, and lay with her.*] As the nightingale in Hesiod sung in vain to the ravenous hawk (as Strigelius glosses upon these words), so Tamar said all this to a deaf man, who was wholly under the power of his furious lust, which would not suffer him to mind either God, or men, or himself.

Ver. 15. *Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her.*] The Jews are much concerned to give a reason of this hatred. And Rasi and others say, that in her struggling with him to resist his attempt upon her, she hurt those parts wherewith he offended: which extremely enraged him. This is not improbable; but others think it a better account to say, that she reproached him so bitterly with what he had done, that he could not endure to hear it; and perhaps his own conscience began to fly in his face.

And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.] He doth not so much as speak one kind word to her, nor call her sister (as Pellicanus observes), but in a rude manner bids her be gone, as if she had been a common strumpet.

Ver. 16. *And she said unto him, There is no cause.*] For this hard usage.

This evil is greater than the other that thou didst unto me.] It was not a greater sin, but it did her the greater mischief, because it published her shame, and made that known to all which was done secretly.

But he would not hearken to her.] This was very barbarous, to thrust her out of doors immediately, and in the day-time, without consulting how to cover, if it were possible, so foul a fact. So Josephus, He would not let her stay till night, but commanded her to be put out while it was day-light, ἵνα καὶ μάρτυσι τῆς αἰσχύνης παραπέσοι, that she might meet with witnesses of her shame.

Ver. 17. *Then he called his servants that ministered unto him, and said unto them, Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her.*] This was a new violence to her, to be turned out of doors with such contemptuous language, as if she had been an impudent intruder.

Ver. 18. *And she had a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled.*] This was such a garment as Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, wore. (See upon Gen. xxxvii. 3.)

And his servants brought her out, and bolted the door after her.] A high contempt of a king's daughter, which they knew her to be by her apparel, if by nothing else. But their dependence on their master overruled all the respect due to her.

Ver. 19. *And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that was upon her.*] Both these were expressions of the greatest grief, which she was not able to suppress.

And laid her hands on her head, and went on crying.] Bewailing her calamity. *Laying her hands on her head* was also a token of great trouble and grief; she covering thereby her face, as one ashamed. Thus Jeremiah saith, the children of Israel should go forth from Assyria, *with their hands upon their head;* (xi. 37.) that is, saith Abarbinel, "like a woman who bewails her misfortune; and there is none to deliver her." St. Jerome and Theodoret more plainly, they shall go forth with their hands on their heads, "in signum pudoris et doloris," *in token of their shame and of their grief.* Spreading forth their hands is the same. (Lam. i. 17.)

Ver. 20. *And Absalom her brother.*] Unto whose house she went.

Said unto her, Hath Aminon thy brother been with thee?] A modest expression for the foul rape he had committed: at which he conceived great indignation; and therefore, in scorn, doth not call him her brother Amnon, but *Aminon.* So the words are in the Hebrew, *Hath Aminon thy brother been with thee?*

But hold thy peace, my sister: he is thy brother; regard not this thing.] He seems to desire her to put up the injury in silence; that it might not bring too much disgrace on their family; but, indeed, that he might dissemble the revenge he intended, upon occasion, to take of him.

So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.] She would see nobody, I suppose, but only those that waited on her in her brother's family.

Ver. 21. *And when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.*] But, out of his great indulgence, inflicted no sort of punishment upon him, that we read of: πρεσβύτατος γὰρ ἦν υἱὸς αὐτῷ (as Josephus observes), *for he was his eldest son,* which made him spare him.

Ver. 22. *And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad.*] Never said a word to him about this matter, when they met together.

For Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.] Though he hated him in his heart, yet he never expressed the least resentment. So the particle *ki* should be translated, not *for,* but *though.* By this means Amnon was lulled asleep into a belief that Absalom would not trouble him for what he had done, because he did not threaten, nor so much as expostulate with him, nor take any notice of what had passed. Though in reason he ought to have been more afraid, that he was meditating a terrible

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revenge: according to the fable of the little mouse, who, when the dunghill-cock came into the parlour, clapping his wings, and making a great noise, was very much affrighted at it, but minded not the cat which came gently creeping towards her; whom her mother chid for her folly, telling her there was no danger from the fluttering, clamorous cock; but from the silent cat she was to expect present death. So Victorinus Strigelius glosses upon this place.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass after two years.*] In all which time Absalom had said nothing to Amnon about his abused sister; that he might think he was ignorant of it, or did not regard it, or had forgot it.

That Absalom had sheep-shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.] For the time of sheep-shearing was a kind of harvest in those countries; and therefore full of joy; which they expressed by making a feast upon those days. We read of it early in the book of Genesis, *viz.* of Laban's going to shear his sheep; (xxxi. 19.) and Judah, after his mourning for his wife's death, went to refresh himself at a sheep-shearing with his friends, (xxxviii. 12, 13.) And it was at a time of such joy, that David sent to Nabal for some relief, (1 Sam. xxv. 8.)

Ver. 24. *And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold, now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers: let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants, go with thy servant.*] He had no mind the king should go; but invited him, to avoid all suspicion.

Ver. 25. *And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all go.*] For he seems to have invited all his family: when he beseeched him and his servants to go with him.

Lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.] Gave him thanks for his invitation, and prayed God to bless him.

Ver. 26. *Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with me.*] To cover his design, he pretended, I suppose, a special kindness for him: or at least desired the king to do him the honour, to let him have the company of his eldest brother.

And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?] Being the next person in the kingdom to the king, it is likely David thought it would make the entertainment too chargeable.

Ver. 27. *But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.*] Who might have taken exceptions, if Amnon alone had been entertained by him: therefore his importunity prevailed to have the company of them all.

Ver. 28. *And Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon is merry with wine.*] And had no thoughts of any danger.

And when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.] He encourages them to hope, that he, being the king's son, and next heir to the crown when Amnon was gone (for Chileab seems now to be dead), would stand between them and danger of being called to an account for what they did.

Ver. 29. *And the servants of Absalom did as Absalom had commanded: then all the king's sons arose, and gat every one upon his mule and fled.*] Fearing he might destroy all the royal family; for ambition was as strong in him as revenge; which appeared afterward in his endeavours to dethrone his father. *Mules* began to be much in use in David's days (as Bochart observes), who appointed Solomon to be carried on his own mule, and declared king, (1 Kings i. 33.) And Solomon had a present of them made to him, (1 Kings x. 23.) And they were not used only to ride on, but for carriage of burdens, (1 Chron. xii. 40.) and to draw chariots, as the LXX. understand, Isa. lxvi. 20. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 19.)

Ver. 30. *And it came to pass while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.*] He that saw Amnon killed, presently ran away in a great fright, imagining all the king's sons were so served.

Ver. 31. *Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.*] This was a natural expression of great grief, to throw themselves not upon their beds (as Maimonides observes), but upon the ground. Otherwise, they turned their beds upside down, and so lay as hard as if they lay upon the ground. (See Gierus de Luctu Hebr. cap. 18. sect. 8.)

Ver. 32. *And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered and said.*] Who was noted before to be a very subtle man, (ver. 3.) and understood all the intrigues (as we now speak) about the court.

Let not my lord suppose they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead.] This he spake not from any certain intelligence he had received from Absalom's house; but from rational conjecture, out of what he had learnt concerning Absalom's resentment.

For by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined, from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.] He had talked, I suppose, among his familiars, that he would take a time to revenge the injury done his sister, though for the present he took no notice of it. Which Jonadab, being a prying man, had some way or other discovered.

Ver. 33. *Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.*] He affirms this with the greater confidence, because he never heard (though he was of a very inquisitive temper) of any quarrel Absalom had with the rest of the king's sons, but only Amnon.

Ver. 34. *But Absalom fled.*] With all his servants who committed the murder. For he soon found it was not in his, nor any body's power to protect them.

And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked.] Round about him.

And, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill-side behind him.] They did not think fit to keep the direct road from Baal-hazor to Jerusalem (for what reason we cannot now know), but went about; so that they came not before the watchman, but behind him.

Ver. 35. *And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is.*] Hearing a company was coming, he went out, it is likely, to descry who they were; and seeing the king's sons, made haste and carried David the good news.

Ver. 36. *And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came.*] They trod upon Jonadab's heels, as we now speak.

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And lifted up their voice and wept; and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.] See iii. 32. But we read of no public funeral and lamentations which he made for him, as he did for Abner.

Ver. 37. *But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur.*] For no city of refuge in his own country could give him protection, having committed a designed murder; therefore he fled out of the kingdom to his mother's father. (See iii. 3.)

And David mourned for his son every day.] Either for the loss of Amnon or for Absalom: who was lost, as to any comfort he could have from his company. It seems to be meant of the latter; for it is said he was comforted for Amnon: and therefore his continued affliction for three years together was upon the account of Absalom.

Ver. 38. *And Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.*] This is repeated to shew, that he found such favour with his grandfather, that he went no further; but continued with him three years in safety. Geshur, it appears from xv. 8. was a part of Syria.

Ver. 39. *And the soul of David longed to go forth unto Absalom.*] He had a vehement desire to see him. Though some, even of the ancients, translate the words, *he ceased to pursue after Absalom:* as if he had at first endeavoured to seize him, either in his flight to Geshur, or afterward, when at any time he went abroad. But ours appears to be a true translation, from the beginning of the next chapter: where David's heart is said to be *towards Absalom.*

For he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.] He was unwilling to want the comfort of both his sons; and since it was impossible to bring Amnon back again, he longed to bring back Absalom: but he had committed so horrid a crime, that he durst not venture to restore him in his favour.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *NOW Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived the king's heart was towards Absalom.*] That he longed to see him, and have him restored to his own country; if it could be contrived by some handsome pretence for it: which Joab therefore endeavoured to bring about, knowing he was dear to the people, as well as to David: and he might by his reduction ingratiate himself with Absalom, whom he looked upon as next heir to the crown.

Ver. 2. *And Joab sent to Tekoah.*] A city in the tribe of Judah, (2 Chron. xi. 5, 6.) but at a distance from Jerusalem: and the further off the better for his purpose; because the case which the woman was to represent to the king, could not easily be inquired into, if he desired to know the truth. The Jews say it was in the tribe of Asher; the place where the prophet Amos was born.

And fetched thence a wise woman.] A woman was the fittest for this purpose; especially a widow: who was proper to move compassion. And a grave woman, as Josephus calls her (πρεσβύτις), was still more proper.

And said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself now to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead.] Who put on no ornaments, nor used any ointment; but appeared in a sordid neglected condition.

Ver. 3. *And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words into her mouth.*] And, in all probability, introduced her into the king's presence; and then left her to manage the matter with him, according to her prudence. Or, as seems to be suggested, (ver. 21.) he stood by at some distance, whilst she addressed herself to the king.

Ver. 4. *And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance.*] This was the humblest posture of reverence.

And said, Help, O king!] Relieve a poor distressed widow.

Ver. 5. *And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I am indeed a widow woman, and my husband is dead.*] Which made her the greater object of pity.

Ver. 6. *And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.*] This, and the foregoing, and the next verse, represent her condition as very lamentable: that she had lost her husband, and one of her sons, and was in danger to be deprived of the other: which was all she had.

Ver. 7. *And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they say, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him.*] Put him to death, as the law required, (Numb. xxxv. 18, 19.)

For the life of his brother which he slew; and we will destroy the heir also.] These words, if spoken by the kindred, shew it was not love to justice, but a desire to have the inheritance, which moved them to prosecute the murderer.

And so they shall quench my coal which is left.] Deprive me of the little comfort of my life which remains (and is in a manner buried as a coal in the ashes), and ruin my family.

And shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon earth.] Utterly extinguish her husband's memory. In all this she intended to frame a case as like to David's as she could devise: by determining which in her favour, he might judge how much more reasonable it was to preserve Absalom. But there was a wide difference between her case and his, how plausible soever their likeness might appear. For her son she pretended was slain in a scuffle with his brother, and was no premeditated murder, as Absalom's was. It was also in the field, where there were no witnesses whether it was wilful or not: whereas all the king's sons saw Amnon barbarously murdered by his brother. And in this last passage the difference is as great as in any; for David's family was not in danger to be extinguished, if Absalom were lost also: he having many children, and also many wives, whereby he might have more. And therefore in that likewise this case differed from hers who was a widow.

Ver. 8. *And the king said, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee.*] He promises he would take care the matter should be thoroughly examined, and justice done her.

Ver. 9. *And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my father's house; and the king and his throne be guiltless.*] She desires a speedy sentence might be given in her favour, which, if it proved wrong by her misinforming the king, she prays

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the guilt might light on her and her family, and the king and his be innocent.

Ver. 10. *And the king said, Whosoever saith aught unto thee, bring him unto me, and he shall not touch thee any more.*] If any one endeavoured to lay hold on her son, he bids her bring that person before him (for which end he commanded his officers to be assistant to her), and he would punish him so that none should dare to meddle with him any more.

Ver. 11. *Then she said, I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God.*] She seems to desire him to confirm what he had said by an oath. For men swore by *remembering* (or making mention of) the name of the Lord. Others think she only prays him to remember how merciful and gracious God is, and had been to himself, even in pardoning the murder of Uriah.

That thou wouldest not suffer the avengers of blood to destroy any more.] In the Hebrew, *to multiply to destroy:* that is, after she had lost one son, to take away the life of the other, as the next words explain it.

Lest they destroy my son.] Or, *let them not destroy my son,* which remains.

And he said, As the Lord liveth.] Though it was a bold request in the woman to desire him to confirm what he said by an oath; yet, such was his pity, to her, that, to send her away entirely satisfied, he solemnly swears he would preserve her son.

There shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.] He should not suffer the least harm upon this account.

Ver. 12. *Then the woman said, Let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak one word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on.*] Now she designed to open her meaning in this parable, and plainly desire the king to make her case his own. But it would take up some time, and therefore she bespeaks his favour to hear her patiently.

Ver. 13. *And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing.*] As that which she had hitherto been speaking of.

Against the people of Israel?] Who were in danger to lose Absalom, the heir of the crown; which was far worse than the private loss of her son.

For the king doth speak this thing as one that is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home his banished.] In the sentence he had pronounced for her, he had condemned himself, because he had not called Absalom from his exile. This looks like too bold a speech: but the sense is no more than this; Do not judge otherwise in thy own case, than thou hast done in mine. For all the world allows (as Strigelius here observes) the reasonableness of that saying, *Odi sapientem qui sibi non sapit.* Her reasoning indeed was infirm, his case and hers being very unlike upon several accounts, which I before observed. But though the supposed killing of her son was casual, but Amnon's murder designed; and she had no more sons, and David had many, &c. yet David perceiving how the people stood affected towards Absalom (otherwise he knew this woman durst not have spoken after this manner), and it being his own desire, as much as theirs, to have him recalled, he overlooked all the differences there were in his case, and did not go about to shew her the weakness of her discourse.

Ver. 14. *For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.*] She pleads for further pity towards him, from the consideration of our common mortality; and represents that death comes on apace, and we need not hasten it: and when we are dead, we can no more be recovered, than water when it is spilt on the ground, which is presently sucked up and seen no more. This is also a weak, though plausible argument; for by this reasoning all malefactors should be spared, because it will not be long before death cuts them off: but when we have a mind to a thing, all reason seems strong to persuade us to it. Some apply this to his mourning for Amnon; as if she had said, Dost thou still weep for thy other son? he must have died; and now he is gone, thy tears cannot call him to life again. But this is not probable, because it is said in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, *He was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.*

Neither doth God respect any person.] If this be a right translation, the meaning is, that David himself was mortal, though a great king. But I think the Hebrew words, *issa nephesh,* never signify respect to persons; but the word *panim* is used in that sense, not *nephesh,* which signifies the *soul,* as the other doth the *face,* or countenance. Therefore these words should be translated, *God doth not take away the soul,* or *life.* She argues from the sparing mercy of God, who doth not presently inflict the punishment of death when men have deserved it. And perhaps she had in this a particular respect to Absalom, whom God had not cut off, but let him live; and therefore she desires David to imitate God.

Yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him.] Or, according to the foregoing words, *But he doth devise means,* &c. God provided many cities of refuge, she means, to which he that slew another unawares might flee: where, though he was banished from his habitation for a time, he was not quite expelled, but might return again after the death of the high-priest. From whence she argues, that kings being the images of God, nothing could more become them than clemency and mercy; in mitigating the punishment of offenders, though there was just cause of anger against them. Which still was short of the present case; for God was not so merciful as to provide for the safety of a wilful murderer. But such specious arguments are good enough, when men are willing to be persuaded: and nothing more moving than the example of God, who doth not delight in the death of a sinner.

Ver. 15. *Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid.*] This sounds as if the people talked so discontentedly about Absalom's banishment, that it was another motive to her to make this address to the king. But it doth not seem to me to be likely that the people were dissatisfied, because he was not recalled: but rather David was afraid the people would be dissatisfied if he did recall him. I said indeed before, (ver. 13.) that David imagined by her speech that they were desirous of his return from banishment; but he did not think so before: and whatsoever their desires might be, they did not express any discontent because he was not; for then there would not have been any need of this woman to bring that about which he desired more than they. Therefore I think the last words should be translated, not *because,* but *though the people made me afraid.* That is, those she advised withal

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told her it was too bold an attempt: but this did not discourage her; because she presumed the king would be so good as to give her a favourable audience, and not be angry with her, since what she said was well intended. So the next word is to be translated *but*, not *and*.

But thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid.] This is, notwithstanding the fears which some put into her, she resolved to make this petition: and she gives her reason for it in the next verse.

Ver. 16. *For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the men that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.*] Clemency and kindness are the properties of good kings; and such she saith she knew the king to be, who would take pity upon her and her son, in whose preservation her life was bound up. And when she calls the land of Israel *the inheritance of God*, who dwelt among them there, she secretly puts the king in mind how dangerous it was to let Absalom (unto whom she had adventured to apply her case) to continue in an idolatrous country; where God was not worshipped, as he was in the land of Israel.

Ver. 17. *Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable.*] Thereupon she grew confident that the king's answer would be according to her heart's desire: it being the highest glory of a prince (as the emperor Titus was wont to say) not to send any petitioner away sad and sorrowful. And, indeed, the king's great patience, in attending to so long an address, might make her presume to receive a gracious answer.

For as an angel of God, so is my lord the king, to discern both good and bad.] To discern between just and unreasonable petitions, as well as patiently to hear both those things which are grateful, and those which are less acceptable. And therefore she doubted not of such a kind answer as the angels bring, who are messengers of Divine mercy.

Therefore the Lord thy God will be with thee.] To direct him to judge aright and to shew mercy. There is a great deal of artifice in all this. For to presume upon the kindness of another, and to expect gracious answers from their noble qualities, is very moving: men being very loath to defeat those who think so highly of them, according to that of Aristotle, in the second book of his Rhetoric, "We love those that admire us."

Ver. 18. *Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, one thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.*] As much as to say, And I will answer truly.

Ver. 19. *And the king said, Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?*] His prudence made him suspect that a woman durst not have adventured upon this speech, but by the counsel and contrivance of some greater person. And none more likely than Joab, whom he knew to be a cunning man and a friend to Absalom.

And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from aught that my lord the king hath spoken.] As much as to say in our language, *it is even so*. And therefore she did not seek by any windings or turnings this way or the other to dissemble the matter, but plainly confessed it, as it follows. Concerning the phrase, *turn to the right hand or left*, see upon Gen. xxiv. 49.

For thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thy handmaid.] The sense of them, which he left her to manage to the best advantage.

Ver. 20. *To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing.*] The meaning is, Joab instructed her, that having obtained pardon for her son, she should turn about the face of her speech (as the words are in the Hebrew) another way, and transfer it to Absalom, as a parallel case with her own. And so Josephus expresses her sense, lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 8. "When she had thanked the king for his pity towards her, she said, But that I may be more certain of thy clemency, receive thy own son into thy favour; for how is it possible for me not to doubt of the favour thou promisest me, when thou still sufferest thy own son to lie under thy indignation for the like fault?"

And my lord the king is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are done in the earth.] That is, in the whole kingdom, where nothing could be hid from him, but he knew all men, and their counsels; and likewise knew what was fit to be done in answer to their desires. She still persists in her admiration of the king, that she might the more incline him to grant her request.

Ver. 21. *And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, and bring the young man Absalom again.*] The king turned from her to him (who seems to have stood in some part of the room while she delivered her petition), as the principal agent in this business, whom he was pleased to gratify in his request.

Ver. 22. *And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself.*] As the woman did when she entered into his presence to present her petition, (ver. 4.)

And thanked the king.] For favours are to be no less humbly acknowledged than humbly begged.

And Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.] He looked upon it as a mark of the king's great kindness, who was not angry, but granted so bold a request, in which he was mistaken; for though he passed by the murder of Amnon, yet he remembered Joab's murder of Abner to his dying day.

Ver. 23. *So Joab arose, and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.*] St. Ambrose mentions this as an instance of the wonderful affection which parents have to their children, though degenerate and wicked; by which we may raise our thoughts to comprehend a little of the inconceivable love of our heavenly Father (as Strigelius here meditates) towards his own eternal Son, and towards mankind for his sake.

Ver. 24. *And the king said.*] When he heard he was come to Jerusalem.

Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face.] His affection to him did not so blind his eyes, but he still saw it would not be for his honour to let him come into his presence.

So Absalom returned to his own house.] This intimates as if he came not only to Jerusalem, but to the king's court.

And saw not the king's face.] Which was some humiliation to him, and put him upon repentance; for he saw he had not a full pardon, being not entirely restored to the king's favour. The people also were convinced by this how detestable his crime was in the king's account; and that he

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would not easily pass by the like in any other person, since he could not endure the sight of a son, whose hand was defiled with the blood of his brother.

Ver. 25. *But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for beauty: from the sole of the foot even to the crown of the head there was no blemish in him.*] For his father and mother were both very lovely persons: but this proved the occasion of his ruin; for he grew proud, because he was so much admired; and forgetting his cruel murder of his brother, it tempted him to rely upon the favour of the people in committing of a greater crime, which was seeking the life of his father.

Ver. 26. *And when he polled his head (for it was at every year's end that he polled it; because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it).*] It is not certain tha the cut his hair once a year: for the words in the Hebrew are, *from the end of days to days,* without any particular designation of the time. And therefore the Targum translates it, *at stated times;* that is, when it grew too heavy, which might be once in two years, more or less, as Bochartus observes.

He weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.] In those days hair was accounted a great ornament, and the longer it was the more it was esteemed. And therefore no wonder Absalom nourished his with much care, and let it grow to great length, which made him look more like a goodly person. Insomuch that, in after-ages, they were wont to use art (as perhaps they did now) to make the hair grow, and grow thick and strong (as the same Bochartus hath shewn); and they anointed their hair also with fragrant oils, of myrrh, cinnamon, and such-like; and after that powdered it with the dust of gold: all which made it very ponderous. So that Absalom's hair weighed, when it was cut off, two hundred shekels: which he demonstrates was no more than three pounds and two ounces of our weight. This is not at all incredible, considering that he let it grow as long as he was able to bear the weight of it; which was increased, it is likely, by such additions as I have mentioned; for a king's son would not want any thing that might add to his splendour. Josephus also informs us, that such ostentation was in use among the Jews in those days; for, speaking of the noble guard which attended king Solomon, with long hair flowing about their shoulders, he saith that they scattered in their hair every day ψήγματα τοῦ χρυσίου, *little particles of gold,* which made their hair shine and sparkle by the reflection of the sun's rays upon the gold. As for their interpretation, who think that Absalom's hair did not weigh thus much, but was sold for two hundred shekels, Bochartus shews how absurd it is to imagine a king's son would sell his hair, or that any one would buy it, especially at that rate, there being no perukes worn in those days. And besides, the text confutes it, *he weighed the hair of his head,* &c. whereas, if it had been sold, the buyer would have weighed the money, not Absalom; as Abraham did when he bought the field of Ephron, (Gen. xxiii. 16.) and Jeremiah when he bought the field in Anathoth, xxxii. 9. (See his epistle to Michael Faukellius, at the end of the third edition of his Geographia Sacra.)

Ver. 27. *And unto Absalom were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name was Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.*] How the LXX. in the Vatican edition came to add here, that Tamar was afterward the wife of Rehoboam, and bare him Abijah, I cannot tell, but I suppose it was from some Jewish tradition.

Ver. 28. *So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.*] He lived privately, having the company only of his own family. For, it is likely, he was, by the king's command, confined to his house, where he had few visitants, being under the king's displeasure.

Ver. 29. *Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king.*] He did not employ his privacy so well as he should have done; but had ambitious designs in his head, if he could be restored to the king's favour, and enjoy greater liberty; for which he intended to make Joab his intercessor.

But he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.] Josephus thinks that Joab only took time to consider whether he should do what was desired: but Absalom was in haste, and could not endure any delay, and therefore did as follows. Or, perhaps, Joab thought he had done enough, and was afraid the king might be angry if he pressed him further.

Ver. 30. *Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near unto mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.*] He had those still about him who were ready to execute any command, though never so unjust; as they did when he bade them kill Amnon. And it appears by this what a daring person Absalom was, who durst affront such a man as Joab after this manner.

Ver. 31. *Then Joab arose, and went to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?*] This carried Joab presently to his house, to expostulate with him about the damage he had done him; for which we do not find he offers any satisfaction; which may make it seem strange that so furious a man as Joab should not immediately revenge himself, by ordering his field to be burnt, or some such way: but he was so wise as to consider, that being the king's son he might some time or other be reconciled to his father, and do him a prejudice.

Ver. 32. *And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king.*] He seems to have no sense of any injury he had done Joab, but thought he had just cause to complain that he would not come to him.

To say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur?] These were words too insolent to be sent to the king; therefore one would think he only expressed himself thus to Joab.

It had been better for me to have been there still.] He might have found means to return thither, if he had not had other designs in his head; which made him desire to have his full liberty.

Now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.] He could not but know there was iniquity in him: but he pretends, if the king would not pardon it, he had rather die than not see his father's face.

Ver. 33. *So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom.*] These passionate expressions, that he was weary of life, while he continued banished from the king's presence; nay, that he desired to die, so he might but see him, moved Joab to intercede for him, and David to receive him into his favour.

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He came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king.] Begging pardon, as Josephus explains it, for the sin he had committed.

And the king kissed Absalom.] In token of reconciliation. Josephus saith the king raised him up from the ground, καὶ τῶν γεγονότων ἀμνηστίαν ἐπαγγέλλεται, *and promised him an oblivion of what was past.* Which was a great weakness in David: for impenitent persons become more wicked by a full pardon of their offences; as Absalom did. Who being thus received into the king's favour, became more gracious with the people: who before looked upon him as an excommunicated person, and would have nothing to do with him.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass after this.*] When he thought he had established himself in his father's good affection.

That Absalom prepared himself chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.] He took great state upon him, and made him, as we now speak, a splendid equipage: being royally attended, as the next heir to the crown (for we hear nothing of Chileab, who it is likely was dead), designing to draw the eyes of the people to him. Who, as they were much in love with his beauty, so were mightily taken with this unusual fine sight of chariots and horses; which the law did not allow: but David was so indulgent that he took no notice of it.

Ver. 2. *And Absalom rose up early in the morning.*] He accustomed himself to rise betime in the morning, to make a show of his great care for the public good.

And stood beside the way of the gate.] Not of the king's palace, some think, but of the city, where was the seat of judgment. But since he speaks of coming to the king for judgment, it is likely he sat in his own palace, at the gate of which Absalom was wont to stand.

And it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment.] Who reserved all weighty causes for his own hearing: and appeals were made to him from the other courts, as Corn. Bertram observes, cap. 10. de Republ. Judaica.

Then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou?] He kindly inquired where he dwelt; and, it is likely, what he was, and of what family, &c. as if he intended to take a particular care of him.

And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.] That is, of such or such a tribe, and of such a city in that tribe as he named to him.

Ver. 3. *And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right.*] He was so officious as to look into their cause awhile, and examine it: flattering every one into an opinion, that in his judgment he had right on his side. So that if their cause went against them, they might conclude that if Absalom had been judge, it would have gone otherwise.

But there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.] The king he pretended was old, and unfit to judge causes, until some others had first heard them, and opened the matter to him. And his sons (who, being principal officers in his family, see chap. viii. *ult.* were the fittest to bring business to him) were men of pleasure, and did not mind public affairs. Thus he struck not only at his father, but at all his brethren; and principally, it is likely, at Solomon; who he was afraid would be preferred before him by his father, being a beloved son, and born of an Israelite, whereas he was begot of a stranger, the daughter of the king of Geshur. Who, it is probable, might put him upon this course; and his banishment for three years had also exasperated him: and his being secluded for two years more from seeing his father, was so far from bringing him to any sense of his guilt, that it more enraged him against his father, and all his family.

Ver. 4. *And Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man that hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!*] Though he was admitted to come to court, and see the king, yet he had no office there, as the rest of the king's sons had: which he took ill, and endeavoured the people should do so too; by magnifying his care, if he were in authority, to do them speedy justice.

Ver. 5. *And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance.*] To honour him as the king's son.

That he put forth his hand, and took him.] About the neck, I suppose, in token of great familiarity and kindness.

And kissed him.] A most vile piece of flattery: but people are pleased with such unwonted compliments. For so Plato observes, that when any person intended to make himself a tyrant in a popular state, he no sooner entered upon the government, but προσγελᾷ τε καὶ ἀσπάζεται πάντας ᾧ ἂν περιτυγχάνει, *he smiled upon all, and kindly saluted them, wheresoever he met them:* avowing that he hated tyranny, and promising great things, both privately and publicly, καὶ πᾶσιν ἵλεώς τε καὶ πατρῷος εἶναι προσποιεῖται, *seeming to be mild, gentle, and fatherly unto all,* (lib. viii. de Republ. p. 566. edit. Serrani.)

Ver. 6. *And after this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment.*] He continued this course a long time: till he had inveigled the people, and gained their hearts to him. For, as Aristotle observes in his Politics, (lib. v. cap. 4.) all changes in commonwealths are made by one of these two ways, ὅτε μὲν διὰ βίας, ὅτε δὲ δι' ἀπάτης, *either by force and violence, or else by deceit and craft.* Now there is not a more famous instance in history of the latter than this of Absalom, who, by flattering speeches, and large promises, cunningly alienated the hearts of the people from his father.

So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.] Robbed his father of the affections of the people, and possessed himself of them: some admiring his beauty and gallantry; others his courtesy and civility: others being taken with his magnificent promises of the noble things he would do if he were their king. Just as Virgil saith, in book vii. of his Æneids, that Turnus drew the hearts of some to follow him in the wars, because he was a most graceful person; others, because he was descended from an ancient royal race; and others were moved by the noble acts he had done: (ver. 473, 474.)

> "Hunc decus egregium formæ movet atque juventæ,
> Hunc atavi reges, hunc claris dextera factis."

Thus Absalom was young and wonderfully beautiful, descended from kings by his father and mother's side; and though he had done no great things, yet boasted of what he would do, when he had opportunity. Ludov. de Dieu

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thinks there is a peculiar meaning in this phrase, that he drew their affections to him, concealing in the mean time his intentions: upon John x. 24.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass after forty years.*] One would think, that in the copy which Josephus used, it was written *arba*, four, not *arbaim*, forty years: for his words are, μετὰ δὲ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς καταλλαγὴν τεττάρων ἐτῶν ἤδη παραληλυθότων, *four years after his father was reconciled to him.* But there are no warrants now for this reading: but the forty years here mentioned are not to be understood, as if this happened after David had reigned forty years, that is, in the last year of his reign: for he was now very vigorous, which he was not a little before he died: but, as our great primate of Ireland in his Annals understands it, forty years after David was anointed by Samuel. That is, when he was threescore years old, ten years before he died. Then his son conspired against him between the feast of the Passover and Pentecost; as some gather from Barzillai's presenting him with parched corn and new fruits, when he fled from Absalom, (xvii. 28.) And so Strigelius. But the Talmudists in Seder Olam, and other books, will have these forty years to commence from the time that the Israelites asked a king to reign over them. And, after all, Abarbinel is of opinion, that the plainest sense is after forty years of David's reign; so that it was about the latter end of his life, when this great calamity befel him, though not in the very last year of it. For it is not said *in the fortieth year*, but *about the end of forty years.* (See Buxtorf. Anticritica, p. 1004.)

That Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron.] Now he pretends religion, as before he did the public good.

Ver. 8. *For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord will bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then will I serve the Lord.*] With a solemn sacrifice.

Ver. 9. *And the king said unto him, Go in peace.*] It is much he should dismiss him without any suspicion; when he had deferred so long to perform this vow, and made such court to the people, as he could not but be informed.

So he arose, and went to Hebron.] Which was a high place, where they were wont to sacrifice till the temple was built. And it being the place of his birth, where the royal seat had been in the beginning of David's reign, he thought it the most commodious city, next Jerusalem, for his purpose.

Ver. 10. *And Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel.*] To try how the people stood affected to him.

Saying, As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.] This was the signal which was to be given, that they should take arms. For as soon as they heard the sound of the trumpet (which he took care should be blown in all the tribes), these spies were to proclaim that Absalom was crowned in Hebron. Whereupon, all his partakers, it is likely, shouted, *God save king Absalom!*

Ver. 11. *And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called.*] Invited by him to feast with him upon his sacrifice. And it is likely they were principal persons of the city; whom he drew in, to avoid suspicion.

And they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.] Of his design; but went only to wait upon him, as the king's son; who did them the honour to invite them to a holy feast. Among these two hundred men, the Jews fancy were all those of the grand Sanhedrin, who thought they had been called by David's order to attend his son. For which there is no ground; though Mr. Selden has produced a great deal out of the Talmudists concerning this matter, lib. ii. de Synedriis, cap. 16. But I have shewn elsewhere, there was no such Sanhedrin in these times.

Bartenora upon Sota hath a conceit, that Absalom begged of the king (for he had stolen his heart before he stole the people's) that he would grant him liberty, under his hand, to choose two persons whom he liked best, to be his companions; which being obtained, he went with this writing from two to two, till he had gathered two hundred; part of which were the men of the great Sanhedrin, whose examples others followed; all believing they had been warranted by David to attend his son.

Ver. 12. *And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh.*] None are more capable to do mischief to kings, than those that know their secrets; having been of the privy-council. And it is supposed by the Jews, that Ahithophel was incensed against David for abusing Bath-sheba, whom they take to have been his grand-daughter, she being the daughter of Eliam, (xi. 3.) and Eliam being the son of Ahithophel. (xxiii. 34.)

While he offered sacrifices.] Or rather, after he had offerred sacrifices, while he sat at dinner, he sent for him to come to him.

And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.] Most of which, it is likely, intended no harm at the first, but came merely to do honour to the king's son, and to partake of his bounty. Nay, Abarbinel is of opinion, that neither Absalom, nor the elders of Israel, nor the rest of the people, who were misled by them, had any intention to divest David of his crown and dignity, much less to take away his life; but only to substitute Absalom as a coadjutor to him, for the executing of the royal authority during David's life, and to be his successor after his death. And, indeed, as it was very monstrously unnatural in Absalom to design the destruction of such a kind father, so it is not very probable that he should gain such a number as he had to assist him in such a villanous enterprise. And yet, notwithstanding this, David looked upon this as a treason against his life, as appears from ver. 14. and xvi. 11. because he knew, whatsoever they intended, they would be carried further, though they meant no more than Abarbinel supposes. And more than that, if this opinion of his were true, it is evident, they themselves did proceed so far as to design (contrary to their first intentions) to kill David for their own greater security. For so Ahithophel advised, and they all consented to it, (xvii. 2, 4.) which shews how dangerous it is to go out of the right way; for they do not know into what precipices they may fall. And it should be a warning to all men never to begin any thing that is wrong, which may lead them to commit that in the issue which they abhorred at the first; when they find they cannot be safe in one wickedness, unless they commit a greater.

Ver. 13. *And there came a messenger unto David, say-*

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ing, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.] Some of the two hundred men, who went innocently along with him from Jerusalem, it is likely, sent this intelligence. Which did not come presently: but when the conspiracy was plain and open, by a great concourse of people to him; and the elders of Israel, and the military men (who are called *all Israel*, as Fortunatus Scacchus thinks), declared for him.

Ver. 14. *And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom.*] Though Jerusalem, at least the fort of Zion, was a strong place, yet they could not have time to lay in provision to endure a siege: and beside, he was not willing to be cooped up there; but chose rather to go into the country, where he hoped to find friends and followers.

Make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.] He knew Absalom would lose no time to accomplish his end; and therefore requires them immediately to be gone, and prevent a surprise. He was desirous also to preserve Jerusalem from being sacked: being the royal city; upon which he had bestowed much cost.

Ver. 15. *And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.*] One seems to have spoken in the name of the whole court: and it was some comfort to him, that he had a company of such faithful servants about him, as were ready to execute whatsoever he commanded.

Ver. 16. *And the king went forth, and all his household after him.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *all his household at his feet.* Which shews that he went on foot, and would not make use of his mule; being in a mournful state, and desirous to move his people's compassion to him.

And the king left ten women, that were concubines, to keep the house.] For their sex, and their quality, might be thought to be a sufficient protection to them. What became of his wives is not here related; it is probable they went along with him to take care of him, as the other were left to take care of the house.

Ver. 17. *And the king went forth, and all the people after him.*] That is, all the people of Jerusalem, who were well-affected to him.

And tarried in a place that was far off.] At a good distance from the city, where, it is likely, he put the people that came out confusedly after him into good order, and waited to see what other friends would come to him.

Ver. 18. *And all his servants passed on beside him.*] His household servants, I suppose, marched on both hands of him.

All the Cherethites and all the Pelethites.] Who these were, I have shewn at large upon viii. 18. and it is possible they now brought up the rear.

And all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.] These marched in the front of his little army; but who they were it is hard to tell; for we read nothing of them before. Some take them to have been proselytes born in Gath of the Philistines, who came with Ittai to David; being attracted by the fame of his piety, and happy successes. Others take them to be Jews, who had fled to David in his exile, when he was at Gath; and accompanied him ever after, not only in the time of Saul's persecution, but after he came to the crown of Judah and Israel.

Ver. 19. *Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us?*] He seems to have been the commander of those six hundred men beforementioned. And the Jews make him the son of Achish king of Gath; who out of religion and friendship came to David.

Return to thy place.] That is, to Jerusalem.

And abide with the king.] For so Absalom was by usurpation.

For thou art a stranger, and an exile.] Who upon that account might hope to be civilly treated; at least, being none of David's family, and a new comer, he thought it was not fit to engage him in their broils.

Ver. 20. *Whereas thou camest to us but yesterday, should I make thee this day go up and down with us?*] He was newly settled at Jerusalem; and therefore David thought it unreasonable he should be so soon unsettled again.

Seeing I go whither I may.] Especially since he knew not whither he should betake himself for safety; and therefore would not have Ittai expose himself to such uncertainties. (See concerning this phrase, 1 Sam. xxiii. 13.)

Return thou, and take back thy brethren.] Some understand by his *brethren*, the six hundred men that came from Gath: but it is not probable David would part with such a guard as they were, in this time of extreme danger, unless they had desired to be gone; therefore he rather means those persons that attended him, or were of his family, who came to sojourn with him in Judea.

Mercy and truth be with thee.] In the Hebrew the words are, *with thee mercy and truth.* Which some take to signify, *thou art a right honest and good man.* But our translation seems better, which makes them a form of a blessing, or prayer to God, that he would requite the kindness and fidelity of Ittai, by shewing mercy to him, and faithfully fulfilling his promises made to those who came to put their trust in him.

Ver. 21. *And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in whatsoever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or in life, even there also will thy servant be.*] A marvellous fidelity in a stranger, when a son was a rebel against him. And David's humanity is no less admirable in offering to dismiss him so freely, yea, earnestly pressing him to return, because he was a stranger; though he was in the greatest need of all the assistance he could get to defend him.

Ver. 22. *And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over.*] There was not a word more to be said, now he had sworn he would not leave him.

And Ittai the Gittite passed over.] The brook Kidron, as it follows in the next verse.

He and all his men, and all the little ones that came with him.] This shews that his whole family were come, as I noted before, to sojourn in this country.

Ver. 23. *And all the country.*] About Jerusalem.

Wept with a loud voice,] Being extremely afflicted to see their prince, under whom they had lived in great peace and prosperity, reduced to such extremities.

And all the people passed over.] All that continued faithful to David in those parts.

The king also himself passed over the brook Kidron.] He stayed till the last, that he might take notice who appeared for him, as they passed over before him.

And all the people passed over towards the way of the wil-

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derness.] And when they were over, they marched through the wilderness, that lay between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Ver. 24. *And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites went with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord.*] That is, all the Kohathites that were at Jerusalem, whose office it was to carry the ark, and take care of it.

And they set down the ark of God.] When they came to David, they set down the ark in the place where he was, to signify that God would be with him, and accompany him; and that the people might thereby be excited to follow him, who had the token of the Divine presence with him.

And Abiathar went up.] To the top of the Mount Olivet.

Till all the people had done passing out of the city.] From the mount he could behold, when the people, who would follow David, were come out of the city. And then, I suppose, he came down; and desired that the ark and the king might move up the hill also.

Ver. 25. *And the king said unto Zadok.*] The Talmudists have a fancy that the king spake to Zadok, not to Abiathar, because he had removed Abiathar from the high-priesthood; upon this account, that, he consulting by *urim* and *thummim*, God gave no answer; but when Zadok inquired, God did answer. Whereupon David understood the Spirit of God was departed from Abiathar, and therefore turned him out of his office; which is notoriously false, for he was not turned out till the reign of Solomon.

Carry back the ark into the city.] For he did not think it decent to have it wander about with him he knew not whither, as Abarbinel observes: and perhaps he thought God might be angry with him, should he let it be carried out of its place. As if he trusted in the ark, which was but the token of his presence, more than he did in God himself, who had preserved him in the persecution of Saul when he had no ark with him.

If I find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation.] It was not for the honour of the ark, as I said, to take it out of the place which he had made for it: which he calls *God's habitation*, because there he dwelt by this special token of his presence in it. And if he had a favour to him, he knew he could preserve him without the ark, as well as with it; and bring him again to worship him in his proper place.

Ver. 26. *But if he say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seems good in his sight.*] He was very sensible of his own ill deservings; and humbly submits to whatsoever punishment, even the heaviest, that God would think fit to inflict upon him.

Ver. 27. *And the king said also unto Zadok the priest.*] He is frequently called by Josephus, *the high-priest:* particularly in lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 6. where he saith David made him, Ἀρχιερέα μετ' Ἀβιαθάρη, φίλος γὰρ ἦν αὐτῷ, *high-priest together with Abiathar: for he was his friend.* But hereby we are only to understand that he was the *sagan*, as the Jews call the vicar or deputy of the high-priest: who is called the *second priest*, 2 Kings xxv. 18. (See Selden, de Success. in Pontif. Hebræ. lib. i. cap. 4.)

Art thou not a seer?] A very wise man, or a prophet, who could not but discern in what state things were likely to be, and that he might serve David better by staying in Jerusalem than going along with him.

Return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.] This was another reason for sending back the ark: for as it was not fit to keep it with him, and the priests and Levites also to attend it, so they might do him more service elsewhere than in his camp.

Ver. 28. *See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness.*] He put an entire confidence in them, that they would not betray him, by acquainting them where he meant to rest awhile, to wait for intelligence from them.

Till there come word from you to certify me.] What Absalom designed; and accordingly he intended to steer his course.

Ver. 29. *Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem; and they tarried there.*] Mention being made both here and also ver. 33. of Zadok before Abiathar, it seems to intimate some preference to him, and to justify what Josephus saith, that he was the king's friend; and being constantly with him, was more honoured than Abiathar.

Ver. 30. *And David went up the ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and went barefoot.*] Dejected, as Salvian glosses, into the condition of a servant; or rather in the habit of a mourner. For *covering the head* was a token of shame and confusion, and great trouble: and so was going *barefoot.* Which was used on the great fast, or day of expiation, as we find in Codex Joma, cap. 8. though the doctors say, they might put on woollen or linen socks, but no leathern shoes. And this was observed also in funerals, as Buxtorfius shews in his Synagoga Judaica, cap. 49. which was a custom in the days of Ezekiel, (xxiv. 17.) Nor were the heathen strangers to it: but in times of great calamity went *barefoot*, as that excellent person Ezekiel Spanhemius observes in his notes upon Callimachus's hymn, ad Cererem, ver. 125.

And all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.] Going barefoot also, it is most probable, as the king did: whose example they followed.

Ver. 31. *And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.*] This touched him very nearly; because he was a very wise man, and one whom he took for his friend, (Psal. lv. 13.)

And David said, O Lord, I pray thee turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.] He prays that he might give foolish counsel; or that it might be contemned and looked upon as foolish; or that it might miscarry in the execution.

Ver. 32. *And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God.*] Looking towards the ark in the house of God: which he could see from the top of the mount.

That Hushai the Archite came to meet him.] There was a city in the tribe of Ephraim called Archi, (Josh. xvi. 2.) where this person, in all likelihood, was born and bred, and coming to Jerusalem, became one of David's privy-council; being famous for wisdom; otherwise Absalom would not have so readily entertained him, and admitted him to his secrets.

With his coat rent, and earth upon his head.] Which were expressions of great sorrow. Joh. Braunius hath demonstrated, the garment called *ketonah* was round, like our surplices, with sleeves to put the hands and arms into it. Which was worn by great persons, not only among the Jews, but the Egyptians, Tyrians, and Assy-

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rians, he observes, (lib. ii. de Vestitu Sacerd. Hebr. cap. 2. sect. 13, 14.) which may incline us to a belief, that Hushai was no mean man, but a person of quality.

Ver. 33. *Unto whom David said, If thou pass along with me, then thou wilt be a burden to me.*] For he was not provided with maintenance for his own family: and Hushai, being no soldier, but a counsellor, could not be so useful to him in the field as he might be at the court.

Ver. 34. *But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king.*] So he was to call him, because he had taken upon him that title.

As I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant.] He would have him pretend he would be as faithful to him as he had been to David; and it was very well known he had done him good service. This was not honest; but it was according to the policy practised in those days, and indeed in all ages. Which Procopius Gazæus approves so far as to say, that "a lie which is told for a good end, is equivalent to truth." But I dare not justify such doctrine; though what Hushai undertook to do was not to get money, or to do others hurt, but to preserve a good king, and a prophet, and a friend.

Then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.] God he thought had sent this man, in answer to his prayer, (ver. 31.) if he would but follow his direction.

Ver. 35. *Hast thou not with thee there Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that whatsoever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.*] Whom he looked upon as trusty persons, and faithful to his interest: and so they proved.

Ver. 36. *Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.*] They were not with their fathers in Jerusalem, but lay close in a place not far off, ready to carry any message that was sent by them. (See xvii. 17.)

Ver. 37. *So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.*] Where Hushai, I suppose, waited for his coming: having got thither before him, and so ordered his affairs, that it was not known he had been to offer his service to David: or, those that knew it, out of reverence to him, and affection to David, did not discover it.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *AND when David was a little past the top of the hill.*] *viz.* Mount Olivet, (xv. 30.)

Behold, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred bunches of raisins, and a hundred of summer-fruits, and a bottle of wine.] They put their wine into bottles, or bags, some of which were large vessels, and contained a great deal of wine. Such, no doubt, was this, which had liquor in it, proportionable to the rest of the present.

Ver. 2. *And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses are for the king's household to ride on.*] For his wives and children, if they were weary with travelling on foot; as they now did.

And the bread and summer-fruits for the young men to eat.] For the refreshment of the king's attendants.

And the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.] This argues great consideration of David's condition: to which he suited his present; which in a wilderness came very seasonably, and was very noble. Perhaps the bunches of raisins were intended for David's own support.

Ver. 3. *And the king said, And where is thy master's son?*] He desired, I suppose, to know whether this present was from himself, or from Mephibosheth.

And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.] This seems to be a fiction; but well contrived: for the family of David being so broken, he might think it probable the crown would fall to him.

Ver. 4. *Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth.*] We read ix. 2. that Ziba was but a servant (see there), but now David makes him a freeholder; giving him a great estate: which, if he said true, was forfeited to the king for treason, as it had been before in the time of Ish-bosheth, and thereupon given to Mephibosheth. But in this David seems to have been too credulous, and rashly condemned Mephibosheth before he heard what he could say for himself: but he imagined, perhaps, that Ziba durst not tell so notorious a lie, which might shortly be disproved. And beside, a man that comes to relieve another who is in great distress, easily wins his good opinion.

And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.] He pretends to value the king's favour more than the gift he had bestowed upon him.

Ver. 5. *And when king David came to Bahurim.*] A city in the tribe of Benjamin, (xix. 16.) into the territories of which David was now come: though not as yet into the town itself, as appears from ver. 14. The Targum calls it Almoth; which is of the same signification with Bahurim; the one importing *young men*, and the other *youth*.

Behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he went.] Out of an inveterate hatred to David; whom he looked upon as the great enemy of his family.

Ver. 6. *And he cast stones at David.*] In contempt of him. Or, as some fancy, to reproach him with the adultery he had committed; for which he deserved to have been stoned.

And at all the servants of king David.] This shews it was done only in contempt of them: as if they had been a company of dogs.

And all the people, and all the mighty men, were on his right hand and on his left.] He was under such a strong guard, that Shimei's rage was little less than madness: for he could not hurt David, but might have been immediately killed himself.

Ver. 7. *And thus said Shimei, when he cursed, Come out, come out.*] As much as if he had said, Get thee out of the kingdom; from whence thou deservest to be expelled. So the words are in the Hebrew, *Go out, go out:* the doubling of which words expresses his vehement detestation of him.

Thou man of blood, thou son of Belial.] So they called all those that made their will their law. But R. Levi ben Gersom thinks he hath respect in these last words to the

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adultery committed with Bath-sheba; as, in the first, he might have to the killing of Uriah.

Ver. 8. *The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul.*] This was perfect railing: for David had shed none of their blood; but he maliciously imputes to him the death of Abner, and of Ish-bosheth.

In whose stead thou hast reigned.] In effect, he calls him an usurper.

And the Lord hath delivered thy kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.] He still vomits out the same reproaches, with a most wicked spirit, which the Greeks call ἐπιχαιρεκακία, *rejoicing in iniquity*; to see Absalom so prosperous in his horrid rebellion.

Ver. 9. *Then said Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?*] See iii. 8.

Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.] There was admirable discipline observed in this small army, none of which durst stir without David's order or leave. And this, according to human reason, was a just motion which Abishai made; he being very near of kin to David, as Shimei was to Saul; and therefore a fit person to stop the mouth of such a mad dog, by cutting off his head.

Ver. 10. *And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?*] He speaks this with some indignation; and reflects upon Joab, as well as Abishai, who had been the occasion of these reproaches.

So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.] God neither bade him curse David, nor excited him to it; but finding his heart full of malice and rage, gave him an opportunity to vent it, as a punishment unto David. Unto which the good king humbly submits; looking upon it as coming from the hand of God, who delivered him up to this contempt. And in this David's virtue was admirable; for it is not an easy thing to stifle all motions to revenge, when it is easy to take it, and there is a high provocation to it. It is an observation, indeed, of Cicero's (Orat. de Auruspicum Responsis), that "perditi hominis profligatique maledictis, nullius gloria dignitasque violatur;" *by the reproaches of a wicked, profligate fellow, no man's glory or dignity is hurt or violated.* But David doth not scorn these curses, out of mere greatness of spirit, as coming out of the mouth of a base wretch, not worthy to be regarded; but acknowledges the justice of them, and bears them with a singular patience, out of humility and reverence to God, who had so ordered it.

Who shall then say, Why hast thou done so?] He doth not mean, who should ask Shimei such a question, but who should take upon him to find fault with God, who had just reason to suffer this? Though Grotius thinks David excuses Shimei in these words. For, speaking concerning the respect that is to be used to kings, in not giving them public reproaches, he excepts those which are given by a prophet, who had a special command from God for it. Upon which account he saith, when David was openly upbraided by Shimei as a murderer, he had no excuse to make for him but this, that perhaps God had commanded him to do it; shewing that this alone could make it lawful to speak evil of the king, if God, in a special manner, enjoined it. (Lib. de Imperio Summar. Potest. circa sacra, cap. 9. sect. 19.)

Ver. 11. *And David said unto Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.*] His passion seems not to have been at all stirred by this impotent railer, and endeavours to quiet the spirits of others, calmly reasoning himself and them, with admirable consideration, into an humble patience: for what were the revilings of a stranger to the murderous intentions of a son? And how could he withstand God, who inflicted this punishment upon him for his sins?

Ver. 12. *It may be the Lord will look upon my affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.*] He durst not be confident, being conscious of his ill deservings; but he had some hope, that God would be as gracious to him as this man was malicious.

Ver. 13. *And as David and his men went by the way.*] Taking no notice of him.

Shimei went along on the side of the hill over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.] Neglect of him made him more outrageous: which gave David occasion to exercise the greater patience under so long a vexation.

Ver. 14. *And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary.*] Not only with their journey, but with grief.

And refreshed themselves there.] At Bahurim, (ver. 5.)

Ver. 15. *And Absalom, and all the people of the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.*] As soon as David was got into the wilderness, he took possession of Jerusalem, and the king's palace.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, that when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom.*] Among others that came to welcome him to Jerusalem.

That Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.] He not only owned his authority, but with great affection seemed to desire its countenance. Which was an egregious piece of flattery and dissimulation.

Ver. 17. *And Absalom said, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?*] Absalom had not so little sense as not to consider, that no man ought to forsake a friend in his distress: though at the same time he did not reflect, how he had not only forsaken, but forced away his own father. So that one might have said to him, *Is this thy duty to thy father?*

Ver. 18. *And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.*] The voice of the people he pretends to look upon as the voice of God; and that he was bound to prefer the public good before his own private obligations or affections.

Ver. 19. *And again, whom should I serve? should I not serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in the presence of thy father, so will I be in thy presence.*] He gives a second reason; that he should not offend against David, in giving good counsel to his son.

Ver. 20. *Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.*] I suppose Ahithophel was made president of the council (as we now speak), who required the rest to deliver their opinions after he had delivered his.

Ver. 21. *And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto*

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thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house.] It appears by this he was a profane politician, who did not regard by what means, how wicked soever, he compassed his ends. The Hebrews think, also, that by this counsel Ahithophel gratified his own revenge, because David had lain with his grand-daughter, as I before noted.

And all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father.] That he and his father were become irreconcilable enemies. For Ahithophel involved him in a greater sin than that for which he killed Amnon: it not being so foul a crime to lie with his sister, as it was to commit incest with his father's wives.

Then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.] When they were possessed with an opinion, that the father and son could never come to an accommodation. Which might have been hoped between such near relations; and then the people had been in an ill condition: for David might not have been reconciled to them, though he was to his son. But after this detestable crime there was no likelihood that they would ever be friends again.

Ver. 22. *So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.*] Who were strangely depraved, in that none of them should cry out against such abominable wickedness.

Ver. 23. *And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God.*] It was so sure and safe, that it was commonly followed, without any doubting of the success. Such was this counsel which he now gave: for there was no greater danger to him and all Israel, than for Absalom to repent, and submit to his father: therefore he endeavoured, as I said, to make them irreconcilable, by doing his father the highest injury. Such was this to which he advised, as we learn by Jacob's resentment of it in his son Reuben, and many other examples, for which I refer to Grotius. He made the breach therefore thus wide, that it might never be healed: for if it had, David might have called him and others, in due time, to an account for their treason.

So was all the counsel of Ahithophel, both with David and with Absalom.] While David was in prosperity he gave him faithful counsel: but now in his distress as wisely consulted his ruin. For, as Procopius Gazæus observes, "accommodavit se rebus præsentibus:" *he was one of those who complied with the present state of things;* and now, with great reason, advised to make haste to dispatch David: fearing lest natural affection should work a reconciliation, and he should be punished for his perfidiousness.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *MOREOVER, Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men.*] Out of the whole multitude of the Israelites that followed Absalom: a thousand choice men, I suppose, out of each tribe. For he knew it would take up too much time to gather all the forces of Israel together, and give David an opportunity to escape.

And I will arise and pursue after David.] It seems he was a soldier as well as a counsellor: or, at least, he thought his counsel so sure of being successful, that he undertook himself to put it in execution. He was afraid, also, that if Absalom should command them himself, natural affection might make him spare his father, and not take away his life; or perhaps work an agreement between them: and so leave him in danger, as I said before, to be called to an account for his rebellion.

This night.] The next, I suppose, after David went away. For speed was the main thing on which he depended.

Ver. 2. *And I will come upon him while he is yet weary.*] With a long march.

And weak-handed.] Before he had got more forces together.

And I will make him afraid.] Strike a terror into him by this sudden attack; and in the night, when he was ill provided.

And all the people that are with him shall flee.] Finding how unable they were to resist such a force.

And I will smite the king only.] And spare all the people, whom he would not pursue.

Ver. 3. *And I will bring back all the people unto thee.*] By this means he doubted not to make an end of the war presently, and to bring all Israel to be his subjects.

The man whom thou seekest is as if all returned.] By smiting David, with whom alone was his quarrel, the whole nation would come into him: there being no other to whom they should submit when he was dead.

So all the people shall be in peace.] Thus they should have a peace without war; by taking and killing him; which would preserve both the people which were with Absalom, and those with David. They should all be saved, and he alone destroyed.

Ver. 4. *And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.*] For it was very sound advice; it being dangerous to deliberate long about such wicked designs; which must be executed speedily. So Tacitus well observes, "Scelera impetu, bona consilia mora valescunt;" *Wicked counsels prevail by sudden violence, but good by delays.*

Ver. 5. *Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.*] It was a proverb, it is likely, before Solomon's time, that *in a multitude of counsellors there is safety:* by which Absalom resolved to govern himself. But the providence of God is chiefly to be here noted; who made Absalom irresolute and doubtful, even in that counsel which was approved by all the elders of Israel, and was, evidently, the wisest that could be given.

Ver. 6. *And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner.*] Relating what he had said, ver. 2, 3.

Shall we do after his saying?] Follow his advice.

If not, speak thou.] He gives him full liberty to speak freely, if he were of another opinion; which he might deliver without offence, either to him or any body else.

Ver. 7. *And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given, is not good at this time.*] He confessed him to be a man of extraordinary judgment; but no man is wise at all times: and he thought now he was in an error for the following reason.

Ver. 8. *For (said Hushai) thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men.*] Old soldiers, who are

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aware of the danger wherein they are; and will provide against it, that they be not easily surprised.

And they be chafed in their minds.] So extremely provoked and exasperated, that it would be dangerous to fall upon them with so small an army as Ahithophel proposed. For such desperate persons would sell their lives at a dear rate.

As a bear robbed of her whelps in the field.] All men know that a bear is a very fierce creature: and good authors, particularly Aristotle, observe, that she-bears are fiercer than the male; especially when they have whelps to take care of, as the same philosopher writes, lib. vi. Hist. Animal. cap. 18. But most of all enraged, when their whelps are killed, or taken away from them; which is mentioned often in Holy Scripture, Prov. xvii. 12. Hosea xiii. 8. where Kimchi observes, that they bring forth their whelps wrapped up in a very thick skin, which it costs them a great deal of pains to free them from; and therefore grieves them more, when they find they have laboured in vain. (See Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 9.)

And thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.] Of such experience in warlike affairs, that as his men would defend him stoutly, and with great fury, so, when all was done, it was probable Ahithophel would not know where to find him; for great captains having disposed their force to the best advantage, and set their guards, oftentimes retire themselves from the camp, and lodge in some secret place.

Ver. 9. *Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place.*] Some cave, or other lurking-place; as he was in the days of Saul, who was never able to catch him.

And it shall come to pass, when some of them.] That is, of Absalom's forces.

Be overthrown at the first.] As might well be supposed, if David's men should come on a sudden upon them, out of an ambush, and put the first ranks into disorder, if not make a slaughter among them.

That whosoever hears it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.] This news would presently be spread through the whole army, and fear make them think the slaughter greater than it was.

Ver. 10. *And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt.*] For men are apt to conjecture of successes by the beginning; and it is a great encouragement to men to fight when they prosper at the first onset; and mightily disheartens those that are beaten. Lions are not only very strong, but very furious creatures; and therefore valiant men are said to have the *hearts* of lions, and the *faces* of lions, (1 Chron. xii. 8.) and the army of locusts to have the *teeth* of lions, (Joel i. 6.) But no men are so terrible, but they may be terrified, when they are suddenly and unexpectedly surprised by men as terrible as themselves; and far more incensed and justly enraged.

Vossius thinks that the word *lebi*, which in Hebrew signifies a *lion*, comes from the word *leb*, which in that language signifies the *heart*; as much as to say, *Cordatus*, a hearty creature, full of courage: whence the Greeks call a valiant and generous man, θυμολέοντα and λεοντόθυμον. (See him, lib. iii. de Orig. et Progr. Idol. cap. 52. and Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 2.)

For all Israel know that thy father is a mighty man, and they that be with him are valiant men.] Who would pursue any advantage with the greatest courage and resolution.

Ver. 11. *Therefore I counsel, that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, even as the sand that is by the sea in multitude.*] He means all the fighting men throughout the country, which were very numerous. In which advice, his chief aim was to gain time for David to raise an army by the help of his friends; for all Israel could not presently be gathered together, and put into order of battle.

And that thou go to battle also in thy own person.] Which would encourage the people to fight valiantly, when he was at the head of them; and would win him great glory, in owing his victory to his own conduct, and not to other men's.

Ver. 12. *And so shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falls upon the ground.*] He compares the multitude of their soldiers to the drops of dews, which cover the face of the whole earth; so that if David was in the field, he could not escape, but he would fall into the hands of some or other of them.

And of him, and of all the men that are with him, there shall not be left so much as one.] For his army would be so large as to spread itself over all the country, and ferret David and his men out of all their holes, by searching every one of them. This counsel was very plausible to one who relied upon the greatness of a host; and Hushai was also so cunning as to speak as if he would accompany him.

Ver. 13. *Moreover, if he be got into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river.*] He represents a further advantage of such a multitude; that if David quitted the field, and got into the strongest of their cities, encompassed with high walls, and a deep ditch, they were enough to begirt it round, and, by ropes put about the walls, draw them down and all the houses of the city, into the ditch that run about it. There was no such thing, that we read of, practised in war; therefore some by *chabalim* (which we translate *ropes*) understand *troops*, or *bands* of men, who by machines drawn with ropes could batter down walls and houses: or rather, this is a bragging hyperbolical speech, that they should be so numerous as to be able to do this, if there were no other way to reduce the city.

Until there be not one small stone found there.] Much less any man remaining there.

Ver. 14. *And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai is better than the counsel of Ahithophel.*] For so it would naturally seem to men that had a bad cause, and were cowardly, having nothing but their numbers to depend upon.

For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that God might bring evil upon Absalom.] But the chief reason was, that God blinded their eyes, and infatuated their judgments, that they could not discern what was best, but take that course which would ruin Absalom. Such is the wonderful overruling providence of God, in more cases than we are aware of; for, as St. Hilary speaks, concerning the rage of heretics, "Si quantum audet impietas, tantum consuleret prudentia, dif-

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ficile esset veritatis causam agere;" *If wickedness were as wise and prudent in counsel, as it is bold and daring in attempts, it would be hard to maintain a good cause.*

Ver. 15. *Then said Hushai to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus have I counselled.*] He acted the part of a true friend to David, but not of a trusty servant to Absalom, whose counsels he betrayed.

Ver. 16. *Now therefore send quickly, and tell David.*] Carry him this intelligence with all speed.

Saying, Lodge not this night in the plain of the wilderness, but speedily pass over.] The river Jordan.

Lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.] For fear Absalom should change his resolution, and incline again to the counsel of Ahithophel; who being a man of great authority, might persuade him his advice was the truest.

Ver. 17. *Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel.*] A place near Jerusalem, (Josh. xv. 7, 8.) which the Targum translates the *fuller's well;* because, as Kimchi says, the fullers there trod their cloth with their feet; for he derives *rogel* from the word *regel,* which signifies a *foot.*

(For they might not be seen to come into the city).] Their fathers charged them to stay in this place; because it would have been difficult to send them out of the city without being discovered.

And a wench went and told them.] Pretending, perhaps, to go thither to scour some clothes.

And they went and told king David.] After a little stop in their way, as it here follows.

Ver. 18. *Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom.*] Some of whose troopers, who were scouting thereabouts (as Josephus understands it), discovered them before they had gone two furlongs.

But they went both of them away quickly, and came into a man's house in Bahurim.] They suspected they were discovered, and therefore turned out of the public road (as Josephus explains it) and made haste to this village, and perhaps to that man's house where David refreshed himself, (xvi. 5. 14.)

Which had a well in his court; whither they went down.] For at that time of the year their wells in many places were dry, or had little water in them. And it would not be easily suspected that they would stay in an open court.

Ver. 19. *And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon.*] Corn newly thrashed out, which she pretended to dry in the sun.

And the thing was not known.] By this means they lay undiscovered.

Ver. 20. *And when Absalom's servants.*] Who were sent to pursue them.

Came to the woman of the house.] For some had informed them that they had turned this way.

They said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan?] They were known persons, being the sons of the most eminent among the priests; or, perhaps, they described them to her, so that she could not but know whether two such persons came thither, or passed that way.

And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water.] Which came, I suppose, from the fountain of En-rogel. It seems to have been a common opinion in those days, that these officious lies, for the safety of innocent persons, had no hurt in them; for we find many instances of them, which cannot be justified. (See upon Josh. ii. 5.)

And when they had sought them and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.] For the woman told them, as Josephus says, that they made no stay at her house; but after they had asked for a little drink, made haste away. Though if they pursued them speedily, she believed they might overtake them.

Ver. 21. *And it came to pass, after they were departed, they came up out of the well, and went and told David.*] As soon as the pursuers were returned back to Jerusalem.

And said unto David, Arise, and pass over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.] And they did not know but he, by his great wisdom, might overrule the counsel of Hushai (with which, no doubt, they also acquainted David), and persuade Absalom to hearken to his; and then David was in extreme danger.

Ver. 22. *Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning-light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.*] By this it appears, that they passed over in the night, either at the fords, or in boats: and that not one of them miscarried in the passage, or ran away from him.

Ver. 23. *And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed.*] Soon after Ahimaaz and Jonathan were gone to David, it publicly appeared, that the counsel of Ahithophel was rejected, and Hushai's entertained.

He saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order.] Settled his affairs, and disposed of his estate.

And hanged himself.] Being confident that David would get the better of Absalom; and that then he should be put to death for his treason; which made him choose to be his own executioner. So we understand it; though some of the Jews will have it that he died of grief, being choked with a quinsy. For it is not likely, they think, so wise a man as he would hang himself: but, being full of anguish, anger, and vexation (arising not merely from his pride, which enraged him to see any man's counsel preferred to his; but to the foresight, as I said, of danger, if David prevailed, as he was sure he would), these passions cast him into so violent a distemper, that he was strangled by it. And so some interpret the word ἀπήγξατο, in Matt. xxvii. 5.

And died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.] Where perhaps he would not have had the honour to be interred, if he had been executed, by David.

Ver. 24. *Then David came to Mahanaim.*] A place in the tribe of Gad. (See chap. ii. 8. of this book.)

And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.] As soon as he had gathered them together, which required some time: during which David had opportunity to strengthen himself by gathering an army also. Which was after the death of Ahithophel (who saw what delays were made by gathering Israel together, and what the consequence would be), and after relief was sent him by several persons: particularly by Shobi of the children of Ammon, (ver. 27.) who were neighbours to this part of the country of Israel, though at a good distance from Mahanaim.

Ver. 25. *And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man's son whose name*

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was Ithra, an Israelite.] By religion, though by birth an Ishmaelite. (See 1 Chron. ii. 27.) Abarbinel thinks the quite contrary, that he was an Israelite by birth, but had lived long in the land of the Ishmaelites. And by *the son of a man* he understands an illustrious person.

That went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash.] That is, he married one of the daughters of Jesse, who is here called Nahash. For, as Kimchi observes, many persons had two names: and this signifies *a serpent.* From whence it is, that when Isaiah saith, xiv. 29. *out of the serpent's root* (or *the root of Nahash) shall come forth a cockatrice,* or *basilisk;* the Chaldee paraphrase expounds it, *out of the root of Jesse shall come forth the Messiah.* Who was typified by the brazen serpent in the wilderness.

Sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother.] So Amasa was cousin-german to Joab: and David was uncle to them both. Absalom, one would think, should not have trusted in such an office so near a relation of David: but he himself was much nearer; and he took Amasa to be as ambitious as himself.

Ver. 26. *So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.*] Waiting an opportunity to fight David.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi, the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon.*] This was a comfort to David, to see himself honoured in his distress by one of a strange country: which he had made his enemy by the terrible execution he had made among them, (xii. 26, &c.) But it is thought, that this Shobi, the brother of Hanun, abhorring the base affront which he put upon David, was preserved by him, and made king of the country in the room of Hanun. And shewed his gratitude for so great a kindness, by coming to his relief, and perhaps to his assistance in his extreme necessity.

And Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar.] Who bred up Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, till David sent for him, (ix. 5.)

And Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim.] Who was a man of great wealth, (xix. 32.) and of as great goodness: for he maintained David while he was in those parts.

Ver. 28. *Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels.*] All manner of household stuff, which they now wanted.

And wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse.] All sorts of provision, which were necessary for the sustenance either of man or beast. And they brought it of their own accord, without asking, which was a token of their affectionate loyalty. The word *kali* is twice repeated among these provisions, and is first joined with *wheat, barley,* and *flour.* And properly signifies, *tostas fruges, parched corn,* as we well translate it. And in the latter end of the verse, after *beans* and *lentiles,* it must signify, as Bochart observes, "tostum aut frictum aliquod legumen, *viz.* frictum cicer," *some parched or fried sort of pulse,* to wit, *fried vetches:* which grew plentifully in Judea; as it was common among both Greeks and Romans in their food, as Bochart shews, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 7. where he observes that it is called *kali* by the Arabians to this day. And here we may learn, by the way, from this story, and the present made him by Abigail, and by Ziba, what was the ordinary victuals used in those days. Grain and pulse made up a great part of it, which were the common food of the ancient Egyptians. And the Romans, in their best times, when they most of all applied themselves to agriculture, did scarcely live upon any thing else: whence came the illustrious names of Fabius, Piso, Cicero, and Lentulus.

Ver. 29. *And honey.*] Milk and honey in those times were reckoned the greatest delicacies, and were the food of kings and great persons; as the same Bochart observes, lib. iv. cap. 11.

And butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat.] The making of *butter,* I have observed elsewhere, was early known in these countries; and so was *cheese.* For, as the author now mentioned observes, though these words *saphoth lachar* be very variously interpreted, yet the Chaldee and Syriac, as well as all the Hebrews, understand by *saphoth, cheese* made of cow's milk: from the Hebrew and Chaldee word *saphar,* which signifies to *strain;* cheese being made by pressing the whey out of the curds. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 33.) Here is no mention of any flesh-meat but sheep, which were very plentiful in those countries: and so was fish also, but we never read any mention of its being eaten, till the latter times. For it is supposed by learned men, that the ancients despised it, as too light and delicate for strong stomachs. Whence they observe that Homer never speaks of it, nor any Grecian writer of the heroic times.

For they said, The people are weary, and hungry, and thirsty, in the wilderness.] Where there was scarcity of provision, and therefore they needed refreshment, when they were come out of it. Which moved these good people to bring them beds to rest themselves in, after their journey: and all these good things which this rich country afforded, to satisfy their hunger: and it is highly probable, bottles of wine were not wanting, to make their entertainment more noble.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *AND David numbered the people that were with him.*] And found them sufficient to make a considerable army.

And set captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds over them.] Formed them into regiments and companies (as we now speak), and set proper officers and commanders over them.

Ver. 2. *And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab.*] Who was the general of the whole host: but now David intended to command in chief himself (as we read in the end of this verse), and therefore committed only a third part of the army to the conduct of Joab.

And a third part under the hand of Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite.] Order and discipline is of more force in a battle than great numbers: therefore David disposes his little army, for so it was in comparison (Josephus saith but four thousand men), into three bodies, under three eminent commanders: who were to succour one another as they saw occasion.

And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.] Which he thought would be a great

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encouragement to them, and make them fight the more valiantly.

Ver. 3. *But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us.*] They did not think it advisable that he should hazard himself: for which they give a good reason. That if they should be routed, and half of them slain, Absalom would not think himself a conqueror as long as David was alive: who might raise new forces, and give him battle again. And, as Josephus adds, they might possibly think the king had another army to guard his person.

But now thou art worth ten thousand of us.] Whose person, therefore, ought not to be exposed to danger.

Therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city.] By sending them, if there were need, a fresh supply of men, which he kept with him as a reserve in the city: and provision also, with counsel and advice, as occasion required.

Ver. 4. *And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do.*] He submitted to their opinion; for it was not a time now to oppose the sense of his people.

And the king stood by the gate-side, and all the people came out by hundreds, and by thousands.] Whom, Josephus saith, he exhorted to be faithful and courageous, remembering what he had done for them, *νικὴν αὐτοῖς ἐπευξάμενος, praying God to make them victorious.*

Ver. 5. *And the king commanded Joab, and Abishai, and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.*] If they got the better, he prayed, or rather required them, to spare Absalom's life: though he did not deserve it, yet because David desired it, whose affection was wonderfully great to him as his son; and in hope, perhaps, to reclaim him and bring him to repentance. He considered him also as a rash *young man*, and therefore an object of his and their pity.

And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.] So that no private soldier might voluntarily kill him.

Ver. 6. *And the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim.*] Josephus saith, that Joab drew up his men, *ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ μεγάλῳ, in a large field, which had a wood behind it.* Which is called the *wood of Ephraim*, not because it belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, for they had no possessions on this side Jordan, where the battle was fought: but the Gileadites gave it that name in memory of the great slaughter Jephthah made of the Ephraimites hereabout, mentioned Judg. xii.

Ver. 7. *Where the men of Israel were slain before the servants of David.*] They who fought for Absalom being called *the men of Israel*, it looks like an argument that David's army was principally gathered out of his own tribe of Judah. But it will appear from xix. 11. that this is not true: and therefore by *Israel* we are to understand the tribes on the other side Jordan, who pursued David into the land of Gilead, where he had got together a small army.

And there was a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men.] For the fight was obstinate, as Josephus thinks, both sides having great reason to stand stoutly to it, lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 9.

Ver. 8. *For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country.*] Thereabout, both in the field and in the wood.

And the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.] Some think the wood is said to devour them, because they fell into pits, or stumbled upon stumps of trees, or pressed one another to death as they came into strait places, or were killed by wild beasts. But the most simple meaning is, that there were more slain in the wood than in the field. That is, more in flight than in the fight: so Josephus, *ὡς φεύγονται πεσεῖν πλείονας ἢ μαχομένους. For they could not run away so fast in the wood as in the open field.* Many also being weary, it is likely, got into lurking-places, and were there killed like wild beasts.

Ver. 9. *And Absalom met the servants of David.*] In this flight through the wood, he chanced to meet with some of David's soldiers, who would not kill him, nor so much as stop him, much less seize him: for so it seems they understood David's commandment, that they should not meddle with him. But though they let him go, yet God met with him, and put a stop to his flight, as it here follows.

And Absalom rode upon a mule.] Full speed, as fast as it could carry him.

And the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak.] His neck, I suppose, stuck fast between the boughs of this oak.

And he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away.] He hung there, having nothing to support him: and his neck was so wedged between the boughs, by the swift motion of the mule, that he was not able to disengage himself. I do not see any colour for their opinion who think he hung by his hair, which being very long, was wrapped about the boughs of the tree: nor is it probable he was without a helmet, which covered his hair. And besides, it is said afterward, that Joab smote him *while he was yet alive*, in the middle of the oak, (ver. 14.) Which had been no wonder, if he had only hung by his hair; which would not have killed him: whereas when Joab came to him, he was only not quite dead, but very near it. Yet that great man Bochartus, in his epistle about the weight of Absalom's hair, supposes it to have been so thick, and so strong, that the weight of his whole body could not break it when he hung thereby. Though in his last work he saith, "Hæsit inter ramos arborum, et jumento prætergresso pependit inter cœlum et terram." *He stuck between the boughs of trees, and his beast going from under him, he hung between heaven and earth.* (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 11.)

Ver. 10. *And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.*] But not dead.

Ver. 11. *And Joab answered to the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him; and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle.*] A military belt, which was much esteemed, (1 Sam. xviii. 4.)

Ver. 12. *And the man said, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in my hand.*] In ready money (as we speak) paid down beforehand.

Yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abishai, and Ittai.] It was a thing notoriously known, not only to him, but to all the army.

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Saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.] Do him no hurt; but leave me to punish him.

Ver. 13. *Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against my own life.*] Not only been false and disobedient to the king, but brought his own life in danger; and therefore not have been true to himself.

For there is no matter hid from the king; and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.] He knew the genius of Joab so well, that he was sure he would have been as forward as any, both to inform the king of what he had done, and to have him punished for disobeying his sovereign. Joab also knew this to be so true, that he doth not rebuke him for this bold saying.

Ver. 14. *Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee.*] Lose time in such discourse.

And he took three darts into his hand.] From the Hebrew *spatim*, which we translate *darts*, comes the Latin word *spatha:* which was a sort of weapon among the ancient Gauls, as Bochartus shews, called by the Chaldee *gisæ;* from whence the Latin *gesum:* which Festus saith, was *grave jaculum, a heavy dart*, being made all of iron. (See his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 42.)

And thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.] Not through that part which is strictly called *the heart* (for then he would have died immediately, and there would have been no need of his soldiers falling upon him, as we read they did in the next verse), but through the midst of his body; which did not kill him outright, but there was still some life remaining in him.

Ver. 15. *And ten young men that bare Joab's armour.*] Who waited upon his person, as general of the army.

Compassed about, and smote Absalom, and slew him.] Surrounded him, and thrust their spears or swords through him; and so put an end to his life. Joab, I suppose, thought himself not safe as long as Absalom was alive. For some unquiet people, he thought, who were deeply engaged in this rebellion, would move new disturbances to set him on the throne. Therefore he did not as David commanded, but as he imagined he should have commanded. Kimchi hath a conceit that some of Absalom's crimes are legible in his punishment: for he was thrust through with three darts, having stolen the heart of the king, and then of the two hundred men that followed him out of Jerusalem, and then of all Israel. And as he committed incest with his father's ten concubines; so ten young men compassed him about, and killed him.

Ver. 16. *And Joab blew the trumpet.*] Sounded a retreat.

And the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.] This was done like a good man: for he knew the people were drawn into this rebellion, and would return to their duty, now they had none to head them. Thus Cæsar, after the defeat of Pompey, and the scattering of his army, cried, "Miles parce civibus;" *Soldiers, spare your fellow-citizens.*

Ver. 17. *And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood.*] They would not bring his body to be disposed of by his father's order, lest it should too much move his passion.

And laid a great heap of stones upon him.] So that after a sort he was stoned: as the law ordered a rebellious son to be, (Deut. xxi. 20, 21.) Adricomius, in his description of the holy land, saith this heap remained to his days; and all travellers, as they went by it, were wont to throw a stone to add to the heap, in detestation of his rebellion against his father.

And all Israel fled every one to his tent.] See 1 Sam. iv. 10.

Ver. 18. *Now Absalom in his life-time had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale.*] This *dale* is mentioned Gen. xiv. 17. and was not far from Jerusalem: there he thought to perpetuate his memory (which had better been forgotten) by a very magnificent structure; as Rasi, and several other Jewish doctors fancy: and some that have been in the holy land, tell us of such a noble fabric in the valley of Jehoshaphat. But this is a supposititious monument, as Wagenseil observes upon Sota, p. 221. For Josephus, who is more to be believed than these later authors, saith, that it was only a pillar, lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 9. where he calls it, στύλος λίθου μαρμαρίτου, *a pillar of marble;* which he saith was two furlongs from Jerusalem: in a place where the king's horses run races, as some say, and other exercises used to be performed.

For he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance.] We read before, xiv. 27. that he had three sons and one daughter: but, as Kimchi and other Hebrew doctors say, they were all dead: so that he had no hope to make his name survive him by any other means but this.

And he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day Absalom's Place.] In the Hebrew the word which we translate *place* is *jad*, which signifies *a hand.* As much as to say, *his work:* though Kimchi observes, that this word sometimes is the same with *makom*, a *place*, as in Isa. lvi. 5. And when this book was written, it bare Absalom's name: though it is likely it did not last very long: for such works of vanity are commonly short-lived. Of which the most famous instance we meet with in history is recorded by Pliny, lib. xxxvii. Natural. Hist. cap. 6. where he saith, Demetrius Phalereus had as many statues erected to him in Athens as there are days in the year, *viz.* three hundred and sixty; "nondum anno hunc numerum dierum excedente;" which is more, he thinks, than ever man had. But they were all thrown down, and broken in pieces, before a year was expired.

Ver. 19. *Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run and bear the king tidings, how the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies.*] By this it appears Ahimaaz did not return to Jerusalem after he carried intelligence to David, but stayed with him, and was in this battle; for the priests bore arms as well as other men: and particularly performed the office of trumpeters to the army, (2 Chron. xiii. 12.) And here it is observable what strict discipline was kept in those days: that no man durst stir to carry the news of what had been done without the leave of the commander-in-chief.

Ver. 20. *And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day.*] Some reward, no doubt, was wont to be given to him that brought good tidings, especially of a great victory: which made him so desirous to be the messenger.

But this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.] Which he knew would be unwelcome news to David, and procure no good to Ahimaaz.

Ver. 21. *Then said Joab to Cushi.*] An Ethiopian by birth, as some think, but had embraced the Jewish religion: and

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it is probable, was one of those ten young men who attended on Joab, and was present when Absalom was killed; and helped perhaps to dispatch him, (ver. 15.)

Go tell the king what thou hast seen.] He mentioned, it is likely, the particulars: which he would not put in writing, but have him deliver by word of mouth. For he himself would not relate what he had done to Absalom.

And Cushi bowed himself unto him, and ran.] It was a great honour to be a messenger of such good tidings, as the defeat of the king's enemies.

Ver. 22. *Then said Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, yet again to Joab, But, howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi.*] We cannot tell what made him so earnest to carry tidings, unless it was hope of reward, and confidence that his own swiftness would make him the first messenger of good news. For Josephus saith, he told Joab he would relate nothing to the king, but περὶ μόνης τῆς νικῆς, *only concerning the victory:* ἡσυχάσειν δὲ περὶ τῆς Ἀβσαλώμου τελευτῆς, *but say not a word about the death of Absalom.*

And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing thou hast no tidings ready?] Concerning the particulars of the fight, which he had not time to acquaint him withal. He calling him *my son*, it signifies he had a great affection to him, and therefore had denied his first request: for Joab knew the king better than Ahimaaz did; who had a mind to run, because he imagined the king would be pleased to hear he was out of danger: whereas Joab knew the king loved Absalom so dearly, that nobody would be acceptable to him that could not assure him he was safe.

Ver. 23. *But, howsoever, said he, let me run.*] He did not understand Joab's kindness, and therefore presses him again to grant his desire.

And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi.] There were two ways from hence to the place where David was: one over the mountains, which was the shorter way; the other by the plain, which, though the longer, according to the proverb, proved the nearest. Or, as Josephus understands it, Ahimaaz ran a more compendious way, which he alone knew, ἐπιτομοτέραν ἐμβαλὼν τῶν ὁδῶν, μόνος γὰρ αὐτὴν ἐπιγίνωσκεν.

Ver. 24. *And David sat between the two gates.*] The gate was a very large place, where public meetings used to be; and had an inward and an outward door, between which David sat to hear news.

And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall.] Over the gate there was a watch-tower, from whence they might see round about, whether any were coming, and from what quarter.

And lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.] Whom he spied at some distance, but could not discern who he was.

Ver. 25. *And the watchman cried, and told the king: and the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth.*] He took it for a sign that he was a messenger sent from Joab, and that he brought good news: for if they had been routed, there would have been more than one seen running away.

And he came apace, and drew near.] So that, in a little time, he could discern who he was.

Ver. 26. *And the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, another man running alone. And the king said, He also brings tidings.*] More news than the former.

Ver. 27. *And the watchman said, Methinks the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok.*] Who was remarkable, it seems, for his speed in running.

And the king said, He is a good man, and comes with good tidings.] He was one true to the king's interest, and therefore, he concluded, would not bring bad news.

Ver. 28. *And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well.*] He was in haste to let the king know the good success they had in the battle, and therefore seems to have said at a distance, before he came up to him, *Peace;* which is the word in the Hebrew, signifying all happiness and prosperity.

And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king.] When he approached nearer to him.

And said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.] Like a truly religious man, he ascribes the victory they had got unto the Lord; who still shewed his mercy unto David, and continued to be *his God; i. e.* his benefactor.

Ver. 29. *And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe?*] He would not express his joy until he heard that Absalom was preserved.

And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant.] This seems to signify that Cushi was one belonging to the court.

I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.] He dissembled his knowledge of Absalom's death; and perhaps in this said true, that he did not know the particular manner of it; though it appears plainly (from ver. 20.) that he knew he was dead.

Ver. 30. *And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.*] He would not have him go away until Cushi came, supposing he might find more of the truth, by examining them both together.

Ver. 31. *And, behold, Cushi came.*] Not long after Ahimaaz had delivered his message.

And Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.] He said no more than Ahimaaz had done; thinking it would be unacceptable news to mention Absalom's death.

Ver. 32. *And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.*] This was a decent manner of speech to inform him that he was dead.

Ver. 33. *And the king was much moved.*] So that we do not find he inquired after the manner of his death, nor after any of the particulars of the victory.

And went up to the chamber over the gate.] See xix. 8.

And wept.] Being extremely disturbed, he retired as far as he could from all company, ἐπὶ τὸ ὑψηλότατον τῆς πόλεως (as Josephus speaks), *to the highest part of the city,* where he bewailed his son, knocking his breast, and tearing his hair (as the same author's words are), καὶ παντοίως αὐτὸν αἰκιζόμενος, *afflicting himself all manner of ways.*

And, as he went up, he said.] When he came into the

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chamber, it was not so easy to know what he did, or hear what he said, because he shut up himself privately; but as he went up the stairs, he thus bemoaned the loss of his son.

O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!] No words can be more passionate; and it is likely his wish, that he had died in Absalom's stead, was only the effect of excessive love to him, and grief for him, which made him vent himself in expressions which were not considerate. But Pellicanus (in which he follows St. Austin) thinks this was a deliberate wish, because Absalom died impenitent, and might have lived to be a better man; but if David had died, he had good hope of his own salvation. But I take this not to be well-grounded; for if David had died, in all likelihood his son would not have been sorry for it, but triumphed in his good success, and proved a wicked tyrant over a base people. The stupidity of the Jewish doctors is inconceivable, who fancy Absalom would have cut his hair, by which he hung, with his sword, had he not seen hell gaping for him, if he fell down; which made him choose to die in the oak: but his father, by his lamentation over him, crying seven times, *my son, my son*, delivered him from the seven gates of hell, and brought him into paradise. (See Bartoloccius, in his Kirjath-sepher, tom. ii. p. 128, &c. 162.)

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1. *AND it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.*] For Joab was now come to the city himself, to give the king an account of the fight; and it is likely Ahimaaz, or Cushi, informed him how heavily the king took the news of his son's death.

Ver. 2. *And the victory.*] That is, the joy for the victory.

That day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day, how the king grieved for his son.] They had so great a regard to their prince, that when they heard of his affliction, they were afflicted with him; and instead of triumphing, they also made lamentations.

Ver. 3. *And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city.*] Not by the gate where David was, but by some secret way, that he might not see them. Just like thieves, who are afraid to be discovered and punished for what they have done.

As people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.] As if they had lost the day, and not been victorious.

Ver. 4. *And the king covered his face.*] Such was the custom of deep mourners (as Kimchi here observes), that they might neither see, nor be seen. As being ashamed (saith R. Levi) any should behold their rueful looks.

And the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!] It is observed by many learned men, that the oriental people expressed their passions with greater vehemence than we are wont to do in these parts of the world. Where crying out aloud with a doleful voice, called *howling* in Scripture, is not usual; but was common among the Jews, as we see before in David, (iii. 32.) and at the laying the foundation of the temple after the captivity, when they that wept with a loud voice, drowned the voice of those that shouted for joy, (Ezra iii. 12, 13.)

Ver. 5. *And Joab went into the house of the king.*] It seems by this, that David was removed before Joab came from the top of the gate, and gone to his house, where he was wont to reside.

And said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants.] Making them hang down their heads, as if they had committed such a crime that they were ashamed to look men in the face.

Which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines.] Of all that was dear unto him.

Ver. 6. *In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends.*] In whose preservation he seemed to take no pleasure, but only to grieve for the loss of a rebellious son.

For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants.] Neither himself, nor Abishai, nor Ittai, nor any of the great officers and faithful soldiers, who had adventured their lives for him.

For this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.] This was spoken by Joab too sharply, and insolently; yet it was something necessary at this time to awaken David out of a strange lethargy, which made him take notice of nobody, but behave himself as if he had no concern for any person in the world, but for Absalom alone, who was gone out of it.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably to thy servants.*] He wishes him to go and shew himself to his people, and acknowledge their good service, praise their courage, and congratulate their happy success: giving the honours and largesses that were due unto them, or promising them rewards proportionable to their merits.

For I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth.] Unto the people, and declare how sensible he was of their services.

There will not tarry with thee one man this night.] He resolved, and confirmed it with the most solemn oath, that he would lead his whole army away from him, and leave him alone. David seems to have answered nothing to all this discourse, which moved Joab to conclude with these harsh words.

And that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befel thee from thy youth until now.] For during the cruel persecution of Saul, as well as in this exile, he had a good company of faithful persons with him. Josephus expresses this threatening very well, τότε σοι πικρότερον, καὶ ἀληθὲς ποιήσω τὸ πένθος, *I will make thee weep for something* (as we speak), *and more bitterly than ever.*

Ver. 8. *Then the king arose, and sat in the gate.*] Where the concourse of people used to be about business. For the *gate* was a spacious place, and the same thing with the exchange, or the forum among the Romans. The market for commodities was held here, as we learn from the prophecy of Elisha, who foretold corn should be sold at such a rate the next day in the gate of Samaria, (2 Kings vii. 2.) which was a very large place, since Ahab assembled there four hundred false prophets, (1 Kings xxii. 10.) In these gates also there was some building, wherein were seats for the elders and judges: for Boaz having a cause to be heard, *went up to the gate*, and sat down there, (Ruth iv.

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1, 2.) And so many public assemblies being held here, it makes it probable that the *chamber over the gate* (mentioned in the foregoing chapter), where David went to weep, was the place where the privy-council were wont to meet.

And they told unto all the people.] That were in the city and elsewhere.

Saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king.] To congratulate to him his safety, and to receive the tokens of his favour.

For all Israel had fled, every man to his tent.] Until the people heard the king appeared publicly, and no longer bewailed Absalom.

Ver. 9. *And all the people were at strife through all the tribes of Israel.*] Who should be forwardest to bring back the king: blaming one another's slackness in it.

Saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines, and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.] They call to mind what benefits they had received by his means, in their deliverance from many enemies; especially the Philistines, who had grievously oppressed them: and also their great ingratitude to him in driving him out of Jerusalem, and forcing him to flee over Jordan, for the sake of Absalom.

Ver. 10. *And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle.*] We do not read of his being actually anointed: but they chose him for their king, and obeyed him as if he had.

Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?] They spake this to their elders; who seem to have been dubious what to do until they heard the sense of the people.

Ver. 11. *And David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests.*] By their sons, whom he had with him.

Saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah.] The priests were men of great authority, especially the high-priest and his deputy, and most proper to be employed to deal with the elders.

Saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house?] That which made them so cold, was, I suppose, the sense of their guilt in joining with Absalom: who began his conspiracy in Jerusalem itself, and perfected it in Hebron, both cities of Judah. Whose revolt was the baser, because he was of their tribe, and had long shewn his great kindness to them, (1 Sam. xxx. 26, &c.) the conscience of which made them afraid to bring him again to Jerusalem.

(Seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house).] These last words, *even to his house*, seem to be but a repetition of what was said before, *to his house;* viz. at Jerusalem: the other words being a parenthesis.

Ver. 12. *Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh.*] That is, he had much kindred among them.

Why are ye then the last to bring the king back?] He expresses the greater kindness to them, lest they should be so desperate as to defend Jerusalem against him.

Ver. 13. *And say unto Amasa, Art not thou of my bone, and of my flesh?*] That is, his sister's son: whom he bids them particularly court; for, being general of Absalom's forces, he might through shame and fear be very loath to look his uncle in the face.

God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.] He solemnly promises to prefer him to the highest command in the kingdom: for now he thought it a fit time to depress Joab; who was grown insufferably insolent and imperious. For he had slain Abner most perfidiously in cold blood; and killed Absalom against the king's command; and now lately insulted him in his sorrow: threatening (if we may believe Josephus) *τὴν βασιλείαν ἑτέρῳ παραδοῦναι, that he would depose him, and deliver the kingdom to some other person.* This promise David endeavoured to perform; bidding Amasa take upon him to assemble all the men of Judah, (xx. 4.) yet leaving Joab (ver. 7.) the command of his own legion. Which he took so heinously, that he killed Amasa; and was captain of the host again, more out of fear than any favour David had for him: for if Amasa had lived, David would have humbled him. For Amasa had a great interest in Israel, over whom he had commanded in chief; especially in the tribe of Judah, whose heart he bowed to receive David again, as it here follows.

Ver. 14. *And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man.*] Either this disposition was wrought in them by Amasa; or the kind words delivered from David by Zadok and Abiathar overcame them.

So that they sent this word unto the king.] By some messenger of their own.

Return thou, and all thy servants.] Assuring him they were ready to receive him, and return to their obedience.

Ver. 15. *So the king returned, and came to Jordan.*] Began to return back, and came as far as Jordan: which parted the country where he was from the land of Canaan.

And Judah.] That is, the elders of Judah.

Came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.] This was an expression of their great affection, to come thus far to attend him, and to furnish him, I suppose, with accommodations in his journey: for Gilgal was near Jordan; on the other side of the river.

Ver. 16. *And Shimei, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hasted, and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.*] Hoping David would receive him kindly in such good company.

Ver. 17. *And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him.*] He was nobly attended, to shew how powerful he was, and what an interest he had in his country: and yet came to implore the king's mercy. Perhaps he was a captain of a thousand in his own tribe: who came with him to intercede for his pardon.

And Ziba, the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him.] See ix. 10.

And they went over Jordan before the king.] They were so officious as to go further than the men of Judah, to the other side of Jordan, where the king was: before whom they passed over.

Ver. 18. *And there went over a ferry-boat.*] Prepared, as many suppose, by the men of Judah. Josephus will have it a *bridge;* composed, perhaps, of many boats joined together.

To carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good.] To carry over what he pleased to order.

And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan.] As soon as he landed.

Ver. 19. *And said unto the king, Let not my lord the king*

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impute iniquity to thy servant, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely in the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.] Resent it so deeply, as to be revenged of him.

Ver. 20. *For thy servant doth know that I have sinned.*] He professes himself sensible of the crime he had committed, and was sorry for it.

Therefore, behold, I come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.] To shew by his example what the rest should do: and, as the Hebrew doctors gloss upon it, they would all see in him an instance either of David's clemency, or severity; and accordingly behave themselves. He was not properly of the house of Joseph, but of a tribe near of kin to it: so that at this time, it seems, they looked upon themselves as members of the same body; being descended from the same mother: and they continued so till the kingdom was rent. For Benjamin is placed between Ephraim and Manasseh (the two sons of Joseph) in Psal. lxxx. 2. and they marched under the same standard, Numb. ii. 18, 19, &c.

Ver. 21. *But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?*] He would have gone and done execution upon him, at that time when he cursed, (xvi. 9.) and now he imagined there could be no reason to spare him.

Ver. 22. *And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah.*] It seems Joab joined with his brother: who thought to govern all the king's motions as they pleased. But he bids them, in a disdainful manner, stand aside, and not meddle in this matter.

That ye should this day be adversaries unto me?] Hinder me from following my own inclinations, and set my people against me. For by following this advice, he might have alienated the hearts of all Israel from him, and made them fear the like punishment for their revolt.

Shall any man be put to death this day in Israel?] In a time of universal joy, he would not have any family have cause to make lamentation. It was accounted an ill omen among other nations, if any man was put to death on the king's birth-day: and this was a second *natalis imperii, birth-day of David's empire;* which he would not have sullied with any cloud of sorrow.

For do I not know that I am this day king of Israel?] He had power to punish, or to pardon, as he pleased: and being restored to his kingdom, would not enter upon it with blood.

Ver. 23. *Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die: and the king sware unto him.*] That he would not put him to death. But this did not oblige him not to give such a charge as he did to Solomon, to do justice upon him for any new disobedience. Nothing is more glorious than mercy and clemency, as the heathens themselves were sensible. Cæsar saith in a letter of his to Oppius and Cornelius (which is among Cicero's Epistles), "Hæc nova est vincendi ratio," &c. *This is a new way of conquering, to fence ourselves by mercy and liberality,* (lib. ix. Epist. ad Atticum.)

Ver. 24. *And Mephibosheth the son of Saul.*] That is, his grandson.

Came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet.] But wholly neglected himself, as they used to do in a time of public sorrow. For the not dressing his feet signifies (as Schickard and others understand) that he had not cut the nails of his toes; but let them grow, as he did his beard. It may be understood of his not washing his feet; the neglect of which made men very sordid. For in those countries, they lying upon beds when they ate (as Scaliger observes in his sixth book de Emend. Temporum), put off their shoes, and washed their feet, "ne pulverosis pedibus strata inquinarent," *lest they should defile the carpets with their dusty feet.* Besides, in hot weather the smell of their feet without washing was offensive.

Nor trimmed his beard.] He not only let the hair grow, but took no care to put it in good order. For the words in the Hebrew are, *he had not done any thing to his feet, nor any thing to his beard.*

Nor washed his clothes.] His shirt, nor any of the linen which he wore. As for their woollen garments, they were not wont to wash them.

From the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.] This long-continued mourning argued him to be really afflicted for the king's exile.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king.*] It is manifest from the foregoing verse, that he came down from some other place to Jerusalem to meet the king: but could not meet him sooner, as others had done, because Ziba had got his estate, and, it is likely, would not furnish him with an ass, no more than he had done when David fled away.

That the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?] As prudence, as well as gratitude, obliged him.

Ver. 26. *And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle my ass, and ride thereon, and go to the king; for thy servant is lame.*] He had ordered an ass to be made ready for him, to carry him to David: instead of which, Ziba saddled it for himself; and went with that false story, which is mentioned xvi. 3.

Ver. 27. *And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is an angel of God.*] To discern between truth and falsehood.

Do therefore what is good in thy sight.] And therefore he submits himself entirely to his judgment, and trusted to his kindness.

He had great reason so to do, as he confesses in the next words.

Ver. 28. *For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king; yet didst thou set thy servant among those that did eat at thy own table.*] The undeserved benefits he had received from David made him absolutely resign himself to his will and pleasure.

What right therefore have I yet to cry any more to the king?] He did not challenge any thing as his right, nor thought it decent to trouble the king further with his complaints.

Ver. 29. *And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters?*] As if he had said, Enough, enough; I desire to hear no more of the injuries done me by the house of Saul.

I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.] Some of the Hebrew doctors understand this, as if he now parted the estate formerly given to Mephibosheth between him

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and Ziba; partly out of shame, lest he should appear too rash and hasty of belief in giving all to Ziba, and partly out of suspicion that the too great wealth of Mephibosheth might make him ambitious. But they acknowledge this sentence to be unjust, Ziba making no defence for himself. And some of them say, a voice from heaven was heard thereupon, saying, That God would make the like division of David's kingdom, between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. But if we carefully attend to the words, they carry another sense in them; being as much as if he had said, *My first grant shall stand;* when he decreed that Mephibosheth should be lord of the land, and Ziba should manage it for him, ix. 10. (See Selden, de Successionibus, cap. 25. fol. 89, 90. where he makes out this very clearly.)

Ver. 30. *And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.*] Nothing could be more generously spoken, nor signified greater affection, than that he was content to be a beggar, now that the king was restored to his kingdom.

Ver. 31. *And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim.*] A place in Mount Gilead.

And went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.] Merely to bring him on his way so far, and then return.

Ver. 32. *Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old.*] Which was a great age in David's days, (Psal. xc. 10.)

And he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man.] And had a very large heart, which moved him to supply the wants of David, and all his family and attendants, as long as he stayed at Mahanaim, which was a considerable time. Pliny relates, that Crassus denied any man to be rich, who was not able to maintain a legion, lib. xxxiii. Natural. Hist. cap. 10. where he mentions one that entertained all Xerxes' army at a feast: but here was a far more rare example of virtue in Barzillai, who maintained not a prosperous prince in all his glory, but a distressed prince in his exile, when no hope appeared of a reward.

Ver. 33. *And the king said unto Barzillai, Come over with me, and I will feed thee with me at Jerusalem.*] Entertain him at his own table, as a singular friend.

Ver. 34. *And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?*] He excuses himself, by several reasons, for not accepting the king's kindness; and the first is, because, as he was unfit for travel so far, so, for so short a time as he had to live, it was not prudent to change his dwelling.

Ver. 35. *I am this day fourscore years old; and can I discern between good and evil?*] These general words are explained by the particulars which follow.

Can thy servant taste what I eat and drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing-men, and singing-women?] His second reason is, that the king's kindness would be ill bestowed upon one that had no relish left of any of the pleasures of a court.

Wherefore then should thy servant be a burden unto my lord the king?] A third is, that instead of doing the king any service he should prove a burden to him; for old men must have some to wait on them, and take care of them.

Ver. 36. *Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king.*] Express his dutiful affection to him, as far as he was able.

And why should the king recompense me with such a reward?] Since he had but done his duty to his sovereign, he did not expect to be so highly rewarded for it.

Ver. 37. *Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in my own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother.*] He beseeches him, for a fourth reason, not to press him to go further; but suffer him to enjoy that which old men naturally desire; to die in the place where they have lived, and to be buried with their ancestors.

But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king, and do unto him what shall seem good unto thee.] That he might not seem rude in refusing the king's gracious offer, he desires him to translate his kindness to his son, and bestow upon him what he pleased.

Ver. 38. *And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do unto him that which shall seem good unto thee.*] He would not have it left to his choice what he should do for Chimham; but desires the good old man to say what he would have for him, and it should be done. We do not read what Barzillai asked, or what David did for him: but there being mention made in Jer. xli. 17. of *the habitation of Chimham,* and that near to Beth-lehem, it is a very reasonable conjecture of Grotius, in his annotations on that place, that David, having a patrimony in the field of Beth-lehem, the place of his nativity, "Jus ibi habitandi, et fructus quosdam suos faciendi dedit Chimhamo," he bestowed it upon Barzillai's son; and from thence this place took the name of Chimham, which remained until the days of Jeremiah.

And whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.] He promises withal, that when Barzillai was gone home, if he had any occasion to petition him, his request should be granted.

Ver. 39. *And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was gone over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him.*] They parted with great kindness, and the king prayed God to requite what Barzillai had done for him.

And he returned to his place.] With great satisfaction, that he had seen his sovereign in his way to be restored to his kingdom.

Ver. 40. *And the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went with him.*] As one of his near attendants.

And all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.] That is, the elders and great men both of Judah and Israel. To gratify his own tribe, David marched on, not expecting the coming of all the great men of Israel, who were making themselves ready to wait upon him.

Ver. 41. *And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king.*] When the other half of the Israelites were got together, they thus expostulated with the king.

Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen thee away, and have brought the king and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?] That is, why did they make such haste, and not expect our consent and assistance, who were as zealous as themselves to bring the king back? They seem to take it ill, that not only David and his family, but all *his men, i. e.* his soldiers and guards,

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should be brought over Jordan; as if they would force their way, whether the Israelites would or no.

Ver. 42. *And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us.*] Being of their tribe, which justly required they should be more forward than others in his service.

Wherefore then be ye angry with us?] For our affection to him.

Have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift?] We get nothing by it, but have only done our duty, and testified our great affection. Abarbinel thinks these words, *given us any gift*, import expiation and pardon; as in Gen. xviii. 26. Numb. vi. 26. and are as much as if they had said, Hath he granted us a pardon for what we did in the business of Absalom? Whereby they suggested, that the Israelites were the principal actors in that rebellion, and needed an act of oblivion, though they did not.

Ver. 43. *And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said.*] The words are not as before, *all the men of Israel:* which is a sign some of them were cooled, though most of them continued violent.

We have ten parts in the king.] By the *king* is here meant the *kingdom: ten parts* of which they say were theirs (whereas there were eleven tribes besides Judah), because Simeon, being intermixed with Judah, it is likely, now came along with them.

We have also more right in David than you.] As David was a private person, Judah had more interest in him than the rest, because he was of their tribe: but, as he was a king, the Israelites had more, being the far greater part of his subjects.

Why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king?] They looked upon it, therefore, as a great neglect, if not contempt, of them, that they had not the precedence in this business.

And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.] More vehement: or, they were too hard for them in their argument. David did not think fit to interpose; which made the men of Israel think he favoured Judah, and thence arose a new rebellion.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *AND there happened to be there.*] When this contention fell out between the men of Israel and Judah.

A man of Belial, whose name was Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite.] Who perhaps was of kin to Saul, as Shimei was, (xvi. 5.) and one of the commanders in Absalom's army, next to Amasa. For so Victorinus Strigelius understands the Hebrew words, *isch Bichri*, to signify *unus ex proceribus*, a nobleman, of great power and authority among the people: like Catiline at Rome.

And he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.] As much as to say, Let the men of Judah have him to themselves. He cares not for us, and we care not for him.

Every man to his tents, O Israel.] He wishes all the men of Israel, since David expressed no more regard to them, to go to their homes, and trouble themselves no further in bringing him back.

Ver. 2. *So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri.*] Instead of going home, they followed their seditious incendiary: taking it in snuff (as we speak) that the king did not expect till they, who were the majority, came to conduct him: but relied solely on the men of Judah, as if they were able, without the rest of Israel, to re-establish him in his throne.

But the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.] Not a man of them stirred from him, but conducted him from Jordan to Jerusalem. And we must not think that all the men of Israel forsook him: but a very great number of them. For Shimei, in all likelihood, and his thousand men, stuck to him, though of the same tribe with Sheba; otherwise David would have punished him, when this rebellion was quelled.

Ver. 3. *And David came to his house at Jerusalem, and the king took the women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward.*] Shut them up close under a guard, *and fed them.* Nobody came to them, but only to bring them daily provision for their sustenance.

But went not in unto them.] Never lay with them; but looked upon them as become impure to him, having been defiled by his son.

So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.] They were not fit for any body else, being royal wives; and therefore he did not give them a bill of divorce, but shut them up close, that no man might enjoy them. And indeed it was not prudent to let them be so much as seen abroad; which would have renewed the remembrance of Absalom's filthiness.

Ver. 4. *Then said the king unto Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah.*] He makes good his promise to Amasa, which was a great encouragement to others in the tribe of Judah, to stick fast to their king. And by this means also the seditious Israelites might be the sooner brought to reason, when they saw their old general in the field against them.

Within three days.] Because the business required speedy dispatch.

And be thou here present.] To receive his orders.

Ver. 5. *So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.*] He was not treacherous unto David (as the Jewish doctors in the Sanhedrin say Joab represented him, and made it the reason of his killing him), but he found difficulty in the business; because the people had a high opinion of Joab, and would not easily be brought to serve under a new general. This Amasa, it is likely, was loath to report to the king, because it would diminish his authority, and represent him as incapable to serve the king in the office wherein he had placed him.

Ver. 6. *And David said to Abishai.*] He persisted in his resolution to depress Joab; but employed his brother, who was the next great commander in the army. Whom he doth not create captain of the host; but for fear this delay should prove prejudicial, bids him take such forces as he found ready in Jerusalem, and pursue Sheba.

Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom.] If he had time to gather an army: the people being highly incensed by the provocation the men of Judah had given them.

Take thou therefore thy lord's servants.] The guards

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that attended David, and the standing forces, which were always kept on foot.

And pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.] So that they must be put to the trouble of laying a long siege to the place where he was.

Ver. 7. *And there went out after him Joab's men.*] A body of men whom he particularly commanded.

And the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men.] See upon viii. 18.

And they went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.] For David thought himself safe enough in the love of the city of Jerusalem, and the rest of the people thereabout.

Ver. 8. *And when they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon.*] The place of rendezvous (as we now speak), appointed by Amasa for the men of Judah. Which was, as Josephus saith, a hundred furlongs from Jerusalem.

Amasa went before them.] As their commander-in-chief.

And Joab's garment that he had put on.] As soon as Amasa arrived at the army, Joab also came there as a volunteer, of his own accord: or rather, was there before with Abishai. Yea, Josephus takes it, as if David had spoken those words ver. 6. unto Joab, telling him it was not safe to delay, and therefore bids him take such forces as they had ready, and go with his brother Abishai. Ἰωβὸς δὲ οὐκ ἔτι μέλλειν ἔκρινεν, ἀλλὰ τόν τε ἀδελφὸν καὶ τοὺς ἑξακοσίους παρέλαβε, &c. *He resolved not to stay to gather more forces: but with his brother, and six hundred men, and all the force they had in Jerusalem, marched out to pursue Sheba.*

Was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened to his loins in the sheath thereof.] He had no armour on, but such a garment as soldiers wore, closely girt to him: and upon it a belt, in which a sword hung by his side. Yet Josephus saith he had a breast-plate, θώρακα ἐνδεδυμένος, as well as μάχαιραν περιζωσάμενος, *begirt with a sword.*

And as he went forth.] To meet Amasa, πολλὴν δύναμιν ἀναγόντος, *who led numerous forces* to that place, as the same author speaks.

It fell out.] He had hung it so, that it might drop out of the sheath when he pleased. And it fell out just as he went to salute and embrace Amasa: who seeing him stoop to take it up, imagined it was only to put it into the sheath again.

Ver. 9. *And Joab said unto Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother?*] He inquired in a friendly manner of his welfare.

And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.] This is the custom still among the eastern people, the Indians: who take one another by the chin, or the beard, when they would give a hearty salute; and say *bobba, i. e.* father; or *bii, i. e.* brother, as the author of the voyage to the East Indies relates, at the end of Peter de Valle's Travels, p. 410.

Ver. 10. *And Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand.*] Which he thought he had put into his sheath, and did not observe that he held it in his left hand, which it seems he could manage as well as the right.

So he smote him therewith in the fifth rib.] See iii. 17.

And shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again, and he died.] He gave him such a wound, that his very bowels gushed out; and there was no need to give him a second stroke.

And Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.] Hereupon Joab immediately, without any order, resumed his command, and Abishai durst not oppose him, but yielded it up to him. For his authority was so great among the soldiery, that none of Amasa's men durst stir to avenge his death; the Cherethites, and Pelethites, and all David's guards submitting to him: and besides, all Amasa's men were not yet come up, but followed by degrees, as appears by the rest of the story.

Ver. 11. *And one of Joab's men stood by him.*] By the command of his master; who knew this would make some disorder among Amasa's soldiers.

And said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David.] He cunningly joins these two together, as if their interest was inseparable.

Let him follow after Joab.] He was grown so insolent, because David durst not punish him; that, as it made him venture upon this bloody fact, so he presumed, that though the sight of Amasa's dead body might stop the march of those that came by it; yet, upon the declaration his officer made, that now he was become general of the army, their love to him was such, that they would make no scruple to follow him.

Ver. 12. *And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway.*] He seems not to have been quite dead, though senseless: but had so much life, that he rolled to and fro in his own blood, which was a doleful sight.

And when the man saw that all the people stood still.] Joab was deceived in his measures, for the people hated this fact as much as they loved him. And therefore as many as saw it would move no further till the body was removed out of the way: so that they who were behind went without any stop after Joab.

He removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.] This was a prudent officer; who expected no orders, but of his own accord removed that out of sight which hindered their pursuit of Sheba.

Ver. 13. *And when he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.*] They that were behind, it is likely, did not know that Amasa was killed, and so marched on without any scruple.

Ver. 14. *And he went through all the tribes of Israel.*] That is, Sheba rambled about the country, from one city to another, to excite the people to take up arms against David. But Josephus refers this to Joab, that he followed Sheba from place to place, till he came where he was.

Unto Abel, and to Beth-Maacah.] Or rather unto Abel Beth-Maacah: for they were one and the same place, as appears by the next verse. And so Josephus, who saith it was a strong city, well fortified, in the tribe of Naphtali, in the northern parts of Judea, upon the borders of that part of Syria where Maacah was, (x. 8.) In this city Sheba at last settled himself, and resolved to defend it: being unable, I suppose, to raise such an army as to keep the field.

And all the Beerites.] Among whom he had been before he came hither, and got some considerable forces among them. For they were of the city Beeroth (it is probable) and the parts adjacent: which was in the tribe of Benjamin, of which he was a member, and perhaps dwelt in this city, (Josh. xviii. 25.)

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And they were gathered together, and went also after him.] Unto Abel Beth-Maacah.

Ver. 15. *And they came.*] That is, Joab and his men pursued him thither.

And besieged him in Abel of Beth-Maacah, and they cast up a bank against the city.] Raised fortifications round about it, from whence to batter it.

And it stood in the trench.] That is, Joab's army had advanced so far that they had filled up the trench: and there stood at the very foot of the wall.

And all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.] Some battered it with engines from the forts: while those at the bottom of the wall undermined to throw it down. So Josephus.

Ver. 16. *Then cried a wise woman of the city.*] A woman of great understanding, who also could speak well. Many such there were in Israel, it appears by her of Tekoah, and Abigail, and the mother of king Lemuel.

Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.] She prays those that were at the bottom of the wall to stop their proceedings awhile: and desires Joab to come, and hear what propositions she had to make to him.

Ver. 17. *And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he.*] She was unwilling to treat with any one, but him who had power to agree to what she propounded.

Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.] He did not despise her because she was a woman; but, as became a wise man, gave her a favourable audience, and attended to what she said.

Ver. 18. *Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter.*] According to this translation of the words, she praises the city of Abel as famous, time out of mind, for wisdom and giving sound advice: and now, she would have him believe, was not without persons of great prudence and fidelity also (as it follows in the next verse), who would not willingly offend their king. But there is another translation in the margin of our Bibles, which I take to be more literal, by referring the word *barishonah* not to *old time*, but to the *beginning* of the siege. As if she had said, When the people saw thee lay siege to the city, they said, Surely they will ask us if we will have peace, and then we shall soon come to an agreement and make an end. Whereby she secretly remembers Joab of a rule in the law, Deut. xx. 10. which commands them to offer peace to the cities of other nations when they came to besiege them; and therefore much more to a city of their own, as Abel was. To this purpose R. Solomon Jarchi; and it agrees well with what follows, that they were a peaceable people and faithful to their prince: and therefore would not have refused to yield, upon summons, to him. R. Levi ben Gersom gives another sense of them; That Sheba and his company, when they first came into the city, asked if they would follow him, and said no more: to whom the men of the city answered, We are peaceable and faithful; that is, we cannot join with thee and rebel against king David. But there is a late writer, who thinks the words will bear this sense: This was a common saying in old time, If any one asked whether Abel was a place of justice and judgment, or a den of thieves; the answer was, They are an upright people. And therefore she asks Joab, why he went about to destroy a city so famous for virtue. Thus Mayerus in his Annotations on Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 14.

Ver. 19. *I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel.*] She speaks in the name of the whole city: which was of a peaceable temper; and had been faithful to David in the time of the late revolt.

Thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel.] A great city, which had many towns depending on it; and therefore called *a mother.*

Why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?] Do an injury to the public; by depopulating a part of the country, which is God's peculiar.

Ver. 20. *And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it, that I should swallow or destroy.*] Do you the least hurt, if I can avoid it. He disclaims any ill intentions twice, saith R. Solomon; as if he had said, Far be it from me, far be it from the king, to design any such thing.

Ver. 21. *The matter is not so.*] You are not rightly informed.

But a man of Mount Ephraim.] He is said before (ver. 1.) to be of the tribe of Benjamin: but he lived, I suppose, in Mount Ephraim.

(Sheba, the son of Bichri by name), hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city.] And leave all Sheba's party at liberty to go home, without any punishment.

And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.] She had reason to be confident that both the citizens and soldiers would be glad to save themselves, by giving up him, who had brought them into imminent danger.

Ver. 22. *Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom.*] Desired they would all meet in the common hall; where she told them what terms she had made for them with Joab: unto which they immediately consented.

And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab.] It seems his party was not strong in the city; or, seeing it likely to be taken, they were glad to accept of the conditions the woman had made for them.

And he blew the trumpet, and retired from the city, every man to his tent.] Raised the siege, and went home.

And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.] To give him an account of his good success.

Ver. 23. *Now Joab was over all the host of Israel.*] Now that David was restored to his kingdom, and established in it, he settled all the great officers who were to govern under him: and continued Joab in the chief command of the army, which was so much at his devotion, that he found it dangerous to displace him.

And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Chereth-ites, and over the Pelethites.] As he was also before, (viii. *ult.*) being a very valiant man, (xxiii. 20.) whom Solomon made commander-in-chief of the whole army (as now he was captain of the king's guards) after the death of Joab.

Ver. 24. *And Adoram was over the tribute.*] Treasurer, or receiver of the king's revenue. Which office was not settled before; because, in the beginning of his reign, it is likely David had no great revenue.

And Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder.] See upon viii. 16.

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Ver. 25. *And Sheva was scribe; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests.*] It is uncertain whether Sheva be the same with Seraiah mentioned viii. 17. or, Seraiah being dead, or displaced, this man came in his room. Concerning these priests, see viii. 17.

Ver. 26. *And Ira also the Jairite.*] He had his original in the country of Jair the Gileadite on the other side Jordan; (Numb. xxxii. 41.) who is not mentioned before, but now was made a great officer.

Was a chief ruler about David.] The Hebrew word *cohen* (as hath been often observed) signifies any minister, either sacred or civil: a priest or a prince. Instances of the last are many, and the Targum thus expounds it here, *Rab le David*, a prince, or great man about David. And so the *priest of On*, Gen. xli. 50. and the *priest of Midian*, Exod. ii. 26. signify the priest or ruler of On and of Midian. As, in Job xii. 19. we, following the Chaldee, translate it, *God leadeth princes away spoiled.*

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *THEN there was a famine in the days of David, three years, year after year.*] The Jewish doctors commonly say this famine was before the rebellion of Absalom. But Abarbinel will have it, that things are related here in the order wherein they were done; so that this was after that rebellion was ended.

And David inquired of the Lord.] For what sin so grievous a punishment was inflicted: suspecting (as Abarbinel thinks) God might still punish him for those sins he committed in the matter of Uriah.

And the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house.] God soon comforted him, by letting him know that this punishment was upon the account of Saul and his family, who had been deeply engaged in blood.

Because he slew the Gibeonites.] When he slew the whole city of Nob (saith the same Abarbinel) where the Gibeonites lived, and served as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the priests, whom Saul then cut off, (1 Sam. xxii. 18, 19.) But the same great man hereupon inquires, why God did not send this famine rather for the slaughter of the priests than of the Gibeonites? Of which he gives this account, that the slaughter of the priests was punished before, by the slaughter of Saul and of his sons in the battle with the Philistines, (1 Sam. xxxi.) and now he was punished in the sons of his concubines, and all Israel suffered with them by famine, because they did not hinder him from murdering the Gibeonites, by remembering him of the oath which was made to them; nay, perhaps they approved of what he did, being glad to see the land rid of foreigners. But why this judgment was not executed before, may seem strange, till we consider, as he observes, that the counsels of God are profound; and he hath excellent reasons why he punishes sinners not now, but hereafter: and knows which of their children are most worthy to be punished, and bear the iniquity of their fathers. And the longer he stays before he strikes, the more evident it is, that he doth not forget what the evil men have done, though he doth not presently declare his anger against it. He observes, also, that the Gibeonites being drawers of water, God put the Israelites in mind of their offence, by withholding rain from them: just as his refusing to answer Saul by *urim*, was a suitable punishment for his murdering the priests who consulted God by that oracle.

Ver. 2. *And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites, and the children of Israel had sworn unto them; and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah).*] Which transported him to violate a solemn oath: as many since have done, under pretence of the public good.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for thee?*] He asks them what satisfaction they desired, for the wrong that had been done them. Which may seem strange, unless we suppose, as Josephus doth, that God told him when he consulted him, not only for what crime he sent this punishment, but that he should take, δικὴν ἣν αὐτοὶ θέλουσιν, *such a revenge for it, as the Gibeonites would have.* Besides, they had never made any complaint to David of the injury which had been done them: who might therefore be the kinder to them, and give them leave to name the recompence that should be made them.

And wherewith shall I make an atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?] Pray to God to be pacified also; and to restore plenty unto Israel again.

Ver. 4. *And the Gibeonites answered unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel.*] Except those that they afterward mentioned. For they seem to have been people truly proselyted to the Jewish religion, who desired nothing but equal justice; that men should suffer as they have done: and therefore Saul having not taken away their money, but their lives; they desired only that the lives of some of his family might pay for it.

And he said, What you shall say, that will I do for you.] If they had desired money, or any thing else that was in his power, they might have had it.

Ver. 5. *And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel.*] He intended, if not to kill, yet to banish them all: which had been worse than death; for it would have deprived them of the liberty of worshipping the true God.

Ver. 6. *Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us.*] Some imagine, that at the first they demanded all the house of Saul to be delivered up unto them: but upon cooler thoughts they demanded only seven persons.

And we will hang them up unto the Lord.] To appease his anger, and vindicate his honour. Some think this was a barbarous custom in those days (which certainly prevailed in future times) to hang men up, to appease the anger of their gods, in time of famine. Which Johannes Geusius fancies the Gibeonites had formerly used, and now propounded it to David, as a means to make the earth more fruitful, (De Victimis Humanis, par. i. cap. 14. p. 310, &c. and par. ii. cap. 14. p. 312.) which he imagines to be the reason why it is observed (ver. 2.) that the Gibeonites were "not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites:" to shew whence this horrid superstition proceeded; of which some tang still remained amongst them. The Vulgar here translates it, "ut crucifigamus eos," *that we may crucify them.* Which misled Serrarius and some

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others into this error, that crucifixion was a punishment anciently among the Jews: which Casaubon, Selden, and several other great men, have shewn to be false.

In Gibeah of Saul.] To make the punishment the more remarkable and shameful: this being the city where he lived, both before and after he was king, (1 Sam. x. 26. xi. 4.)

Whom the Lord did choose.] This aggravated his guilt, that he was so highly favoured by God, and yet obeyed not his commands: but spared the Amalekites, whom God commanded him to destroy; and killed these poor Gibeonites, whom he was bound by the oath of God to preserve.

And the king said, I will give them.] This seems to be contrary to the Divine law, (Deut. xxiv. 16.) that the son should not die for his father's fault. To which some of the Jewish doctors thought it sufficient to answer, "It is better that one letter should be taken out of the law, than that the name of God should be publicly profaned:" that is, that one precept, rather than an oath, should be broken. But there is no need of this; for, as Abarbinel judiciously observes, the law in Deuteronomy is to be understood of proceedings in human courts; not of the Divine judgments: for God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, (Exod. xx. 5.)

Ver. 7. *And the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.*] Not merely his affection to Jonathan, but his dread of breaking the oath he had made to him, moved him to preserve Mephibosheth; lest he himself should incur the same punishment which Saul fell under, for breaking the oath made to the Gibeonites.

Ver. 8. *But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Ajah.*] Who was a concubine of Saul, as we read afterward, ver. 11.

Whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth.] After whose name, perhaps, Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan was called.

And five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up.] In the Hebrew, *whom she bare, i. e.* which were born: according to an usual manner of speaking among the Hebrews; of which see Dr. Hammond upon Luke xvi. note *b*.

For Adriel.] It is plain from hence, that by *was born* is meant, as we translate it, was *brought up*. For Michal was not the wife of Adriel, but was given to Phaltiel, (1 Sam. xxv. 44.) Merab her elder sister being married to Adriel, (1 Sam. xviii. 19.) by whom she had these five sons, whom Michal brought up, and therefore they are called her children. Thus the Jews say, in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 2. *Merab brought them forth, and Michal educated them.* And the like we read (as they allege for the proof of this) Gen. xxx. 3. l. 23. (See Selden, de Uxore Hebr. lib. i. cap. 6.) Kimchi also here alleges the words of the women in Ruth iv. 17. *There is a son born to Naomi;* who was not the mother of it, but only laid it in her bosom, and became nurse to it, as is said in the precedent verse. Thus also Rasi, Ralbag, and a great many other Jews, following the Chaldee paraphrase. And we have an example of this in the heathen writers. For Agamemnon and Menelaus are called sons of Atreus, because their father being dead, he took care to bring them up. So Eustathius on the second book of the Iliads: Plisthenes (who was their father) being dead, the youths being bred up by Atreus, *αὐτοῦ παῖδες ἐκλήθησαν, they were called his children.*

The son of Barzillai the Meholathite.] This last word is intended to distinguish him from the other Barzillai the Gileadite: for this was of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Abel-Meholah belonged.

Ver. 9. *And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord.*] In a conspicuous place, where they might be seen by all that passed by. David did not command his officers to hang them up, but delivered them to the Gibeonites, that they might dispose of them as they pleased.

And they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley-harvest.] That is, say the Jews, on the sixteenth of Nisan, a little after the Passover.

Ver. 10. *And Rizpah the daughter of Ajah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock.*] It is probable, she both made a tent of it to dwell in, and spread it upon the ground to lie upon.

From the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven.] From the sixteenth of Nisan (as the Hebrew doctors understand it) until the seventeenth of Marchesvan; that is, from the middle of our March to the middle of October; when God shewed he was reconciled, by sending showers down upon the earth; which might be, for any thing we know, in the middle of summer. And, indeed, Abarbinel thinks this opinion of their doctors is not true; but that the plain meaning is, they hung from the beginning of harvest until God was entreated for the land, and was pleased to send them rain; for want of which they suffered by famine. And he thinks it probable, that not long after they were hung up, they had plentiful showers by the good providence of God, though it was summer-time; whereby it appeared God was appeased: but by their hanging there several days, it is manifest this was not a legal punishment (and therefore David committed it to the Gibeonites, and did not execute it by his own officers), but an extraordinary one, inflicted by those who were not bound by that law, Deut. xxii. 24. which in this case was violated.

And suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.] She had servants no doubt to attend her, who kept a constant watch day and night to fright away the birds and beasts.

Ver. 11. *And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Ajah, Saul's concubine, had done.*] Which did not displease him, nor the Gibeonites neither (as far as appears), but was accounted a laudable thing, which excited David to the imitation of her. I observed before, that Saul had but one wife, and we read of no more than this one concubine, which shews his moderation in some things, which was praiseworthy.

Ver. 12. *And David went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of Jabesh-Gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa.*] See 1 Sam. xxxi. 10. This noble act of Rizpah moved David to do some honour to the carcasses of her sons, and to the whole house of Saul: and for that end he sent for the bones of Saul and Jonathan, to in-

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ter them and those children of Saul's with their ancestors. Which piece of generosity demonstrated that he had no personal enmity to the family of Saul.

Ver. 13. *And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son.*] From under the tree where they were buried in Jabesh, (1 Sam. xxxi. 13.)

And they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.] Which seems to have been done some time after they were taken down, when nothing but their bones remained; and then they had all seven an honourable interment, as it here follows.

Ver. 14. *And the bones of Saul and of Jonathan his son.*] Together with those now mentioned.

Buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah.] Which was in that tribe, (Josh. xviii. 28.)

In the sepulchre of Kish his father.] It was accounted very desirable to be buried with their parents, as appears by old Barzillai, (xix. 37.)

And they performed all that the king commanded.] They that were employed in this business gave them a solemn burial, with all the mourning that was usual in the funerals of kings; as the Hebrew doctors expound it.

And after that God was entreated for the land.] When satisfaction was given to the Gibeonites for the injuries done to them, God restored plenty to the country.

Ver. 15. *Moreover, the Philistines had yet war again with Israel.*] That is, after all the wars beforementioned in this book with the Philistines, they again disturbed David's repose in the latter end of his reign. Some, indeed, will have these wars to have been presently after the war with the Ammonites was ended; before the rebellion of Absalom. But Abarbinel, I think, well resolves, that the history of this war is not misplaced, but that it fell out not long after the famine beforementioned.

And David went down, and his servants with him.] It is not said where this battle was fought (as the place of the other three following is mentioned), but it is likely to have been near to the country of the Philistines; unto which *David went down;* for it lay low, towards the sea-side.

And fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint.] Being in his declining years; or rather of a great age, and much worn out by various troubles and afflictions.

Ver. 16. *And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant.*] That is, of Goliath; who by way of eminency is called *the giant;* though Bochartus thinks the Hebrew word *rapha* signifies any giant; and so these words should be translated, *of the race of the giants, i. e.* of the Anakims who fled into this country, particularly to Gath, when Joshua expelled them from Canaan, (Josh. xi. 22.)

(The weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight).] This is to be understood of the head of his spear, which weighed half as much as that of Goliath, (1 Sam. xvii. 7.)

He being girded with a new sword.] The word *sword* is not in the Hebrew; nor is there any thing remarkable in his having a new sword; therefore it should be translated, *with a new kind of weapon,* or rather, *with a new belt;* which had been bestowed upon him as a reward of some great exploit which he had done; or as a token of some new honour, or command, conferred upon him in the army. (See xviii. 11.)

Thought to have slain David.] Being stronger than he, and having him at an advantage; when, by some accident, he was separated from his army; as Josephus understands it.

Ver. 17. *But Abishai succoured him.*] Came in seasonably to his relief.

And smote the Philistine, and killed him.] The words leave it doubtful whether he was slain by Abishai or by David. Our translation seems to incline to the former; but if David was not the person that killed him, I do not see how that can be verified, which is said in the end of this chapter, that all these giants *fell by the hand of David and of his servants;* for he slew none of them, unless it were this.

Then the men of David sware to him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle.] They had advised this before, when they went to fight with Absalom, (xviii. 3.) but now they peremptorily decreed it, and solemnly confirmed it with an oath.

That thou quench not the light of Israel.] Lest he should be killed, and thereby they should lose the glory of having such a king reign over them; for good kings are called the *light* of their people, 1 Kings xi. 36. xv. 4. because, by their wise government, conduct, and courage, they made their people happy and illustrious.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass after this, that there was a battle again with the Philistines at Gob.*] Which was also called Gezer, as Abarbinel thinks, 1 Chron. xx. 4. Or, they were so near one another, that the battle was in the confines of both.

Then Sibbechai the Hushathite.] One of David's worthies, (1 Chron. xi. 29.)

Slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant.] One of the same race of the Rephaims; who seem to be descended from the Anakims.

Ver. 19. *And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines.*] This was a place, it seems, very proper for armies to draw up in; for here they fought twice.

Where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim a Beth-lehemite.] He is simply called the son of Jair, 1 Chron. xx. 5. and is reckoned among David's worthies, 1 Chron. xi. 26. and there said to be the son of Dodo; who, I suppose, was his grandfather.

Slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite.] The word *brother* is supplied out of 1 Chron. xx. 5. where his name is said to be Lahmi.

The staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.] See 1 Sam. xvii. 7.

Ver. 20. *And there was yet a battle in Gath.*] In the territory belonging to it.

Where was a man of great stature.] The LXX. translate it, *a man of Madon:* who was born, that is, in a place called by that name.

That had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, twenty-four in number.] If we may believe Tavernier, (in his relation of the Grand Signior's Seraglio, p. 95.) the eldest son of the emperor of Java, who reigned in the year 1648, when he was in that island, had six fingers on each hand, and as many toes on each foot; all of equal length.

And he also was born to the giant.] Was one of the Rephaim of that country.

Ver. 21. *And when he defied Israel.*] In imitation of the great giant Goliath, confiding, as he did, in his monstrous strength.

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Jonathan the son of Shimeah, the brother of David, slew him.] We read of this brother of David in 1 Sam. xvi. 9. where he is called Shammah. But this son of his is not reckoned among David's worthies, 1 Chron. xi.

Ver. 22. *These four were born to the giant in Gath.*] Here *Rapha* seems to signify *Goliath*, the most famous giant; if one of them had not been his brother.

And fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.] The first of them was slain by David (Abishai assisting), the rest by the great men who were about him. (See ver. 17.)

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *AND David spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of his enemies.*] It is commonly thought David penned this psalm towards the end of his life, after all the victories mentioned in the foregoing chapter. Thus Rasi, in the time of his old age, and Kimchi, in the conclusion of his day: but Abarbinel, who contends earnestly that all things fall out in the order wherein they are related in this book, is of a quite different opinion here; and will have it that he composed this song in his youth, in the midst of all his straits and difficulties; out of which, when God delivered him, he sung this song of praise unto him. So that by the words *in the day that the Lord delivered him*, he thinks is meant, that every time he received any deliverance from God, his usual method was to acknowledge it thankfully in the words of this song, which was composed at first for his own private use: but in the end of his days, he thought fit to communicate it to others; and therefore put it into the book of Psalms, that it might serve for the use of those which might be in the like straits, and receive the like mercies. And then also he reviewed it, and made several alterations in it; which, little and great, amount, as he observes, to seventy-four in number. And this he did, as he thinks, to make his meaning plainer; and that the people might not mistake it. And there is some ground for part of what he saith; for the eighteenth Psalm is directed to the chief musician, which shews it was then intended for public use: whereas here is nothing said of that, and therefore it is probable it remained for some time a piece of private devotion.

And out of the hand of Saul.] He may be thought to be comprehended under the name of his *enemies:* but they (as the same Abarbinel observes) were properly the people of other nations, who made war upon him; of whom he speaks in Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22. "Do not I hate them that hate thee, &c. I account them mine enemies." Now though Saul cruelly persecuted David, yet it did not become David to call him his enemy, and one that he hated: for he loved Saul, and therefore doth not number him among his enemies; but, in a particular manner, to distinguish him from them, adds, *and out of the hand of Saul.*

Ver. 2. *And he said, The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer.*

Ver. 3. *The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.*] This great heap of metaphors, as Strigelius observes, is a large paraphrase upon the first commandment, declaring God alone to be his confidence: in whom he placed all his strength, safety, security, and happiness. The consequence of which is, that we should love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength; (as Moses adds after that precept, Deut. vi. 4, 5. x. 12.) and therefore David adds that, when he reviewed this Psalm, and begins it thus; "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength," &c. Psal. xviii. 1. (See my paraphrase upon that Psalm, where I have sufficiently explained these verses.)

Ver. 4. *I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.*] See in that Psalm, where there are the very same words. Upon which the forenamed Strigelius piously observes; That as the Πανοπλία of a soldier doth him no service, unless he put it on to defend himself and offend his enemy, so no protection or help from God is to be expected (who is so powerful as before described), unless we apply ourselves unto him by prayer and praises.

Ver. 5. *When the waves of death compassed me about, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.*] These words in this verse differ from the words in Psal. xviii. but the sense is the same: that he was in a sinking condition, and saw no way to escape; being overpowered by troops of ungodly men, who, like a torrent, threatened to sweep him away.

Ver. 6. *The sorrows of hell compassed me about, and the snares of death prevented me.*] He was so entangled in their snares, that he had no more power to help himself, than a dead man bound head and foot in his grave. For so the word *sheol*, which we translate *hell*, here signifies.

Ver. 7. *In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God.*] He did not despair when he was at this plunge, but made his addresses to Him who is omnipotent; most earnestly beseeching him to deliver him, as he had often done.

And he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.] There is very little difference between these words and those in Psalm xviii. The meaning of which is, that God gave him a gracious answer from his sanctuary, or from heaven (of which the sanctuary was a type), and shewed that he was sensibly touched with his affliction.

Ver. 8. *Then the earth shook and trembled.*] The terror which God struck into his enemies is compared to an earthquake: which makes every body tremble, as it did the gaoler, Acts xvi. 29.

The foundations of heaven moved and shook.] In Psalm xviii. the words are, *the foundations of the hills:* which explains what he here means by *heaven; viz.* mountains lifted up to heaven. Or, he represents the dread which fell upon his enemies, by the consternation which an earthquake causes, when it is accompanied with thunder, lightning, and hail from heaven, in a great tempest. We do not read that there were literally such storms, tempests, and earthquakes, for David's deliverance: but if there were, it need not seem strange, when profane history informs us of God's interposing after this manner in some cases. For Strigelius observes out of Livy, that in the eighth year of the second Punic war, when Hannibal and the Romans were drawn up in battle and ready to fight (upon which the fortune of the city of Rome depended), there fell such a shower of rain and hail, as confounded both armies: so

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that being scarce able to hold their arms they retreated unto their camps. And on the next day, in the very same place, the like tempest parted them: and as soon as they came into their camps, there was a wonderful serenity and tranquillity.

Because he was wroth.] Highly displeased at their enmity to David.

Ver. 9. *There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled at it.*] These are very high metaphors, to express the most flaming degree of anger, and the dreadful effects of it.

Ver. 10. *He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet.*] The Divine Majesty appeared in a glorious cloud, descending from heaven; which at the bottom was all dark, but above bright and shining, with an amazing lustre.

Ver. 11. *He rode upon a cherub.*] To *ride*, in the Hebrew language (as Maimonides observes), is to rule, to govern, to manage with an absolute power, that on which one is said to ride; and to dispose of it as he pleases. (More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 70.) And therefore to *ride upon a cherub*, or to make the clouds his chariot (which is the very same, because angels were wont to appear in bright clouds), is to send his heavenly ministers whither he thinks good, to execute his pleasure.

And did fly.] Made haste to succour and relieve David, when he was in great distress.

And he was seen upon the wings of the wind.] A rapid wind shewed that he was present to overturn all opposition. (See 1 Sam. v. 24.)

Ver. 12. *And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.*] This is still a description of the angelical powers, who surrounded him on all sides, as his ministers, ready to be employed, which way he thought fit to send them. For Andreas Cæsariensis truly observes, in his commentary on the Revelation, that whensoever we read in the sacred books of clouds, or thick darkness, we are always to understand, ὑπουργὸς τῶν θείων πραγμάτων, *some ministry ready to serve in Divine affairs.*

Ver. 13. *Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled.*] Those heavenly ministers going forth from his glorious presence, sent hailstones and lightnings (as in the days of Joshua, x. 11.) in the face of his enemies.

Ver. 14. *The Lord thundered from heaven, the Most High uttered his voice.*] Thunder is called the voice of God, in Psal. xxix. Which he sent forth in such terrible cracks, accompanied with flashes of fire, that quite daunted his enemies.

Ver. 15. *He sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them.*] These were the weapons whereby they were vanquished; lightnings were the darts and arrows that made them turn their backs and run away.

Ver. 16. *And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.*] This is the description of a great earthquake, which rent it in sunder, and made such breaches in it, that the very bottom of it was discovered. And this was the effect of God's just indignation against his enemies.

Ver. 17. *He sent from above, he took me.*] He sent his angels to rescue and protect David.

He drew me out of many waters.] Delivered him from innumerable dangers; compared to waters breaking out upon a country, to overflow it.

Ver. 18. *He delivered me from my strong enemy.*] First from Goliath, and afterward from many others, as we read in the foregoing chapter, xxi. 16, 17, &c.

And from them that hated me.] The Philistines, the Syrians, and other nations, whose hatred to him made them set themselves against him, to destroy him.

For they were too strong for me.] Their forces were more numerous than his, and would have overpowered him, if the Lord had not been his helper.

Ver. 19. *They prevented me in the day of my calamity; but the Lord was my stay.*] When he was in a weak condition, unable to defend himself, Saul suddenly came upon him, and had destroyed him, if the Lord had not been his support. (See 1 Sam. xxii. 9. xxiii. 14. 26. xxiv. 2, 3, &c.)

Ver. 20. *He brought me forth also into a large place.*] When his house, for instance, was beset by Saul's officers, who watched to kill him as he came out in the morning, he escaped by the help of his wife, and got to Samuel and Ramah, where he was at liberty to go whither he pleased. (1 Sam. xix. 11. 18.)

He delivered me, because he delighted in me.] In many other straits he afterward delivered him; because he had a kindness for him, and resolved to make him king of Israel.

Ver. 21. *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.*] God knew also that he was innocent of what he was accused; and had no design to do Saul any hurt. (1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 12, &c. xxvi. 23.)

Ver. 22. *For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.*] He took no unlawful courses to preserve himself; but when Saul fell into his hands, he would not hurt him, because he was God's anointed. (See there, 1 Sam. xxiv. 11—13. and xxvi. 19, &c.)

Ver. 23. *For all his judgments were before me.*] He made God's commands the rule of his actions.

And as for his statutes, I did not depart from them.] In Psal. xviii. the words are, *I did not put away his statutes from me:* that is, bid them stand aside, and give way to his interest; but strictly observed them.

Ver. 24. *I was also upright before him, and kept myself from mine iniquity.*] This is still spoken with respect to Saul. For though he offended afterward grievously against God's laws, yet he chose rather to suffer any thing than do Saul any harm; and nothing could tempt him to that iniquity, unto which he was invited by fair opportunities, (1 Sam. xxiv. 4. xxvi. 8, &c.)

Ver. 25. *Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye-sight.*] According to David's prayer; which is very remarkable, 1 Sam. xxvi. 23. where he desires God to deal with him as he had dealt with Saul, with whose blood he would not defile his hands, when it was in his power to take revenge.

Ver. 26. *With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.*] This is the common method of God's providence, to do good to those that do good to others: and to do them

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justice, who do not swerve from the rules of righteousness, when they are injuriously treated by their neighbours.

Ver. 27. *With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure.*] Faithfully keep his promises to those who are faithful to him.

And with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.] Declare how much he distastes and abhors those that take deceitful courses to bring about their ends. In Psal. xviii. the words are, *with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward;* that is, he ensnares those in their own devices, who perversely take crooked ways to compass their designs: which unexpectedly end in their destruction.

Ver. 28. *And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.*] He is wont to deliver poor helpless people, who humbly depend on him, and not on any unlawful means for safety: but he contrives ways to lay those low who (proud of their power) insolently oppress them.

Ver. 29. *For thou art my lamp, O Lord; and the Lord will lighten my darkness.*] David himself was an instance of this; whom from a despicable, God raised to an illustrious condition: and when he concluded he should perish, (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) advanced him to royal splendour and greatness.

Ver. 30. *For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God I have leaped over a wall.*] Now he seems to celebrate the wonderful works of God, after the persecution of Saul was over, and he was made king. When numerous enemies assaulted him; but he broke and scattered them all. And particularly (which seems to be meant by the last words) he scaled the highest walls, whereby his enemies thought themselves securely defended. (See chap. v. of this book, ver. 6, 7, &c.)

Ver. 31. *As for God, his way is perfect.*] By the *way of God,* here seems to be meant his counsels, proceedings, and methods of his providence: which for the present may appear to us perplexed, but in the issue will be seen to be perfectly just, and agreeable to his promises; as it here follows.

The word of the Lord is tried.] The experience of all good men tells us, that he never failed to be true to his word: which is freer from all deceit, than the most refined gold is from dross.

He is a buckler to all them that trust in him.] So that none can hurt those that put themselves under his protection, with a pious confidence in him.

Ver. 32. *For who is God, save the Lord?*] For none can defeat his intentions, or resist his will.

And who is a rock save our God?] There are none so powerful, as to be able to hurt those whom he will protect; or to defend those whom he will destroy. Of this word *rock,* see Deut. xxxii. 4. 31.

Ver. 33. *God is my strength and power.*] What great men would Scipio and others have been, if they had been possessed with such a sense of God, as to have acknowledged that all their courage, and conduct, and mighty victories were owing to his power. But no warrior was ever like to David, who had God in all his thoughts, and acknowledged all his great acts to be performed by the Divine aid.

And he maketh my way perfect.] Removed all obstacles out of his way, to the completing of his conquests. (See v. 10.)

Ver. 34. *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet.*] This is commonly thought to relate to the swiftness of *hinds;* and so I have taken it in my paraphrase on the Psalms: but Bochartus hath made it probable, that it hath respect to the firmness of their treading; which is very remarkable, as he shews in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 17.

And setteth me upon my high places.] He was enabled to pursue his enemies with great celerity, and without tripping: even unto such places, as for their height and cragginess were thought inaccessible.

Ver. 35. *He teaches my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*] He ascribes all his strength and dexterity to God: who enabled him to wrest the strongest bow out of his enemies' hands, and break it in pieces.

Ver. 36. *Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation.*] And when he was in great dangers, God protected him: as he did in the battle mentioned in the foregoing chapter, (ver. 16, 17.) when Ishbi-benob had slain him, if Abishai had not stepped in for his timely succour.

And thy gentleness hath made me great.] These wonderful deliverances he could ascribe to nothing but the tender mercy of God to him, when he was unworthy of his favour.

Ver. 37. *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip.*] When he was in great straits, and beset with difficulties, God opened a wide passage; and made all things succeed according to his desire. For that seems to be meant by his *feet did not slip,* but he went on smoothly.

Ver. 38. *I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again till I had consumed them.*] He got complete victories over the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Ammonites. (See chap. viii. and x. of this book.)

Ver. 39. *I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise.*] Gave them such a blow, that they were not able to renew the fight.

Yea, they are fallen under my feet.] Submitted themselves unto him and served him. (See x. 19.)

Ver. 40. *For thou hast girded me with strength to the battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.*] This was remarkably fulfilled in the rebellion of Absalom; when he was in a feeble condition, and had but few followers: but God gave them courage to fight, and such success in the battle, that they routed his army; and all Israel was brought under his obedience. (See chap. xviii.)

Ver. 41. *Thou hast also given me the necks of my enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.*] This also was literally fulfilled, when Sheba raised a new rebellion; and his head was thrown over the wall of Abel to Joab, (chap. xx.)

Ver. 42. *They looked, but there was none to save.*] In Psal. xviii. it is, *they cried:* which may signify, that they sought for help from their allies and confederates: but to no purpose.

Even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.] And it was too late, when other help failed them, to seek for help from God: for he had deserted them, and would not hear their prayers.

Ver. 43. *Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth.*] In Psal. xviii. the words are, *as the dust before the wind.* He so entirely vanquished them, that they had no

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more power than the small dust of the earth: which is tossed up and down with every blast of wind.

I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad.] In the forenamed Psalm, *I did cast them out as the dirt in the street:* that is, made them as contemptible as the dirt in the street, which every one tramples under his feet.

Ver. 44. *Thou hast also delivered me from the strivings of the people, thou hast made me the head of the heathen.*] The first part of these words relates to the union of the people of Israel and Judah under his government, after long contentions between them, (v. 1, 2, &c.) The other part to the enlargement of his kingdom, by subduing his neighbouring heathen people under him, (chap. viii. 10.)

A people whom I have not known shall serve me.] Such as the Syrians of Zobah, and Rehob, and Ish-tob, and Maacah: of which David, it is likely, had no knowledge, till they came to help the Ammonites, (x. 8.)

Ver. 45. *Strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient to me.*] The very report of his victories made some heartily submit themselves unto him: and others dissembled their hostility, and offered him their service, (x. 19.)

Ver. 46. *Strangers shall fade away.*] Fall as withered leaves do from the trees.

They shall be afraid out of their close places.] Distrusting their strong holds, that they came creeping out with fear, to surrender up themselves into his hands.

Ver. 47. *The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock.*] To him he desires all the praise may be ascribed; in whose eternal power alone he still confided.

And exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.] He desires again the Lord might be magnified with the highest praises: who had not only preserved him from perishing, but exalted him to be king of Israel. For so the last words are in the Hebrew, *exalted be God, the rock of my salvation.* Who safely preserved and delivered him; and now advanced him most graciously to the highest dignity.

Ver. 48. *It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me.*] He did not avenge himself, but left it to God to plead his cause: who not only punished those that were injurious to him, but brought many nations under his empire.

Ver. 49. *And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me.*] In these words David made some small alteration, when he inserted this hymn into the book of Psalms for public use. Of which, Abarbinel endeavours to give a reason; but he seems too curious in his observations. The plainest and most certain of which is this; that the first part of these words respect the nations whom he subdued; who were properly his enemies: and the latter the children of Israel, when they rose up against him to dethrone him.

Thou hast delivered me from the violent man.] After he had delivered him from Saul, who violently persecuted him a long time.

Ver. 50. *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.*] He resolved to make his thankful acknowledgments unto God every where: so as to make those nations whom he had subdued sensible that he ascribed all his victories unto him. In honour of whom he would sing this perpetual song.

Ver. 51. *He is the tower of salvation for his king.*] As he was a king by God's appointment, and not by usurpation; so he trusted in him for the support of his authority.

And sheweth mercy unto his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.] And he hoped the same mercy which had promoted him to this dignity, would be continued to him and to his posterity till the coming of the great king Messiah: whose kingdom shall have no end. (See vii. 12, 13.)

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *NOW these are the last words of David.*] He spake other words recorded in the next chapter, and in the next book, before he died: but these were the last words that he spake by the Holy Ghost, as Abarbinel expounds them. Who observes, that after he had composed the book of Psalms, and added the hymn mentioned in the foregoing chapter unto it, then he spake these words; after which the influence of the Holy Spirit resided on him no more. The Chaldee paraphrase (which was always highly esteemed by the Jews) takes these words, as if they were a prophecy of the Messiah: for so it expounds them; *These are the words of the prophecy of David, which he prophesied of the consummation of all things, in the day of consolation, which is to come.*

David the son of Jesse said.] He remembers his low condition, when God was pleased to make choice of him to be a king.

The man who was raised up on high.] From feeding his father's sheep, to rule the people of Israel.

The anointed of the God of Jacob.] The Chaldee hath it, *Anointed by the Word of the God of Jacob.*

The sweet Psalmist of Israel, said.] Who was inspired to compose many delightful hymns in the praises of God.

Ver. 2. *The Spirit of God spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*] He would not have those hymns, nor what he spake now, looked upon as human compositions: but as proceeding from a Divine influence, conferred upon him by the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 3. *The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me.*] By Nathan or by Samuel.

He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.] Or, as we render it in the margin, *Be thou ruler over,* &c. which the Chaldee expounds of the Messiah in this manner, *The faithful God spake* (so he interprets the word *Rock*), *I will constitute to me a king, he is the Messiah, who shall arise, and reign in the fear of the Lord.* But this relates first to David, the type of Christ; who was taught to rule justly, and in the fear of God: that is, in the exact observance of all the Divine laws. Or, as Abarbinel interprets it, *When he that rules men is just, then the fear of the Lord will rule and have dominion in the earth:* for all the people are apt to tread in the steps of their king: so that when he that rules is just, it is as if he did not rule, but the fear of the Lord ruled in the earth.

Ver. 4. *And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth.*] The dominion of the just (as the same Abarbinel interprets it) shall be as the morning light, when the sun ariseth, and the light continually increases.

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Even a morning without clouds.] Which hinder the rays of the sun from piercing through unto the earth.

As the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.] We have in this translation quite transposed the Hebrew words, where they run thus, *From splendour and from rain, grass out of the earth.* The sense of which Abarbinel thinks is this, It shall be such a morning, in which there is sometimes sunshine, and sometimes showers of rain, to make grass spring out of the earth.

Ver. 5. *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.*] Which he thus interprets; Although the kingdom of a just man, by little and little, grows and increases; and sometimes is clouded, and sometimes the light shines upon it: the kingdom of David shall not be so, but God hath made a perpetual covenant, &c.

For this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he makes it not to grow.] Or, as he interprets it, This is all my salvation, and my desire, that he would not make it grow or shoot up (for that supposes it to be buried), but that, as was said before, it may always remain in an equal manner ordered and conserved.

It must be acknowledged, that there are no words so obscure in this book as these two verses. The sense of which Ludovicus de Dieu seems to me to have most clearly opened:—The stability and perpetuity of his kingdom, saith he, David amplifies by a comparison from three natural things, which are very grateful to men, but not constant and stable; in a settled order and sure. For the sun arises, but goes down again; and the morning may be clear, but clouds afterward arise; and the tender grass springs up, but withers away. Not so, saith he, is my kingdom before God. It is flourishing, like all these, but perpetual: for he hath made an everlasting covenant with me; though some afflictions have befallen me; and he hath not made all my salvation and desire to grow. So he makes the first *caph* of similitude to stand for three; and to be repeated thrice in this manner:—

"The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake concerning me; The just man ruleth among men: he ruleth in the fear of God. And as the sun ariseth, with a shining light; as the morning is without clouds, by reason of its splendour; as from rain the tender grass springs out of the earth: yet (or truly) so is not my house with God. Because he hath made an everlasting covenant with me; disposed in all things, and well kept and preserved in that order. Although he doth not make all my salvation and desire to grow (that is, though some adversities happen to me and my family), yet that always remains, which, in the covenant of God made with me, is in all things orderly, disposed, and preserved."

Ver. 6. *But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands.*] The kingdom of impious men shall not be like the kingdom of the house of David: being so far from being like to grass, which is useful, that they are rather like thorns: which are rejected as hurtful and pernicious. That is, such wicked men are not fit for human society.

Ver. 7. *But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and with the staff of a spear.*] If any body will meddle with them, it must be at his peril. For so the word *jimmale* (which we translate *fenced*) signifies *shall be filled*, with the iron and the staff of a spear. Spears are never used to cut down thorns; but iron gives one a sore wound, like that which a man receives from a spear, when it runs into his body, iron and wood withal. So the same De Dieu very judiciously.

And they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the same place.] Therefore men burn them with fire, in the same place where they grow: and so wicked men are destroyed, where they think themselves most secure. Which the Targum applies to the judgment of the great day, saying, *Their punishment is in the hand of man; but they shall be burnt up utterly, when the house of the great judgment appears: that they may sit on the throne of judgment, to judge the world.*

Ver. 8. *These be the names of the mighty men whom David had.*] Now follows a catalogue of those valiant men who helped to raise David to his dignity, and preserve him in it: being continually with him in all his wars. There is a list of them in 1 Chron. xi. very different from this in several things. But Abarbinel thinks that it creates no difficulty, if we do but observe, that there he distinguishes them into three classes: those that had always been with him; and they that came to him to Ziklag, a little before he was made king of Judah; and they that came to him to Hebron, after he was made king of all Israel. All whose memories were fit to be preserved: but here, in this book, the Divine writer intended only to mention the most excellent heroes, who were always with him in his wars: and for whose sake he composed the precedent song of praises to God.

The Tachmonite that sat in the seat.] Or, as it is translated in the margin, *Josheb-boshebat the Tachmonite:* for so he is called in 1 Chron. xi. 11. *Ishobeam;* which may well be thought the same name abbreviated. He *sat in the seat* (as we translate it here) in the council of war; next to Joab: being, it is thought, his lieutenant-general. For that he was one of the Sanhedrin, who sat in the seat of judgment, as some would have it, is not probable: though it is likely these were men of great wisdom as well as valour: and this man being called a Chachmonite, Abarbinel thinks it was because he was a man of learning, being given to study as well as fighting; for in Hebrew the word *chacham* signifies *a wise man:* as this was no question in military affairs, if not in affairs of state, and other sorts of wisdom.

Chief among the captains.] The principal commander, as I said, under Joab. Who is not here mentioned, though he was a great man, inferior to none of these: but had stained himself by the base murder of two great persons, Abner and Amasa. Which some take to be the reason why he had not the honour to be put into the number of those worthies who served David.

(The same was Adino the Ezrite).] It is thought he had two names, and was of the family of the Ezrites: though Abarbinel will have his name to have been Adinohaezri.

He lift up his spear.] These words are supplied out of 1 Chron. xi. 11.

Against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.] In that place of the Chronicles it is said he killed three hundred: that is, after the slaughter he made in one battle of eight hundred; but killed in another (as Kimchi understands it) three hundred.

Ver. 9. *And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the*

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Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David.] He was a Benjamite, for Ahoah was one of his sons, (1 Chron. viii. 4.)

When they defied the Philistines.] As Goliath had done the Israelites, (1 Sam. xvii. 1.)

That were there gathered together to battle.] In Pasdammim, as we read 1 Chron. xi. 17. which is the same with Ephes-dammim, 1 Sam. xvii. 1.

And the men of Israel were gone away.] Fled from before the Philistines, as it is explained 1 Chron. xi. 13.

Ver. 10. *He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary.*] With the slaughter that he made.

And his hand clave unto his sword.] Being all besmeared with blood; which drying by the heat of it, made the sword cleave to his hand.

And the Lord wrought a great victory that day.] Like that of Shamgar, Judg. iii. *ult.* and of Samson, xv. 13. where I have shewn these are not incredible stories; God inspiring men with wonderful courage, and striking a terror into their enemies. There were men in ancient times of prodigious strength, mentioned by Pliny, lib. vii. Nat. Histor. cap. 20.

And the people returned after him only to spoil.] They that fled rallied again, when they saw the wonders he did: and followed after him, not to fight, but only to partake of the spoil.

Ver. 11. *And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite.*] Who is not expressly mentioned in the book of the Chronicles; but plainly implied to be engaged in this great action. For it is said, 1 Chron. xi. 14. that *they set themselves*, &c. that is, Shammah and Eleazar, who joined in this enterprise. But this place in Samuel teaches us, that Shammah, the son of Agee, had the chief hand in it: and therefore it is ascribed to him.

And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop.] Or, as we translate it in the margin, *for forage.* For so Ralbag interprets the Hebrew word *chajja* (which Kimchi takes to be a city), that they came to get some sustenance out of the field.

Where was a piece of ground full of lentiles.] In the Chronicles it is, *full of barley.* In which there is no difficulty, one part of the field being sown with *lentiles*, and the other part with *barley.*

And the people fled from the Philistines.] Fearing to defend the place.

Ver. 12. *But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines.*] So that they could neither burn the corn, nor carry it away, nor tread it down.

And the Lord wrought a great victory.] By his hand: who was one of the three most mighty men, though not particularly named in the book of the Chronicles. It being the manner of the Scripture, as the Jews observe, to propound that briefly in one place, which hath been at large explained in another: as this action of Shammah is here in this book.

Ver. 13. *And three of the thirty chiefs.*] Or, as it is in the margin, *three captains over the thirty.* Not the three beforementioned, but the three that follow: who were not so great as the first three; but yet greater than any of the thirty whom they commanded.

Went down, and came to David in the harvest-time.] Or rather, as the Hebrew words are, *at harvest.* That is, saith Abarbinel, the Philistines came to destroy the fruits of the earth, that they might famish the Israelites: whereupon David raised an army to protect and defend them in reaping of their harvest when they went about it.

Unto the cave of Adullam.] A place where he had hid himself under the persecution of Saul, (1 Sam. xxii. 1.) and where he now fortified himself against the Philistines: who in the beginning of his reign came with great forces against him. For it is plain from 1 Chron. xi. 15. that there was a rock or strong hold there.

And the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.] See 2 Sam. v. 17, 18.

Ver. 14. *And David was then in the hold.*] As in the place abovementioned; near Adullam, (1 Sam. xxii. 4.)

And the garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem.] They had possessed themselves of this place, and put a garrison into it.

Ver. 15. *And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the waters of Beth-lehem, which are by the gate!*] The weather being very hot (as it used to be in harvest-time), David was very thirsty, and said to some about him, how glad he should be of a draught of the waters of Beth-lehem: where he was born, and had lived a long time; and therefore had been accustomed to them, and knew how very pleasant and refreshing they were. But he did not speak this, as Abarbinel observes, to the end that any men should venture their lives, to fetch him some of this water.

Ver. 16. *And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and brought it to David.*] This they did without David's knowledge; and the forenamed author observes three wonderful things in this action. First, that three men could break through the whole host of the Philistines: and when they had so done, durst stay to draw water out of the well: and then carry it away with a high hand, through the same host, and bring it to David. To which he might have added a fourth thing, that they attempted this at the very gate of Beth-lehem: where, no doubt, the garrison of the Philistines kept the strongest guard.

Nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord.] Not in that place, where it was brought to him: but kept it (as Abarbinel thinks) till he had opportunity to go to the altar, and there poured it out unto God. Some fancy that now was the feast of tabernacles, when they used to draw water, and pour it out: and David made use of this for that purpose. (See 1 Sam. vii. 6.) There are mystical senses which the Jews please themselves withal about this water, with which I shall not trouble the reader.

Ver. 17. *And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it.*] He looked upon it no longer as water, but as the blood of those men who fetched it with the peril of their lives: and the blood of every thing belonged to the Lord; and was proper to be offered unto him. Some carry this so far to another sense, that they imagine David hereby shewed it was not material water he longed for; but the Messiah, who had the water of life. Who he knew should be born at Beth-lehem: which the Philistines therefore should not be able to destroy.

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These things did these three mighty men.] They all joined in this hazardous exploit: but now follows what they did singly.

Ver. 18. *And Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three.*] The chief of those three mighty men beforementioned. (See 1 Chron. xi. 20.)

And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three.] That is, was most eminent and famous of those three.

Ver. 19. *Was he not most honourable of them? therefore he was their captain.*] That is, no doubt, he was worthy to be the leader of them.

Ver. 20. *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel.*] He was descended from valiant ancestors: whom he far excelled. Kabzeel was in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 21.)

Who had done many acts.] As Abishai also had done (for he succoured David when a giant had like to have killed him), but their greatest acts only are here mentioned.

He slew two lion-like men of Moab.] The Hebrew word *ariel* signifies *a lion of God*, that is, *a great lion*. And it was the name among the Moabites for a very valiant man; who at this day, among the Arabians, is called *Assedollabi*, a lion of God, as Bochartus hath observed out of a great many authors in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 1.

He went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow.] This action was the greater, because in the time of snow lions are fiercer for want of prey, and are then also fullest of heat and vigour. But it is not likely that Benaiah went to encounter this lion merely to shew his bravery; but, as some think, this was a lion that had done much mischief to the country; which moved him to expose himself to this combat with it. But Bochartus doth not think this likely; for he needed not have hazarded his life, but have called others unto his assistance, to destroy this ravenous beast. He thinks, therefore, that in a deep snow, the lion took shelter in a cave (for so the word we translate *pit* sometimes signifies), and that Benaiah being abroad in that snowy season, came into the same place to defend himself from the severity of the weather; where he was necessitated to enter into a combat with the lion; whom he found there, and came with open mouth to devour him. He compares him to Alexander the Great, upon whom a lion of great bigness running, he gave him such a wound as killed him. So did Lysimachus with another. (See Hieroz. par. i. lib. iii. cap. 5.) Abarbinel observes three great things in this action. First, that he slew a lion, which is the fiercest of all wild beasts: secondly, he slew him in a pit, where he could not turn himself as he pleased: and, thirdly, in a time of snow, when his hands and feet were cold and numb; which hindered their vital operations.

Ver. 21. *And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man.*] A person of great stature. (See 1 Chron. xi. 23.)

And the Egyptian had a spear in his hand.] See there.

And he went down with a staff.] Such as men used to walk with.

And plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.] This shews him to have been both a fearless person, and of great skill and dexterity, in managing a combat either with man or beast.

Ver. 22. *These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among the three mighty men.*] Who the third was is not said plainly, either here or in the book of the Chronicles.

Abarbinel thinks he might possibly join with the other two, but did no mighty matter by himself; and so is not mentioned. But perhaps Adina, the son of Shiza, might be the third; because it is said, 1 Chron. xi. 42. that he was "a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him." Which seems to signify that he was above the thirty, as Abishai and Benaiah were.

Ver. 23. *He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the first three.*] Was not comparable to Adino, and Eleazar, and Shammah, who were like lions; as these were like lions' whelps, as Strigelius glosses.

And David set him over his guard.] See chap. viii. 18.

Ver. 24. *And Asahel, the brother of Joab, was one of the thirty.*] Now follow the names of thirty valiant men, but not equal to the worthies beforenamed. Asahel seems to have been the chief of the thirty; and so some translate the words, *he was above the thirty:* and so might be the last of the three of the second order of worthies.

Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem.] Concerning whom we find nothing recorded but this: That he was born and bred (it is likely) in the same place with David.

Ver. 25. *Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite.*] The first of these is called Shammoth in 1 Chron. xi. 27. and he is said to be an Harorite. Which is a very small variation, *resch* being put in the place of *daleth*, as is very common in Scripture, according to the various pronunciation of words in divers parts of the country. There is a greater difference in the name that follows, and in many others; it being common, as Abarbinel observes, for men to have two names. But it is plain the same persons are here mentioned that are in the book of Chronicles; though there (as he notes) are more added. For the author of that book reckons up all the chief commanders in the army; so that, though they were not heroical persons in themselves, yet, being great commanders over others, Ezra thought fit to mention them. But here, in the book of Samuel, the prophet only numbers those that were of themselves great heroes, not minding the chief commanders in the army who were not so.

Ver. 26. *Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikketh the Tekoite.*] None of the memorable acts of these, or of the following worthies, are recorded; therefore all that I can say of them is this: That when God intended to raise a king to a great height, as he did David, he raised up the spirits of several great men to assist him. Thus he did with Alexander the Great, who had Clitus, Parmenio, Antigonus, Ptolemæus, Seleucus, Craterus, and other brave men to accompany him in all his enterprises; but David (it may be truly observed), in a less kingdom, had far more.

Ver. 27. *Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite.*

Ver. 28. *Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite.*

Ver. 29. *Heleb the son of Baanah a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin.*

Ver. 30. *Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash.*

Ver. 31. *Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite.*

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Ver. 32. *Eliahba the Shaalbonite; of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan.*

Ver. 33. *Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite.*

Ver. 34. *Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite.*

Ver. 35. *Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite.*

Ver. 36. *Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite.*

Ver. 37. *Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armour-bearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah.*

Ver. 38. *Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite.*

Ver. 39. *Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.*] Here are only thirty and six named; therefore Joab is supposed, by Abarbinel, to be the other; who was the head of them all.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *AND again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.*] Because they had followed Absalom, says Abarbinel, and afterward Sheba the son of Bichri: for which they had not been yet sufficiently punished. But it is more likely, it was for their luxury, now that plenty was restored to them, after the sore famine that fell upon them upon the score of the Gibeonites.

And he moved David against them.] Or, *David was moved;* that is, by Satan, as it is expounded in the first book of the Chronicles, xxi. 1. But Abarbinel thinks it is as if he had said, The anger of the Lord, which was kindled against Israel, moved David, &c. That is, the same sin which made God angry with Israel, was the cause that David was seduced in this thing, that they might be punished.

To say, Go, number Israel and Judah.] To give command that an account should be taken of the number of all the people.

Ver. 2. *For the king said to Joab the captain of the host.*] Accordingly it no sooner came into his heart, but he gave orders about it to the principal commander of his army.

Which was with him] Who always, when they were in war, attended on him.

Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.] From one end of the country to the other. For Dan (as I have before observed) was the utmost bounds of it in the north, as Beer-sheba was in the south.

And number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.] Joab was to take proper officers with him, to assist him in this business; so that there might be an exact account given. (See ver. 4.)

Ver. 3. *And Joab said unto the king, Now the Lord thy God add unto the people (how many soever they be) a hundred-fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it.*] It appears by this, that Joab was a great courtier, as well as a great captain, who knew how to divert the king from what he did not like, if good words and wishes would have done it.

But why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?] For which he thought there was no reason; and as it would be troublesome and chargeable, so there might be much danger in it; as he expresses it in 1 Chron. xxi. 3.

Ver. 4. *Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host.*] Who joined, it seems, with Joab to divert the king from this purpose: in which he was fixed and immoveable.

And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.] It is most likely, that their inferior officers went with the captains to expedite the business.

Ver. 5. *And they passed over Jordan.*] They went first into the eastern part of the country; and so by the northern coasts to the west; and then to the south.

And pitched in Aroer.] These words seem to import, that they pitched their tents in the field; and thither summoned the neighbouring towns to come into them; which was very troublesome, and at last proved grievous; as appears by the book of Chronicles.

On the right side of the city that lieth in the midst of the river of Gad, and towards Jazer.] We no where read of such a river; which, in the margin, is translated the *valley of Gad.* But Jazer was a town in that tribe, (Numb. xxxii. 35.)

Ver. 6. *And they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi.*] It is in vain to seek after this land, which is not mentioned in the book of Joshua, but it is likely was near to Gilead; and had been lately recovered, some think, from other people, and now inhabited by the Israelites. (See the margin of our Bibles.)

And they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon.] Not to the city of Zidon, for that was not in their power, but to the coast about it.

Ver. 7. *And came to the strong hold of Tyre.*] To the territory near it.

And to all the cities of the Hivites, and Canaanites.] Who lived in those north-west parts of the country.

And they went out to the south of Judah.] Having taken account of all the towns upon the sea-coast (which was in the west), they turned to the south, into the tribe of Judah.

Even to Beer-sheba.] Which was in the utmost limits of the country on that side.

Ver. 8. *So when they had gone through all the land.*] But not numbered all the people; for the work grew so tedious, that they omitted Levi and Benjamin, as we read 1 Chron. xxi. 6.

They came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.] They could not well dispatch it in less time; an account being to be taken of every city and village in the whole country.

Ver. 9. *And Joab gave up the number of the people unto the king.*] All the officers brought in their particular sums to Joab; who cast them up, and they amounted in all to the number following.

And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword.] They did not, it seems, reckon women and children, and old men; nor such as were not fit for war.

And the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.] There is a great difference between this account and that in the Chronicles. For there (1 Chron. xxi. 5.) the men of Israel are said to be three hundred thousand more than are here mentioned; and, on the contrary, the men of Judah are said to be thirty thousand less. Of the former of which there is a plain account, that in this book the standing legions are not numbered: which were very well known, they serving under twelve commanders so many months;

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(1 Chron. xxvii. 1, &c.) but in the book of the Chronicles all these are taken into the number there mentioned. For the Jews observe in Halicoth Olam, that there being twenty-four thousand who waited every month (which makes in all two hundred eighty-eight thousand), allowing a thousand officers (as we cannot well allow less) to every twenty-four thousand, there will be the twelve thousand wanting; which, added to the eight hundred eighty-eight thousand, make just three hundred thousand: which, added to the eight hundred thousand here mentioned, make up the eleven hundred thousand mentioned in the Chronicles. The like account Bochartus gives of the next difficulty, that if twenty-four thousand legionary soldiers be added of the tribe of Judah to the four hundred and seventy thousand, it comes near to five hundred thousand, (Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 38.) But others think there is no need of this; it being usual in Scripture to mention a round sum: either of men or of years, when some were wanting. So that though there were no more than four hundred and seventy thousand, yet they might be said to be five hundred thousand. Or, as they say in Halicoth Olam, the tribe of Benjamin (who were neighbours to Judah) are reckoned here in this book, who were omitted in the Chronicles. (1 Chron. xxi. 6.)

Ver. 10. *And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people.*] When he ordered it, he was possessed with other thoughts; and did not seriously reflect upon what he had done, until God touched his heart with a sense of his guilt after the sin was committed.

And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done.] It is made a great doubt by interpreters what this sin was, and wherein the heinousness of it consisted. The common opinion is, that as there was something of vanity and ostentation in him, when he had a mind to know how populous his country was, so it quite made him forget the half shekel that was due upon such occasions, by the appointment of the law, Exod. xxx. 12. And this was no small sin, not to pay God his dues, in such plenty and abundance as they now enjoyed. But if that was the meaning of Moses, it cannot well be thought that David was either ignorant, or unmindful of it, having made the law his study day and night. Bertram therefore thinks his fault was, that he numbered those who were under twenty years old, contrary to the order in the law, Exod. xxx. 14. xxxviii. 26, &c. but I see no foundation for this; but rather the quite contrary is asserted in the book of the Chronicles. Therefore Dr. Lightfoot fancies David had a covetous project in his mind, to lay a capitation tax (as we now speak) upon every poll throughout the kingdom. But such conjectures being without ground, some reject all other interpretations, and rely upon this; that the numbering of the people was a thing contrary to the fundamental promise made by God to Abraham, that his seed should increase so, as to be like the stars for multitude: which is given as a reason why the number of the people was not taken exactly, 1 Chron. xxvii. 23. and seems to imply, that there was a general notion received among the Jews, that since God promised to increase them beyond number, none ought to go about to take the number of them, for this might seem to savour of infidelity, and mistrust of God's promise. But those words on which this reason relies (in 1 Chron. xxvii. 23.) only give a reason why David did not number all from twenty years old, and under: which if he had gone about to do (*i. e.* reckon the whole nation), it might have seemed to cross the promise: but since it was only those who were above twenty years old whom he ordered to be numbered, I cannot look upon it as a contempt or mistrust of God's word: but, after all, I think we must content ourselves with what Ralbag says (whom Abarbinel after the examination of other opinions follows), that David being the anointed of the Lord, and the sweet singer of Israel, made flesh his arm, and confided in the number of his people: in which such a king as he should not have placed his confidence, but in the Lord his God; whom none can resist, and can save by few, as well as by many. Unto which Abarbinel adds, that the greatness of a sin is not always to be measured by the sin itself, but by the quality and dignity of him that committeth it: as Moses and Aaron were punished for a small sin, which excluded them from the good land: which was not proportionable to the sin, but to the condition of the offenders, who should have given a better example to the people. Thus he.

And now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.] Since he condemned himself, and begged pardon, he hoped he might escape the punishment which he deserved. But he was deceived; because not only he, but his people, had offended, and upon other accounts deserved to be punished.

Ver. 11. *For when David was up in the morning, the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying.*] The words seem to import that David was not touched in conscience, till Gad came and told him how angry God was with him. He is called David's *seer*, because he was his domestic prophet, (who is the same with a *seer*, 1 Sam. ix. 9.) with whom he was wont to advise in all difficult cases, (1 Sam. xxii. 5.) and kept a record of his memorable acts, (1 Chron. xxix. 29.)

Ver. 12. *Go and say unto David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things; choose one of them, that I may do it unto thee.*] Now it had been a proper time, as Abarbinel observes, for David to have fallen down before God, and deprecated his displeasure in those words, (ver. 10.) "I have sinned greatly in what I have done," &c. But he saw the sentence was passed upon him absolutely; and therefore he submits unto it.

Ver. 13. *So Gad came and told him.*] That he was sent by God with a message to him.

And said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land?] In the book of the Chronicles only *three* years of famine are propounded; which is far more likely than *seven:* for it better agrees with the three months' flight before his enemies, and the three days' pestilence. And therefore, not only Grotius, but Bochartus also here read *three years*, following the LXX. who have ἔτη τρία, whom most of the ancients follow, as Bochartus observes in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 38. Yet Josephus here hath *seven* years: and many think that Gad at first propounded seven years: but afterward, at David's prayer, shortened them to three. Other solutions are in every interpreter, who adhere to this reading of *seven* years. (See Buxtorf's Vindic. Verit. Hebr. par. ii. cap. 2. and cap. 8. p. 523.)

Or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy

land?] These were the three sore judgments wherewith God commonly afflicted them for their sins; who now was so gracious, as to give him his choice which of them he would suffer: for one of them was peremptorily resolved.

Now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.] There seems to be no great need to take time to consider which of these to choose; the last being the shortest, and an immediate stroke from the hand of God, who is full of tender mercy and compassion. But in this Gad expresses the clemency of God, who would not hastily inflict any punishment upon him.

Ver. 14. *And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait; let us now fall into the hand of the Lord (for his mercies are great), and let me not fall into the hand of man.*] He seems to leave it to God to send either famine or pestilence (for both come from God's hand), and desires only that men might not be the instruments of his punishment. For as they are wont to be cruel, so they make no distinction between good and bad, but destroy all alike. This is admirably expressed by the son of Sirach, in Ecclus. ii. 17, 18. *They that fear the Lord will prepare their heart, and humble their souls in his sight, saying, We will fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men; for as his majesty is, so is his mercy.*

Ver. 15. *So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel.*] The symptoms of which were very diverse, if we may believe Josephus. For some, he saith, died suddenly in intolerable pain: others wasted away, and left nothing to be buried but skin and bones, their bodies being consumed by the disease: others were suddenly choked, or struck blind, &c.

From the morning.] For that time when Gad delivered the message, and David made his choice; which was in the morning, as we read before, (ver. 11.)

Even to the time appointed.] There are those who by *the time appointed* understand to the end of three days, mentioned by Gad, as the time appointed by the Lord for the continuance of this plague. But this is quite contrary to what follows, that God repented him of the evil; and commanded the angel that smote the people to stay his hand. Therefore the LXX. translate it better, ἕως ὥρας ἀρίστου, *until dinner-time:* and so Procopius Gazæus. Certain it is, that *moed* signifies some part of that day when the plague began: and that must be either noon, or the evening. But, as Bochartus hath observed, the morning and evening are the parts of the day most opposite in Scripture (of which he gives many instances), and therefore so he here understands it, that it continued from morning to the evening. For *moed* properly signifies an assembly: and therefore the *time moed* he thinks is the time when the people met for evening prayer; about the ninth hour of the day. Which prayer, before the building of the temple, was made at the tabernacle, or in their synagogues. And therefore the tabernacle is frequently called *ohel moed:* and the synagogues are called in Psal. lxxiv. 18. *Moade El.* So that he makes account this pestilence lasted no more than nine hours: which was the eighth part of three days.

And there died of the people, from Dan to Beer-sheba, seventy thousand men.] If it had raged three days, and in every nine hours had killed so many, above the third part of those who had been numbered would have died by this plague. But, as Kimchi here observes, by the great mercy of God, the time was contracted. It is a frivolous observation of some of the Jews, that because it is not said seventy thousand *anashim*, but only *isch*, which commonly signifies a single person, that Abishai died of this plague, who was worth seventy thousand of the common people. Nor doth the observation of Grotius seem to be altogether true; who, in his second book, (de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 21. sect. 17.) saith, "Hæc pœna erat non populi, sed Davidis;" *This was the punishment, not of the people, but of David:* quoting that saying of an ancient Christian writer (Quæst. ad Orthodoxos), Πικροτάτη τιμωρία τῶν ἡμαρτηκότων βασιλέων, ἡ τιμωρία τοῦ λαοῦ, *The bitterest punishment of delinquent kings, is that which is inflicted upon their people.* But it is certain the people here had also offended: for it is said in the very beginning of this chapter, that God was angry with Israel. And as for what David saith, (ver. 17.) *These sheep, what have they done?* it is spoken out of his great affection to them; whose offences he did not know so well as his own: and therefore desired they might be spared, and he punished.

Ver. 16. *And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said unto the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough; stay now thine hand.*] God did not change his mind, but only revoked that which he had decreed upon a certain condition; which was, that three days' pestilence should come upon the country, unless David and the people repented; which he seeing they did, (1 Chron. xxi. 16.) he shortened the time, and would not let the angel proceed above an eighth part of it.

Ver. 17. *And David spake unto the Lord, when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done?*] Like a good man, he reflected only on his own sin, in numbering the people; but did not think of theirs in deposing him lately, and setting up Absalom (which Theodoret, Procopius Gazæus, and others, think was the crime for which they were punished), which he had forgiven, but God thought fit to punish; who by their silence may be thought to have approved the fact of David. And besides, the loss of so many people was a punishment of the king himself, as was before observed.

Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.] That is, against his kindred, who did not dissuade him from the vanity of numbering the people, but perhaps encouraged him in it.

Ver. 18. *And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him.*] By the express command of the Lord, (1 Chron. xxi. 18, 19.)

Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the thrashing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.] This thrashing-floor was on the Mount Moriah; the place where Abraham offered up his son, and where the temple was built by Solomon. (See 2 Chron. iii. 1.) Of which Eupolemus, a heathen writer, takes notice, saying, that God shewed David by an angel the place where the temple should be built. (See Eusebius's Præpar. Evang. lib. ix. cap. 30.) The Jews will have it, that it was here Abel and Cain offered their sacrifices; (see Selden, lib. iii. de Synedr. p. 199. 431.) nay, that it was the place where Adam was created; according to a saying of their doctors, "Adam was created out of the place of his expiation." (See G. Vorstius upon Pirke Eliezer, p. 163.)

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Ver. 19. *And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded.*] That is, he went the next moment after he received the command.

Ver. 20. *And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on towards him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.*] As the manner was, and still is, in the eastern countries.

Ver. 21. *And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come up unto thy servant?*] It may be he thought it too great an honour; and therefore desired to know the meaning of it.

And David said, To buy the thrashing-floor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people.] By offering a sacrifice to appease his anger; as he himself had ordered, (1 Chron. xxi. 26, 27.)

Ver. 22. *And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt-sacrifices, and thrashing-instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.*] For when the angel appeared there, he was thrashing wheat, which he offered likewise to David for a meat-offering, (1 Chron. xxi. 20. 23.) And the *instruments of the oxen* were their yokes, and such as they drew after them to press forth the corn.

Ver. 23. *All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king.*] The words in the Hebrew are, *these things gave Araunah the king unto the king.* From whence some infer, that before the taking of Jerusalem he was the king of the Jebusites; or, a man of the greatest authority among them, like a king; or was descended from the blood royal of the Jebusites, as Dr. Lightfoot expresses it. But neither the Greek, nor the Syriac, nor the Arabic copies have the word *king:* nor was it in many of the Vulgar till Sixtus's correction; nor in the Chaldee paraphrast in the time of Kimchi, who cites it thus; *Araunah gave to the king what the king asked of him.* And, as Bochartus observes, Araunah (or Ornan) being mentioned fourteen times in the holy books, it is a wonder he should not be styled a king, but only here. (Hieroz. par. i. lib. i. cap. 38.) But it is likely he was a very rich man, as Josephus reports: whom the king spared when he took the fort of Zion; either because he was a lover of the Israelites, or had done some good office unto David.

And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept thee.] He thought himself abundantly satisfied, if God pleased to grant David's request; which he beseeched him to do; for no doubt he was a proselyte, earnestly desiring the happiness of the nation, into which he was incorporated.

Ver. 24. *And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God of that which cost me nothing.*] Whence is that of Solomon, (Prov. iii. 9.) "Honour the Lord with thy substance;" which the Greek thus translates, Τίμα τὸν Κύριον ἀπὸ τῶν δικαίων πόνων. *Honour the Lord out of thy honest labours;* that is, out of that which thou hast acquired by thy honest industry.

So David bought the thrashing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.] In the Chronicles we read, according to our translation, that he gave him *six hundred shekels of gold by weight,* which Bochartus thus reconciles; that in one place he speaks of shekels of gold, and in the other of shekels of silver. Whose proportion is twelvefold; so that fifty shekels of gold are in value as much as six hundred shekels of silver. He quotes a place out of Plato in his Hipparchus, which proves that gold and silver held this proportion. And then he thus translates this place in Samuel, He bought the floor and the oxen *beceseph,* for money; *viz.* for *fifty golden shekels.* So the word *ceseph* often signifies *money* in general, of whatsoever metal it be; as appears from this very history, wherein David tells Ornan that he will buy the field of him, *beceseph malo,* which we translate, *at its full price,* 1 Chron. xxi. 24. And then it follows, he gave Ornan *shikle zahav, shekels of gold, mishkall shesh meoth, in value six hundred vulgar, or silver, shekels.* See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 38. where the word *mishkall* he acknowledges commonly signifies *weight;* yet here denotes *value:* as in 2 Sam. xii. 30. The design of Ezra being to shew, that the fifty shekels he gave for the floor and oxen were not silver (which were most common), but shekels of gold; every one of which was worth twelve of silver: so that those fifty shekels were equivalent to six hundred silver ones.

But there is a shorter way of solving this difficulty, by supposing, that for the thrashing-floor and the oxen he gave only fifty shekels of silver: but all the ground about it (out of which the courts of God's house were afterward made) cost him six hundred shekels of gold.

Ver. 25. *And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.*] Burnt-offerings were prayers to God that he would remove this plague: and peace-offerings were acknowledgments of God's goodness, who had already given David hopes of this mercy.

So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.] As plainly appeared by God's sending fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifices: and the angel also, who appeared with a flaming sword over Jerusalem, being commanded to put it up into his sheath, (1 Chron. xxi. 26, 27.) From hence David concluded God would be more placable in this place than any other; and therefore took counsel to build the temple here.

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THE

FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THESE two following books contain the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, from the beginning of Solomon's reign down to the captivity of Babylon: for the space of near six hundred years; taking into the account the history of the two foregoing books. It is highly probable that they were composed by Ezra, who extracted them out of the public records: which were kept of what passed in that nation; as we read of the book of the acts of Solomon, in this very book, xi. 41.: and frequently of the books of the kings of Israel, and of the kings of Judah; and of the book of Jehu, in which was written the acts of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 34. And Isaiah, we read, wrote the acts of Uzziah, first and last, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.: out of which, and such-like books, Ezra composed this brief history. In which there are several things that heathens themselves have taken notice of, as Huetius observes in his Demonstratio Evangelica, propos. iv. where he answers the trifling objections which some have made against the antiquity of these books.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *NOW David was old and stricken in years.*] For he was seventy years old, as we learn from 2 Sam. v. 4, 5.

And they covered him with clothes, but he got no heat.] His blood was so chilled, that he could not be warm in his bed, much less when he was up. Dr. Lightfoot thinks he was struck with a dead palsy.

Ver. 2. *Wherefore his servants.*] His physicians, it is most likely, that attended him.

Said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king.] Those are the words of the prime physician, in the name of the rest.

A young virgin; and let her stand before the king.] Or, minister unto him in the day-time: for the very sight of a beautiful virgin very much excites the natural spirits.

And let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom.] Become his wife, and in the night lie in the same bed close to him.

That my lord the king may get heat.] For nothing more effectually procures heat and healthful concoction than the application of a young body, even of a puppy, to the stomach all night: as Galen observes, in his fifth book of the Power of simple Medicines. For συμφυλότερα, καὶ οἰκειότερα πολὺ, *this warmth is nearer of kin to us, and more proper, than any other that can be invented:* as Victorinus Strigelius hath taken notice.

Ver. 3. *So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king.*] She being young, sprightly, and willing to be taken into his bed: for his other wives were grown too old to put any life into him.

Ver. 4. *And the damsel was very fair.*] Of an amiable countenance.

And cherished the king, and ministered to him; but the king knew her not.] Did not enjoy her as his wife; but she remained still a virgin: being his bedfellow only to keep him warm.

Ver. 5. *Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king.*] Taking advantage of his father's age and weakness (who he thought could not oppose it), he resolved to take possession of the kingdom: but the crown, as the Jews fancy, would not fit him.

And he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.] Just as Absalom had done, when he began to conspire against his father, 2 Sam. xv. 1.

Ver. 6. *And his father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?*] This was one of David's great faults, extraordinary indulgence unto his children: of whom he was so fond, that he seems to have overlooked their errors, and never to have chidden them for any thing they did amiss. And now in his old age this wickedness was more apparent; he growing naturally more remiss, careless, and sluggish.

And he also was a very goodly man.] And so the more likely to draw the people after him. For a noble aspect was always a qualification for the royal authority; as appears by the history of Saul, David, and Absalom.

And his mother bare him after Absalom.] He pretended to the crown, because Absalom being dead, he was next to him in order of birth. (See 2 Sam. iii. 3, 4.)

Ver. 7. *And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest.*] Whom, it is likely, he knew to be two discontented persons: the former upon the account of David's putting Amasa in his place; and the other because he saw Zadok in greater favour than himself.

And they, following Adonijah, helped him.] Furthered him in his design, as a means to secure themselves with the next heir.

Ver. 8. *But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged unto David, were not with Adonijah.*] The three first of these are well known to have been great favourites of David: and therefore Adonijah knew would not be for his turn. The two next, it is likely, were persons of note, who were perfectly in David's interest: and Shimei possibly may be the person whom Solomon preferred to a great office, (iv. 18.) though Abarbinel thinks he was Shimei who cursed David. (See upon the next chapter, ver. 8.) The *mighty men* here mentioned are those named in 2 Sam. xxiii. and his guards, who had served under David so long, and done such mighty acts in his reign, and under his conduct, that Adonijah had no hope of drawing them in to his party.

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Ver. 9. *And Adonijah slew sheep, and oxen, and fat cattle.*] Of the Hebrew word *meri*, which we translate *fat cattle*, see upon 2 Sam. vi. 13.

By the stone of Zoheleth which is by En-rogel.] The Hebrew word *Zohel* signifies a *slow motion*, as Bochart observes in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. i. cap. 9. from whence this stone had its name: the fullers here pressing out the water, which dropped from the clothes that they had washed in this well, called *Rogel*. Josephus saith the king's gardens lay near this well: which, out of him, is also affirmed by Procopius Gazæus.

And called all his brethren the king's sons.] Whose names are mentioned in 2 Sam. iii. 4, 5. and more largely in 1 Chron. iii. 4, 5, &c.

And all the men of Judah the king's servants.] Except those beforementioned, ver. 8. and again excepted, ver. 10. But all the rest of the family of David, and the principal persons of the tribe of Judah, with the high-priest, and the captain of the host, being present, there seemed to be nothing wanting to the making of him king, but only his anointing. For this seems to have been a federal feast; wherein they sware allegiance to Adonijah.

Ver. 10. *But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.*] It was a feast, I suppose, upon a great sacrifice: unto which none came but they who were invited.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign.*] It seems they were so bold as to proclaim him king.

And David our lord knoweth it not?] For it was secretly contrived between him and Joab, and the rest: without the privity of David or Bath-sheba.

Ver. 12. *Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thy own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.*] Whom he knew they would endeavour to cut off: as the person designed by David to be his successor.

Ver. 13. *Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, sware unto thy handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? Why then doth Adonijah reign?*] We do not read any where else of this oath; but no doubt he had solemnly sworn to her, that he would make her son his successor: God himself having designed him to that honour; as appears from 2 Sam. vii. 12. where God promises by Nathan to set upon his throne a son that should proceed from him: which plainly signified, none of his sons already born was to be the person. But more plainly, 1 Chron. xxii. 8—10, &c. he declares that God told him Solomon should reign after him, and build him a house, and thereupon he commanded all the princes of Israel to be assistant to him, ver. 17. and see xxviii. 5, 6. All this, I doubt not, was known to Adonijah; which made his crime the greater, in setting himself against the decree of Heaven: and he himself confesses as much in the next chapter, ver. 15.

Ver. 14. *Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.*] Which he knew would quicken the king, to give speedy orders about this matter.

Ver. 15. *And Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber.*] Being the king's wife, she had the privilege to come into his bedchamber, without asking leave, as Kimchi observes. Whereas Nathan did not appear before the king till they told him he was there to wait upon him, (ver. 23.)

And the king was very old.] And could not discern who it was that entered into the chamber.

And Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king.] And informed him, it is likely, that Bath-sheba was come into the room to speak with him.

Ver. 16. *And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance to the king.*] First bowed her head, and then her body: as the manner was even for their wives, as well as other persons.

And the king said, What wouldest thou?] She had signified, I suppose, to Abishag, that she had some petition to make to him.

Ver. 17. *And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the Lord thy God unto thy handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.*] David sware this, as Abarbinel thinks, when Absalom his eldest son rebelled against him. And the rather, because Nathan had told him (as I observed before), a child should proceed from him that should sit upon his throne: who therefore was then unborn. But all the rest, except Solomon, were born before this promise; and therefore he concluded were none of them designed by God to be his successors.

Ver. 18. *And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not.*] This she saith, that she might not seem to accuse David of breaking his oath: and that she might aggravate the crime of Adonijah, in presuming to usurp the throne while his father was alive, and without his knowledge.

Ver. 19. *And he hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.*] She very submissively calls herself his handmaid, and her son his servant: the more to win upon his affection unto those that humbly depended upon his pleasure.

Ver. 20. *And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit upon the throne of my lord the king after thee.*] This she said all Israel expected from the king, that she might free him from all fear of such a rebellion as Absalom raised; the people not being joined to Adonijah, but continuing in suspense, till the king had declared his mind about his successor. Thus Abarbinel. And this power of naming a successor continued for some time after him, as appears by the story of his grandson Rehoboam: who, though no great man, yet took upon him this authority of nominating a successor, and made of his youngest sons, *viz.* Abijah, king after him. (See 2 Chron. xi. 20. 22, &c.) But this custom did not last long; not being in use among their neighbours: as the story of the Moabites shews, 2 Kings iii. 27. Yet it was the manner of excellent princes among the Romans to appoint their successor, whom the people gladly received. So Augustus did: and M. Aurelius commends Nerva for so doing.

Ver. 21. *Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son So-*

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lomon shall be accounted offenders.] Guilty of death for aiming at the kingdom.

Ver. 22. *And, lo, while she talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.*] To confirm what she had said, according to his promise, (ver. 14.)

Ver. 23. *And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet.*] Whereupon Bath-sheba, it is likely, withdrew, as if she supposed he had some private message to deliver unto David.

And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.] The prophets themselves, as well as other men, gave the profoundest reverence to the king (as Maimonides observes), that they might teach all his subjects their duty. Nor was the high-priest excepted. (See Schickard de Jure Regni, cap. 4. Theor. 13.) The Hebrew word is used for *religious* worship, in Psal. xlv. 12. xcv. 6. but very often only for *political*, and that very anciently, in Gen. xxiii. 7. Ruth ii. 10. 2 Sam. xvi. 14. and many other places.

Ver. 24. *And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?*] He knew very well he had given no such order; but he said this to awaken the king, to consider how presumptuous Adonijah was.

Ver. 25. *For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captain of the host, and Abiathar the priest: and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah!*] By this time Nathan had received perfect intelligence, what was the design of that great feast; and they had not only consulted to raise Adonijah to the throne, but actually proclaimed him king. Which was more than Bath-sheba had told him.

Ver. 26. *But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called.*] For he knew they were all faithful to king David; and would follow his directions.

Ver. 27. *Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed it unto thy servant, who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?*] In a matter of this importance, he could not believe the king would act without his advice: whom he was wont to consult on other occasions; and who had acquainted him with the mind of God concerning Solomon.

Ver. 28. *And king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba.*] Who was withdrawn, as I said, into another room, upon the coming in of Nathan: or stood at a distance in the room where they were.

And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.] To understand his pleasure.

Ver. 29. *And the king sware, and said, As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress.*] Unto whom he was so much indebted, that it could not be thought he would take his name in vain: but she might trust him now that he so solemnly sware again to her.

Ver. 30. *Even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.*] He had not forgotten his former oath, which he now renews; and resolves immediately to put it in execution.

Ver. 31. *Then Bath-sheba bowed her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king.*] Most humbly acknowledged his goodness; by a lower reverence than she made before, (ver. 16.)

And said, Let my lord the king live for ever.] There could be no higher expression of love and thankfulness, than to desire never to see Solomon on the throne, if it were possible for David always to enjoy it.

Ver. 32. *And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.*] They were such trusty and resolute persons, that he knew would not fear to execute his commands.

Ver. 33. *And the king said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord.*] His constant guards, the Cherethites and Pelethites. (See ver. 38.)

And cause Solomon my son to ride upon my own mule.] The rest of David's sons were wont to ride upon mules, when they went abroad, (2 Sam. xiii. 29.) And Absalom rode upon a mule, when he was hanged in the oak, (xviii. 9.) But David had a mule peculiarly reserved for himself alone; on which Solomon being set, it was the beginning of his royal authority: for no private person whatsoever, as Abarbinel observes, might ride upon the king's mule. He also further notes, that David ordered him to ride upon a mule, and not upon a horse, because a horse is prepared for battle, (Prov. xxi. 31.) but a mule is a quiet creature: signifying the peace, tranquillity, and security, which they enjoyed in Solomon's reign. But the first is the more pertinent observation: for it was capital (as Maimonides observes) to ride upon the king's horse or mule; or sit in his throne; or use his sceptre, &c. without the king's order. As, on the contrary, to have the honour to ride upon his horse, by his order, was accounted the highest dignity among the Persians, as appears by the story of Mordecai in the sixth chapter of Esther.

And bring him down to Gihon.] A fountain on the west side of Jerusalem, which divided itself into two streams, as some say, and made two pools: that of Siloam, and that of Solomon, mentioned by Josephus, (lib. vi. de Bello Judaico, cap. 38.) But Kimchi, and Abarbinel also, take them only for different names for one and the same rivulet; which was called Gihon, and also Siloam, as the Targum hath it. Hither they were ordered to bring down Solomon; for it is a maxim among the Jews, that they do not anoint a king, but near a fountain: though they have no authority for it, that I know of, but from this chapter: where we read of Adonijah's going to En-rogel, (ver. 9.) and Solomon's being brought to Gihon; which was a fountain or brook near Jerusalem: for thereabout a great number of people used always to be; whom they would have to observe it. The Jews give another reason for it, in the Talmud; that it might be a signification and good omen of the perpetuity of the kingdom: which should continue like a fountain, which runs perpetually. (See Schickard, in his Jus Regium, cap. 1. Theor. 4.) But from what is said here of Solomon, we cannot safely make a general conclusion, that all kings were anointed at fountains. For Saul the first king was not; and in the history of David, who was anointed three times, there is no mention of it.

Ver. 34. *And let Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anoint him there king over Israel.*] One of them poured out the oil, and the other anointed him, as the forenamed

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Schickard thinks it probable. Or, as others will have it, Zadok (as vicar of the high-priest, who in his absence performed all his offices) did both: and Nathan the prophet was witness of the Divine revelation and promise, that Solomon should succeed in the kingdom. For Abarbinel is of opinion, that no king was anointed but by the authority of a prophet: which is hard to be proved out of Scripture, as Carpzovius observes. (See ver. 39.)

And blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon!] Proclaim him to be the king of Israel. The history of Absalom shews that he was proclaimed king by the sound of the trumpet, (2 Sam. xv. 10.) And when God proclaimed his law, and himself the king of Israel, the sound of the trumpet preceded with great vehemence, (Exod. xix. 16.) And hence many places in the Psalms are explained, which say, God went up with the sound of a trumpet, when, after the manner of kings, he triumphed over his enemies, (xlvii. 5. xcviii. 6.)

Ver. 35. *Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne.*] Attend upon him to Jerusalem, and give him actual possession of the throne.

For he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.] To have the same authority over all the people that David had.

Ver. 36. *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen.*] Gave his consent in the name of all the rest: and I suppose sware allegiance to him.

The Lord God of my lord the king say so too.] They all said the same, ver. 47. Nothing doubting God would establish his authority.

Ver. 37. *As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.*] He knew David loved his children so passionately, and desired their happiness so much, that he was assured he should not offend him with this wish. In the Targum it is, *As the Word of the Lord hath helped my lord the king*, &c.

Ver. 38. *So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites.*] This (and in ver. 43.) is the last time that the Cherethites and Pelethites (whom Procopius Gazæus here calls *funditores et sagittarios, slingers and archers*) are mentioned in the holy Scriptures: for we read no more of them after the death of David. Which makes it probable, that in their room, David himself, in the conclusion of his reign, had appointed those troops which we read of in 1 Chron. xxvii. to attend upon him every month under their several commanders: which is the conjecture of Corn. Bonaventura Bertram, de Republ. Judaica, cap. 10. p. 133. And these are they he thinks who guarded Joash, (2 Kings xi. 4, &c.) called *Ceri*, or *Cerim*, i. e. *Ariates* (not much different from *Crethi*) and *Ratzim*, which he translates *Cursores*. But I leave this to better judgments.

Went down, and caused Solomon to ride on the king's mule, and brought him to Gihon.] According as king David had ordered, (ver. 34.)

Ver. 39. *And Zadok the priest.*] Here the anointing of him is attributed to the priest alone. And indeed the unctions which are said to be made by a prophet, as Samuel anointed Saul and David, were private, but not public: which was always done by the priest, as Fortunatus Scacchus hath endeavoured to shew in his third Myrothecium, cap. 49, 50. It must be confessed, that the prophet anointed Saul in Gilgal when he was publicly declared king: but then they offered sacrifice, which could not be without the priest: and the Israelites made a covenant with David when they anointed him in Hebron, which must be by feasting upon a sacrifice offered by the priest. Yet a great many of the Jews are confident that no man, no, not the high-priest, could anoint a king, but only a prophet, as Samuel did David, and Nathan (Abarbinel here affirms) did Solomon, and Ahijah did Jeroboam.

Took a horn of oil.] A vessel of oil, as the Arabic translates it: which vessel was made of an ox's horn, as Bochartus observes, lib. ii. Hierozoicon, cap. 37. par. i. They commonly made cups of such horns; whence the Greek word κεράσαι, *to mingle wine with water.* (See Fortunatus Scacchus, Myrothec. i. cap. 48.)

Out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon.] This made his unction more solemn, and his person more sacred, because anointed with holy oil. Though the Jews are generally of opinion, that it was not necessary to anoint their kings with this holy oil made by Moses. And, indeed, they all agree there was no necessity of anointing them at all (the son being sufficiently anointed by the unction of his father), unless there arose a controversy about the succession of the crown. Thus Solomon was anointed because of the function of Adonijah, Joash because of Athaliah, and Jehu because of Joram. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Success. in Pontif. cap. 9. and Schickard's Jus Regium, cap. 1. Theor. 4.) Fortunatus Scacchus also hath spent a whole chapter, of a good length, to shew that a private unction might be made with any oil: but a public, by oil taken from the tabernacle. Whence it is said of David, *with my holy oil have I anointed thee.* Yet he thinks that this oil, preserved in the tabernacle for that purpose, was not the same with the oil made by Moses, wherewith the high-priest alone was anointed. This he confirms by no contemptible arguments, in his Myrothecium iii. Sacror. Elæochrysm. cap. 48.

And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon!] After the unction followed the acclamation of the people. (See ver. 34.)

Ver. 40. *And all the people came up after him.*] From Gihon unto Jerusalem.

And the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy.] To see a king settled by David's appointment: which they hoped might prevent all contests about the succession.

So that the earth rent with the sound of them.] An hyperbolical expression, to signify the very loud noise the people made with their shouts and their pipes: which were instruments that had their name among the Hebrews from the many holes that were in them: as the illustrious Spanhemius observes upon Callimachus's hymn ad Dianam, ver. 244. where he notes great variety of them.

Ver. 41. *And Adonijah, and all the guests that were with him, heard it as they had made an end of eating.*] But, perhaps, were not yet risen from the table. (See ver. 49.)

And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?] By this time Solomon was got into Jerusalem; from whence they could hear the shouting, and the sound of the trumpet and music. Which Josephus saith was accompanied with a great feast: which is agreeable to 1 Chron. xxix. 21, 22.

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Joab was most concerned to inquire what the matter was; for if the city was in an uproar, as he seems to suspect, it was his business, as captain of the host, to suppress it.

Ver. 42. *And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came.*] He had been employed by David to bring him intelligence, (2 Sam. xv. 27.) and it is likely was now left in Jerusalem by his father's order, to bring him news of what passed there.

And Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.] Or rather, *thou art a virtuous man:* for so the word we here translate *valiant* is rendered in Prov. xii. 4. And so the Targum in this place, *thou art a man that fearest to sin:* and being a good man, he hoped brought good tidings, like himself.

Ver. 43. *And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king.*] He tells him (according to his character) he would not flatter him, but tell him the plain truth: that David had not only declared Solomon should succeed him in the throne, but actually made him king: and related the whole history of his proceedings in the following words.

Ver. 44. *And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride on the king's mule.*

Ver. 45. *And Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, have anointed him king in Gihon.*] By authority from God, which Nathan, I suppose, pronounced; and then Zadok anointed him.

And they are gone up from thence rejoicing, so that the earth rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard.

Ver. 46. *And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.*] He was in actual possession of the kingdom: though his father was alive. For to sit upon the throne was proper to the king: and none else, on pain of death, might be placed there. So Valerius Maximus speaks of the Persians, lib. v. cap. 16.

Ver. 47. *And moreover, the king's servants came to bless king David, and said, God make the name of Solomon greater than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne.*] See ver. 37.

And the king bowed himself upon the bed.] Worshipped God, and prayed it might be so.

Ver. 48. *And also thus said the king, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.*] He gave a solemn thanks to God for the happiness of seeing Solomon begin his reign with such affection of his people, as they expressed by their joy at his inauguration. Jonathan, it appears by this, had been a diligent observer of every thing that had been done in this matter: for he omits nothing, but gives them a full and faithful account.

Ver. 49. *And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.*] They rose from table where they were sitting, and departed every man to his own home in great haste, that it might not be known they had been with Adonijah; who wanted those marks of royalty which were bestowed on Solomon: for he neither rode on the king's mule, nor was he anointed, nor sat on the throne of the kingdom: nor do we read of any forces that he had with him to maintain his title. Yet Fortunatus Scacchus thinks Adonijah wanted none of the marks of royalty, (insomuch that Bath-sheba told David he reigned, ver. 18.) but this one alone. Which defect threw down all the regal majesty of Adonijah, scattered all his forces, and translated the possession of the kingdom to Solomon, as soon as he was consecrated by this holy unction, (lib. iii. Myrothec. cap. 47. p. 571.)

Ver. 50. *And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold of the horns of the altar.*] He thought he had committed a crime worthy of death, by usurping the kingdom without his father's consent, and against the known design of God: and therefore he fled to the altar for safety and protection. It being a privileged place, not by the appointment of the law, but by the custom of all nations. It is a question to what altar he fled; whether to that at the tabernacle in Gibeon, or to that newly built in the thrashing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Some think to this last, which was nearest; and it is expressly said of Joab in the next chapter, (ver. 29.) that he fled to the tabernacle of the Lord; which is not said here.

Ver. 51. *And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, Let Solomon swear to me today, that he will not slay his servant with the sword.*] He offered to surrender himself, and make no opposition, if he might but be secured of his life: which he humbly begged by taking sanctuary at the altar. These words, *to-day,* signify that he desired him from henceforth he would not punish him for what was past.

Ver. 52. *And Solomon said.*] He did not swear unto him, as he desired, but only declared.

If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth.] He gave him a full pardon for what was past; on condition he behaved himself as became a good subject for the time to come.

But if wickedness be found in him, he shall die.] If he did any thing (as Abarbinel glosses) which shewed that he had still a rebellious mind, this pardon should signify nothing, because he had broken the condition of it.

Ver. 53. *So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon.*] He owned him for his sovereign.

And Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.] There to lead a private life, and not go abroad with such an equipage as he had done, (ver. 5.)

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *NOW the days of David drew nigh that he should die.*] As he himself was sensible.

And he charged Solomon his son, saying.] After the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful, (Gen. xviii. 19.)

Ver. 2. *I go the way of all the earth.*] And so was unable to govern any longer.

Be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man.] In wisdom and in courage.

Ver. 3. *And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies.*] Under these four words are comprehended all the laws of Moses: *statutes* being such constitutions as had not their foundation in reason, but in the will and pleasure of God: as not to sow two

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seeds of different kinds together, &c. (See Drusius and Grotius upon Numb. xix. 2. and Masius upon Josh. xxiv. 25.) *Commandments* were moral duties, which had a manifest reason; as, not to steal, &c. *Judgments* were the laws belonging to civil government, in things between one man and another: such as are mentioned Exod. xxi. and the following chapters. And *testimonies* were such laws as preserved the remembrance of some great things; and testified to them the loving-kindness of the Lord; as, the sabbath, the passover, and all the rest of the feasts.

As it is written in the law of Moses.] Which their kings were bound not only to read, but to write a copy of it with their own hands, for their own use: that they might learn to fear the Lord, &c. (Deut. xvii. 18, 19.)

That thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself.] Or, *that thou mayest do wisely*, &c. as it is in the margin. For there is no policy like true religion and piety.

Ver. 4. *That the Lord may confirm his word, which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their ways, to walk before me in truth with all their heart, and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man upon the throne of Israel.*] To engage him to keep the charge of the Lord, he represents unto him the gracious promise which God had made him, to perpetuate the kingdom in his family without interruption, (2 Sam. vii. 15, 16. Psal. cxxxii. 12.) provided his children sincerely and heartily served God, in faithful obedience to his commands.

Ver. 5. *Moreover, thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did unto me.*] After he had given him this general charge, he proceeded to direct him to do some particular pieces of justice and kindness. And, first of all, bids him remember how Joab had used him: how insolently, for instance, he had treated him in his great affliction, and threatened a new rebellion, (2 Sam. xix. 7.) and lately had set up Adonijah to reign, while he was yet alive. Or this may refer to what follows.

And what he did to the two captains of the host of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew.] For this was a great dishonour to David, who had given Abner safe conduct; and passed his word to Amasa that he should be commander-in-chief of all his forces: and therefore he might say *it was done to himself.* But it is an idle conceit of the Jews, in Jalkut, and in other books, which refer these words, *what he did to me*, unto his shewing the letter which David wrote him concerning Uriah, unto the great commanders in the army, (2 Sam. xi. 15.) and thereby exposed the king as a murderer of one of his best subjects. D. Kimchi mentions this upon this place.

And shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.] This was a high aggravation of his crime, that he did not only shed that blood in peace (speaking to them in a friendly manner when he shed it), but after he had done he was not at all ashamed of it, but appeared with their blood upon his belt, and in his shoes: as if he thought it a glory to him, that he had slain them in a battle with them.

Ver. 6. *Do thou therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.*] It was not safe to give any countenance to so bold a man as Joab, who was of great authority among the soldiers: in a new kingdom, and a young man being king. Therefore, if there was a fair occasion, and he could do it prudently, he advises Solomon to cut him off. For David had not remitted his former crimes (nor could he by the law), but only deferred the punishment of a man who was very powerful, and very serviceable in his wars. Though Abarbinel is of opinion he was not cut off for those old crimes: but the new one in following Adonijah could not be forgiven; because he had deserved so ill before on other accounts. But some move a doubt how Solomon, being but a youth, could cut off Joab; which David durst not do, when he most flourished. Which will easily be resolved, if it be considered that now it was a time of peace, when Joab was less necessary: and Solomon's reputation grew continually, (ver. 12.) and so he was more respected than Joab; who now declined in his interest, by reason of his age.

Ver. 7. *But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table.*] As Mephibosheth had done: who, it is likely, was now dead, for otherwise he would not have forgotten him. David's gratitude here is very remarkable; which extended itself to all the sons of Barzillai: who only desired him to be kind to Chimham, (2 Sam. xix. 37.)

For so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.] That is, such kindness they shewed to David, inviting him to Barzillai's house, who sustained him in his great distress, (2 Sam. xix. 32.)

Ver. 8. *And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite.*] These words, *thou hast with thee*, are understood by Abarbinel as if David had said, I see that thou art very familiar with Shimei; whom thou lovest and advisest withal. But, that he might not trust him, he remembers him how bitterly he was cursed by him in his distress: and therefore might do as much by Solomon, if he should fall into the like trouble. And he thinks Solomon, being young, might the more easily be drawn in to hearken to such a crafty man's counsel; because he did not follow Adonijah: for he takes him to be the Shimei mentioned in the foregoing chapter, (ver. 8.) But the plain sense of his having *Shimei with him*, is, that he was in his power, being one of his subjects.

Which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim.] See 2 Sam. xvi. 5—7.

But he came down to me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.] See 2 Sam. xix. 18, 19, &c.

Ver. 9. *Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring down unto the grave with blood.*] His intention was not, as Abarbinel glosses, that he should put him to death for his cursing him: but he admonishes Solomon not to trust him, nor follow his advice; but if (saith he) he do to thee as he did to me, that is, any ways offend thee, do not forgive him as I did. *But bring down his hoar head*, &c. that is, though he be an old man, let not that move thee to clemency towards him; but punish him according to his deserts. And David knew his humour so well, that he did not doubt he would give Solomon occasion to cut him off, and that he was so wise as not to spare him. In short, he did not bid him cut him off for cursing him; but only that he should cautiously observe him: and if he com-

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mitted any new offence worthy of death, not pardon him as he had done.

Ver. 10. *So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.*] The author beforementioned is a little too conceited in his interpretation of the first part of these words: which he will have to signify, not that David died (which is the common import of this phrase), but that his soul rested in the other world, with those just and good men that had been before him. But he observes well enough, that the latter part of this verse informs us he was not buried in the sepulchre of his father, (as Saul was, 2 Sam. xxi. 12, &c.) for that was in Beth-lehem: but, he being a great king, was buried in the chief city of the kingdom; which he himself had founded, and where was the throne of the house of David, (Psal. cxxii. 5.) He tells also, out of Josephus's Antiquities, (see lib. vii. cap. 12.) that there was a great vault over his sepulchre, in which was hid an immense treasure: unto which nobody knew the way, but those that understood the artifice wherewith it was built. Out of this vault they took, in the time of Antiochus, so much money as made him withdraw his army from them. Which Procopius Gazæus also mentions. And Herod took out of it a great many talents for the building of the temple: but in following times there was no man to be found to whom the secret was communicated, how to open it; so that no more money was taken out from that time. What credit is to be given to this I shall not determine, but suspect its truth.

Ver. 11. *And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty-three years reigned he in Jerusalem.*] The very same account is given in 1 Chron. xxix. 27. But in 2 Sam. v. 5. it is said he reigned seven years and six months in Hebron, (and the same is said before, chap. ii. ver. 11.) which, with the three and thirty years in Jerusalem, make forty years and a half. To solve this difficulty (as some of the Jews esteem it) they have devised this conceit: that David had a leprosy six months, to punish him for his adultery with Bath-sheba: all which time he being as a dead man, it is not accounted to his reign. But they did not consider that the six months was part of his reign in Hebron, before he committed that adultery in Jerusalem. Which shews that this is a frivolous fancy; and the true account of this matter is, that the Scripture is wont to reckon only complete years (as Kimchi observes upon that place of Samuel), and therefore omits the six months, being but a part of the year. (See vi. 38.)

Ver. 12. *Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.*] This Abarbinel thinks may refer to the second solemn investiture of Solomon by all the estates of the realm. Who confirmed that which had been done by a few (though by David's order) at Gihon, (1 Chron. xxix. 22, 23.)

Ver. 13. *And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.*] She had some reason to distrust him: because by her means he had lost the kingdom.

Ver. 14. *He said moreover, I have something to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.*] He did not pretend to come to make her a visit; but about some business.

Ver. 15. *And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine.*] By right of primogeniture.

And that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign.] The kingdom, he pretends, was his by the inclination of the generality of the people to him, as David's successor.

Howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and become my brother's: for it was his from the Lord.] Lest she should imagine he meant any harm, or was inwardly disgusted at his being disappointed of the kingdom, he calls Solomon his brother; and entitles God to the change: and therefore would not have her think he affected another change; which would be to oppose the Lord.

Ver. 16. *And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said, Say on.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *turn not away my face:* which signify, that he should be very much ashamed if she did not grant his petition.

Ver. 17. *And he said, Speak, I pray thee, to Solomon, the king (for he will not say thee nay), that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife.*] Both he and she surely were not ignorant, that it was unlawful for any man to marry his father's wife: but they thought, because David knew her not, the marriage was not completed.

Ver. 18. *Bath-sheba said, Well, I will speak for thee to the king.*] For she did not understand the drift of this desire: but was only forward to do courtesies to a man, fallen from very great hopes.

Ver. 19. *Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her.*] For the high honour to which he was advanced, did not make him forget the honour due to a parent: unto whom he was also much indebted for his preferment to the kingdom.

And sat down in his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother.] In the Hebrew it is, a *throne* to be set for her: it being a seat in the form of a throne, though not so glorious as the king's.

And she sat on his right hand.] Which was the most honourable place, next to himself, (Psal. xlv. 9. cx. 1.)

Ver. 20. *Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay.*] It is likely it was the first petition she had made to him; and, as she thought, would cost him nothing: which made her call it, *a small petition.*

And the king said, Ask on, my mother; for I will not say thee nay.] If the thing were fit, and safe to be granted.

Ver. 21. *And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.*

Ver. 22. *And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also.*] He gently reprehends her ignorance: for it is as if he had said, Do you call this a small petition? You had as good ask the kingdom for him.

(For he is my elder brother).] And hath that pretence to the kingdom: unto which he would add this.

Even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.] Who were all in this plot. So the Hebrew words, in the opinion of Lud. de Dieu, are better rendered by the Chaldee paraphrast, than by any other interpreter, *Was not he, and Abiathar, and Joab, in this counsel?* The LXX. more plainly, *With him are Abiathar the priest, and Joab the chief commander of the army:* that is, they are his accomplices, and have laid their heads together to give him this counsel.

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Ver. 23. *And king Solomon sware by the Lord, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word.*] Made this request, which he knew came originally from him.

Against his own life.] For he looked upon it as a treasonable design, to ask David's wife might become his. For, according to the custom of the Hebrews, no man who had been servant of the king, might serve any other master; nor might any man ride upon the king's horse; nor sit on his throne, nor use his sceptre: as they say, in the title Sanhedrin, cap. 2. sect. 2. 5. Much less might any private person marry the king's widow: who belonged only to his successor. Therefore God gave David all the wives of Saul, (2 Sam. xii. 8.) All which the Gemara upon that place (cap. 2. sect. 14.) applies unto this history of Adonijah; whose desire to marry the king's widow (which was not lawful for any private person) was looked upon as an affecting the kingdom. So Cocceius glosses upon that place. And, indeed, Adonijah seems to have understood well enough, that Abishag was wholly in the power of Solomon; and did not return to her father's house after the death of David: but remained with him in his possession, as one of those things that were appropriated to him. Which moved Adonijah (as Abarbinel observes) to desire her of Solomon; and not address himself to her, or to her relations; but to him, because she belonged to the crown. (See Selden, lib. i. de Uxor. Hebr. cap. 10.)

Ver. 24. *Now therefore, as the Lord liveth, which hath established me in the throne of my father, and hath made me a house.*] That is, a royal family.

As he promised.] In 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.

Adonijah shall be put to death this day.] He repeats the oath, to signify it was his unalterable resolution he should not live; but be put to death, without delay: which in such cases is very dangerous.

Ver. 25. *And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.*] For such executions were there done not by mean persons, but by men of eminence: who at the king's command cut off offenders. (See Judg. viii. 20.)

Ver. 26. *And unto Abiathar the priest the king said, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields.*] This was a city of the priests, (Josh. xxi. 28.) where he commanded him to lead a private life, either in that part of the suburbs which fell to his share, or in some land which he had purchased, as Jeremiah afterward did, (Jer. xxxii. 6—8.)

For thou art worthy of death: but at this time I will not put thee to death.] He seems now only to reprieve him, that he might keep him upon his good behaviour: for if hereafter he gave just cause, he might put him to death, as well as now put him out of his office.

Because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David my father.] He was faithful to him in the rebellion of Absalom: when he brought the ark from Jerusalem to accompany him, (2 Sam. xv. 24. 29.)

And because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.] Underwent all the hardships that David inured, all the time of his exile under Saul, (1 Sam. xxii. 20, 21, &c.)

Ver. 27. *So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord; that he might fulfil the word of the Lord, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.*] Which might partly move Solomon to deprive him. (See 1 Sam. ii. 31, &c.)

Ver. 28. *Then tidings came to Joab.*] That Adonijah was put to death, and Abiathar banished.

(For Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he had not turned after Absalom).] The reason of which, Abarbinel thinks, was, because Solomon was very young, and not fit, he thought, to manage public affairs: and his mother also had a blot upon her.

And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord.] Which was at Gibeon. (See the foregoing chapter, ver. 51.) This makes it appear that Joab had a hand in the counsel beforementioned, (ver. 22.) as Solomon suspected.

And caught hold on the horns of the altar.] Which were four, at each corner thereof: in height, as the Jews say, five hand-breadths; that is, a common cubit. Here he thought to save himself, according to the custom of all nations, who fled to their altars, when they were guilty of any great crime, and were in great danger. But Jewish doctors say, Joab was mistaken in two things. First, in fancying there was security from thence for a wilful murderer: and, secondly, in that he looked for safety by taking hold of the horns of the altar, whereas the refuge of the altar (as Kimchi saith) was on the top of it only. But I look upon this as frivolous; Rasi's opinion is better: that as God appointed them cities of refuge whither the manslayer should flee when they came into the land of Canaan, (Exod. xxi. 13.) so, while they were in the wilderness, the camp of the Levites served for that purpose. And the following words (ver. 14.) declaring, that if a man committed a presumptuous murder, he should be taken from the altar and put to death; it not only confirms what he saith, but intimates, that even in the land of Canaan the altar continued a refuge for those that fled to it. But then this question arises, why Joab (who, as the Jews fancy, was president of the great Sanhedrin, and understood the law) should think to find shelter here, being a wilful murderer? To which the Jews answer, that he hoped hereby to save his estate, which otherways would have been forfeited. So they say in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 6. n. 7. He hoped to be condemned by the judgment of the Sanhedrin, and then his goods would go to his heirs: whereas if he was cut off by the king they would fall to him. (See Cocceius there, Annot. 2.) Others say, he hoped to obtain burial by this means. But I take these to be mere conceits. It is more probable, that, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, he hoped to obtain a pardon, as Abiathar had done, by consecrating himself to God and to his service: as he did, he thinks, by this solemn ceremony. For the laying hold of the altar had a vow in it for the future, as well as the hope of present safety. Which may be argued from the name of the altar: which made that which touched it to be holy. (See his treatise of the Temple, chap. 34. sect. 3.)

Ver. 29. *And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled into the tabernacle of the Lord; and, behold, he is by the altar: then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go fall upon him.*] Which punishment, as Abarbinel observes, was not inflicted on him for killing Abner and Amasa: though the remembrance of that innocent blood which he shed moved him not to pardon the faults he had newly committed: first, in setting up Adonijah to be king while his father was living, which was no better than rebellion; being done with-

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out David's order: and, secondly, in this new attempt to pretend to the kingdom, by advising him to beg Abishag for his wife. Solomon did not punish him for the former, because he had pardoned Adonijah: and therefore would not be severe against his adherents. But he renewing his traitorous designs, he thought fit to cut them both off: and Joab thought he deserved no less, as appears by his flying to the altar. Which was an acknowledgment that he was guilty of that crime which Solomon charged upon him, in being one of the wicked counsellors of Adonijah, and therefore deserved to die. Thus he.

Ver. 30. *And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the Lord; and said, Thus saith the king, Come forth.*] The forenamed author thinks that Benaiah had a mind to bring him to Solomon, and try to get his pardon, so far as to have him only deposed from his office, as Abiathar was.

And he said, Nay; but I will die here.] Which he said, that he might bring Solomon into the people's hatred for staining the house of God with blood.

And Benaiah brought the king word, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.] This interpreters generally take to be but the repetition of the same thing in different words: but Abarbinel takes them for two distinct answers of Joab, in which he refuses to come from the place where he was; and pronounces the sentence upon himself, and desires no pardon. For those words, *thus saith Joab*, respect (he thinks) the sentence which he pronounced on himself, that he would die: and those words, *thus he answered*, signify he would not come from the altar.

Ver. 31. *And Solomon said to Benaiah, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him.*] Kill him at the very altar, where he resolves to die: after which he would not deny him burial suitable to his quality, (ver. 34.) But many think he did not kill him at the very altar; but dragged him from thence, and then slew him. For what need was there to defile the holy place with blood? And so the command is, Exod. xxi. 14. Though others are of opinion, that Solomon did think fit to have him killed at the very altar; to let all men see that no place, though ever so holy, should secure any man from the hand of justice.

That thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed.] He means the blood of those two persons mentioned in the next verse: whose murder (as I said before) was not the immediate reason of Joab's death: but the words of Solomon are to be understood (Abarbinel thinks) as if he had said to Benaiah, Do not imagine thou shalt offend God, by killing Joab at the very altar, but rather perform an acceptable service to him: by cutting off a man who deserves to die, not only upon the account of Adonijah; but of the innocent blood which he shed heretofore. So the business of Adonijah was the principal cause of his death: the other only the secondary; which he remembers, that he might warrant Benaiah to kill him in the tabernacle.

From me, and from the house of my father.] The crimes of Joab in killing those two men could not be punished by the house of judgment, because there were no witnesses of that murder: but David might have done it by such proofs as satisfied him of his guilt. Yet he omitted it, because Joab was so potent in the army: and so Solomon feared the guilt might stick upon his family, if it were not wiped off by this execution upon Joab.

Ver. 32. *And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head.*] Make him alone bear the punishment of his iniquity.

Who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah.] His crime was the more heinous, because it brought a suspicion upon David, as if it had been done by his order: which calumny he laboured to wipe off, by the unfeigned grief he expressed for Abner, (2 Sam. iii. 37.)

Ver. 33. *Their blood therefore shall return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever.*] Why doth he repeat what he said before? Abarbinel answers, it is not a mere repetition; but Solomon pronounces that the curse of David should come upon him: so that Joab's own death should not expiate the guilt; but his posterity should suffer for it in future generations, according to what David said, 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29.

But upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall be peace for ever before the Lord.] He prays and prophesies that his family and kingdom might never suffer upon this account, now that the sin which had not been punished in David's lifetime, had received a just punishment from him.

Ver. 34. *So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him.*] He is said *to go up*, because Gibeon, where Joab was at the tabernacle, was a high place.

And he was buried.] It is not said who took care of his burial; but it is likely Benaiah. (See ver. 21.) Because Joab was a man of dignity, and one of the royal family.

In his own house in the wilderness.] He did not bury him in the house, but in some ground belonging to it, and accounted a part of the habitation, which was in the wilderness; so they called those parts of the country, which were but thinly inhabited. And Abarbinel is of opinion, that here Joab had built a hospital, where he provided, in several rooms, a bed, a table, and a candlestick, for poor travellers.

Ver. 35. *And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host; and Zadok the priest did he put in the room of Abiathar.*] It is evident that Zadok was a great man before this; at least the vicar of the high-priest Abiathar: who was, as some of the Jews fancy, deprived by David himself, or suspended from his office, upon his anointing Adonijah. But no such anointing is mentioned in the story of Adonijah; nay, it is most likely (as I before observed) that he wanted it. And therefore he remained high-priest till now that Solomon removed him, and translated that great office from the family of Ithamar to that of Eleazar, (according to the threatening against Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 30.) in which it continued till the time of the captivity; no notice being taken of Jonathan the son of Abiathar, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 42. and in 1 Sam. xv. 27. See Selden, de Succession. in Pontif. lib. i. cap. 4, 5. and Grotius, de Imperio Sum. Potestat. where he observes, (cap. 10.) that the *sagan*, or vicar of the high-priest, had rather a hope, than a right, to succeed in the office of high-priest. For Maimonides saith, the Sanhedrin chose him out of the family of Aaron; but here it is plain the king disposed of that office. For otherwise it could not be said truly, that Solomon put Zadok in the

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room of Abiathar; by the same authority that he put Benaiah in the room of Joab. Bellarmine, indeed, for fear kings should be thought superior to the high-priest, saith, Solomon did this not as a king but as a prophet. (Lib. ii. de Pontifico, cap. 29.) But Solomon was not yet a prophet; and all they who had royal authority in the time of the Macedonians, and Romans, and the posterity of Herod, challenged to themselves this power of making a high-priest; though they left to the Jews an *αὐτονομία (the government of themselves by their own laws)* in other things.

Ver. 36. *And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.*] It was fit to confine such a turbulent man as Shimei was; and not suffer him to go about whither he pleased, throughout the tribes of Israel, where he might stir up sedition. But it was very kind to confine him to such a pleasant place as Jerusalem, and the suburbs of it: which made Abarbinel renew his conceit (from those words of David, *thou hast with thee Shimei*), that Solomon had a great love to him, and made him his familiar. But it is more reasonable to think that Solomon suspected his fidelity; and therefore would have him always in his eye, in the royal city.

Ver. 37. *For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die.*] He mentions the brook Kidron, because that was in the way to Baharim; where Shimei dwelt: as appears by comparing 2 Sam. xv. 23. with xvi. 5. But Solomon's intention was, that if he went out of Jerusalem any way, to a greater distance than Kidron was from thence, he should die for it. For when he went to Gath after his servants, he went directly the quite contrary way; that city lying westward of Jerusalem, as Kidron did eastward.

Thy blood shall be on thine own head.] He should be guilty, and nobody else, of his death: for it was in his power to preserve his life.

Ver. 38. *And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good.*] He confesses the king's kindness in this injunction; and that he was beholden to him, for laying no greater burden upon him.

As my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do.] Which he confirmed by an oath, (ver. 42, 43.)

And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.] Three years, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 39. *And it came to pass, at the end of three years, that two of Shimei's servants ran away unto Achish the son of Maacah, king of Gath: and they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath.*] Achish had been so great a friend to David, that though David had conquered the Philistines, yet he suffered Achish still to retain the title of king, and to be only tributary to him: so that there was a friendly correspondence between his city and Jerusalem; where Shimei might easily hear, by somebody or other who had been at Gath, that his servants were there.

Ver. 40. *And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants.*] In three years' time he thought Solomon might have forgotten his injunction; or he presumed he would not hold him strictly to it: especially since he did not go from Jerusalem for his pleasure, but to recover what he had lost; which he thought was pardonable. For these servants, it is likely, were worth a great deal of money: wherewith he had purchased them.

And Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath.] Where Achish would not protect them; being in friendship with the Israelites.

Ver. 41. *And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.*] If Solomon had not constant spies about Shimei, to watch his motions; yet such a journey as this could not be well undertaken so secretly, but some or other would observe it, and inform against him.

Ver. 42. *And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee swear by the Lord, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for certain, that on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good.*] He repeats their agreement; and only adds that he made Shimei solemnly swear that he would stand to it, and did thankfully accept it.

Ver. 43. *Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the Lord, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?*] He lay under a double guilt, of breaking his oath to God, and of disobeying the king's command.

Ver. 44. *And the king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness that thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father.*] He knew upon what wicked principles he cursed David, and what inward hatred and malice he had to him: and what villanous designs against him, if he could have accomplished them.

Therefore the Lord shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head.] Upon which, if he reflected, he could not but see the justice of God, in letting him fall into other crimes, which deserved death.

Ver. 45. *And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord for ever.*] To which Shimei wished confusion: but the Lord turned his curses into blessings, as David hoped, (2 Sam. xvi. 12.)

Ver. 46. *So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died.*] He went out from the presence of the king, and carried Shimei along with him: and then did execution upon him.

And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.] By the removal of these bad men beforementioned: and by the alliances he made, mentioned in the next chapter, &c.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *AND Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter.*] To be his wife. Which was not unlawful, if she was first made a proselyte to the Jewish religion; as in all probability she was. For though his wives drew him in to worship strange gods; yet the gods of the Egyptians are not reckoned among them, (xi. 5, 6, &c.) which is a sign she was not a worshipper of other gods. Hitherto also Solomon loved the Lord, as it is said, ver. 3. and was beloved of him, as his appearing to him in Gibeon shews, ver. 5.

And brought her into the city of David.] Unto his palace at Jerusalem: which was after he had begun to build the temple, as they say in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 15.

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Until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the Lord.] After which he built a house on purpose for this wife to dwell in, (ix. 24. 2 Chron. viii. 11.) But first he built God's house, then his own, and then the walls of Jerusalem.

And the wall of Jerusalem round about.] If David encompassed it with a wall, as some think is signified, 2 Sam. v. 9. Solomon made another wall, and thereby made it stronger than David left it. Or else, he repaired the wall which David had built, and raised it higher.

Ver. 2. *Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord, until those days.*] This is a short account of the happiness of Solomon's reign hitherto, that there was nothing in it blameable, but only the people's sacrificing in high places. Which having been ancient places of worship (in groves or woods, on the top of hills), the people continued to resort thither, to perform that worship which God had appointed. So that there was no fault in the worship itself, but only in the place of it. And he gives the reason why the people took this liberty, because there was not a house built, to be a settled place for worship; the tabernacle also had been removed from place to place a long time; and was not fixed till it came to Jerusalem. Concerning *high places*, see upon Deut. xii. 2. Cornel. Bertram, indeed, fetches the original of them from the cities of the Levites, where they kept schools, and had places for prayer; and where he thinks the people at last sacrificed in the highest part of the city. (De Repub. Judaica, cap. 15.) But this custom seems, more likely, to have been derived from the ancient patriarchs, and was imitated by the gentiles as well as Jews.

Ver. 3. *And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in all the statutes of David his father.*] Following his directions, who commanded him carefully to observe all God's laws, ii. 2, 3.

Only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.] Which David his father had never done (as far as appears by his history), which renders Solomon's fault the greater, in following the common practice of all the nations, rather than the example of his pious father.

Ver. 4. *And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was a great high place.*] Because the tabernacle was there, and the great brazen altar which Moses made. For after Shiloh was destroyed, it was carried to Nob; and the priests being there slain by Saul, it was carried to Gibeon, (2 Chron. i. 3.) where the Jews say, there was the greatest synagogue in all the land.

A thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.] It is not easy to apprehend how so many sacrifices should be consumed upon an altar, which was but five cubits square; for I suppose he speaks of Moses's altar, which was of no larger dimensions. But Kimchi hath well observed, that we must not fancy they were all offered upon one day; but during the time he stayed at Gibeon, before he returned to Jerusalem. Yet if we suppose this was at some of the great festivals, none of which lasted above seven days, it must be acknowledged a wonderful thing, that so many should be consumed, though offered both at morning and evening sacrifice. The Jews therefore do acknowledge a miracle herein, as there were many, they say, continually at the temple; which are disbelieved, because the Jews are accounted fabulous writers. But if well considered, some of them at least carry good reason in them. For instance, they say the smoke of the sacrifices went always directly up to heaven in a steady pillar, and was not blown about with every puff of wind, as smoke commonly is. For if it had not been so, when there was a vast number of sacrifices offered, no man would have been able to stand in the court of the Lord's house. The fire also upon the altar was exceeding quick and devouring, being celestial fire, which dispatched the sacrifice sooner than ordinary fire would have done. So Dr. Lightfoot observes, in his treatise of the Temple, chap. 34. sect. 1. From whence it was called Ariel, the lion of God, because it was so devouring. And therefore, after the return from their captivity from Babylon (as L'Empereur observes out of the Gemara), the altar was made larger; because the fire burnt more slowly, when they wanted that heavenly flame, which was strong and powerful. (Annot. in Cod. Middoth. cap. 1. sect. 1. p. 103.)

Ver. 5. *In Gibeon God appeared to Solomon in a dream by night.*] Perhaps he thought he saw the Divine glory shine round about him: or else the meaning is, God revealed himself in a dream, as the Targum here expresses it, *The Lord was revealed to Solomon by night;* when men have often seen that represented to them, which they found true when they were awake; as Tully shews by many instances; especially out of Aristotle's famous story of the two men that travelled together to Megara; one of which being killed in his inn, the other, who lay in a friend's house, had all the fact represented clearly and distinctly to him in his dream, as if he had seen it done; so that he found out the murderers in the morning. (See lib. i. De Divinatione, cap. 24—26, &c.)

And God said, Ask what I shall give thee.] He heard a voice speaking to him, and bidding him ask what he desired, and it should be bestowed upon him. This voice he took to be from God (as appears by his answer), who herein shewed himself very gracious to Solomon, and also made a trial of his inclinations.

Ver. 6. *And Solomon said, Thou hast shewn unto David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit upon his throne, as at this day.*] Thankful acknowledgments of mercies already received (as St. Chrysostom notes), invite new blessings to be bestowed upon us. *Uprightness of heart*, here ascribed to David, doth not signify that he was without fault (for the contrary is evident, that he was guilty of great transgressions against the moral law), but it is spoken in opposition to Saul, who was rejected for controlling the orders of God.

Ver. 7. *And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or how to come in.*] There are those, particularly Rasi, who think he was but twelve years old when he spake these words; and therefore calls himself *naar*, a child. But Abarbinel hath shewn, that they ground this upon an uncertain computation; and that, if he was but a child of twelve years old now, he must have begun to reign when he was but seven or eight years old: for he had sat some time upon the throne, as appears by the foregoing story, when he had this dream. And his

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father calls him *a wise man*, when he left the throne to him, (chap. ii. 6. 9.) And, from many other strong arguments, he concludes him to have been at least twenty years old when he began to reign; and therefore calls himself here a child, with respect only to his skill in managing public affairs; as is signified in the last words, *I know not how to go out*, &c. i. e. to govern so great a people, for want of experience. Thus Benjamin is called a child, Gen. xlvi. 20.; and Moses calls Joshua by the same name, Exod. xxxii. 10. though they were above thirty years old: and the sons of Eli, when they ministered as priests, 1 Sam. ii. 17.

Ver. 8. *And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude.*] And consequently great abilities were required to do exact justice to them all.

Ver. 9. *Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge so great a people?*] That is, without the Divine guidance and assistance, he thought it impossible to understand what was law in all cases; so as dexterously to dispatch business, and decide all differences. For young men, as Aristotle observes, are unfit for government; because in them, τὸ βουλευτικὸν ἀτελὲς, *their consultive power is very imperfect*, as he speaks in the first book of his Politics, cap. 7. And therefore, in his book ad Nicomachum, he will not so much as admit a young man to the lectures of politics; τῆς πολιτικῆς οὐκ εἶην ἀκροατὴς οἰκεῖος ὁ νέος. But this is not universally true, as we see not only in the example of Solomon, who was extraordinarily accomplished by God in his youth for the greatest things; but by some examples among the heathen, of young men who managed the weightiest affairs with as much prudence as they who were of the greatest experience. Witness Scipio and Octavianus Augustus. But such persons were rarely found: so that Solomon himself saith, "Woe to the land whose king is a child," (Eccles. x. 16.)

Ver. 10. *And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.*] For it was a token of a virtuous mind and a public spirit, that desired above all things the honour of God, and the good of his people.

Ver. 11. *And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies.*] Which are things of which men are naturally most desirous.

But hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment.] As far transcending long life, wealth, and victory over enemies.

Ver. 12. *Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.*] For other wise men gather their knowledge by study, and observation, and other helps (as Abarbinel here notes), but Solomon had his by inspiration: so that he went to bed an ignorant man, but awaked in the morning like an angel of God. At once, as his words are, he who was like other men, was made like the Son of God. For he had not only the skill of government imparted to him; but a general knowledge of all other things, as the following history tells us. Whence he fancies he calls himself Agur, (Prov. xxx. 1.) because in him there was a *collection* of all manner of wisdom and knowledge, and this imparted from God. Which is the reason, he imagines, why he does not call himself *Oger*, which is an active word, but *Agur*, which is a passive: because he did not gather all his wisdom himself, but it was given him from the hand of God.

Ver. 13. *And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour.*] These are absolutely promised him: but here is no mention of long life; for that depended upon the condition of his steadfast obedience to God, as it follows in the next verse.

So that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.] He promises he should excel all the kings that were in his time, in riches and renown: though there were richer in future ages, as Alexander and others were.

Ver. 14. *If thou wilt walk in my ways, and keep my statutes and commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.*] This God himself mentions, in the first place, (ver. 11.) as the greatest worldly blessing; especially when accompanied with great riches and honour: which Solomon was not to expect, unless he continued obedient to God.

Ver. 15. *And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream.*] He saw and heard all the foregoing things so clearly and distinctly in his sleep, as if he had been awake: and did not know till he awoke that all was done in a dream; which was one way of God's revealing himself to his prophets. But Maimonides, I think, is here a little too curious; for from these words, *Behold it was a dream*, he concludes this was an inferior degree of prophecy from what others had in dreams. For they that prophesied in dreams, do not call it afterward a dream; but simply say, it was a prophecy. So when the patriarch Jacob awoke out of a dream of prophecy, he did not say it was a dream, but saith absolutely, *Surely God is in this place*, &c. Gen. xxviii. 16. (More Nevoch. lib. ii. cap. 45.)

And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord.] Which was there in a tabernacle which David pitched for it, (2 Sam. v. 17.) though the tabernacle which Moses made remained at Gibeon; where Solomon had been to worship.

And offered burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings.] Giving thanks to God, that he had been pleased to speak with him, and reveal himself to him.

And made a feast for all his servants.] Upon the sacrifices of peace-offerings, it is likely, which he had offered; whereby he endeared himself unto them. For nothing more wins men's affection than bounty, affability, clemency, and such-like virtues.

Ver. 16. *Then came two women that were harlots unto the king.*] They kept a house of public entertainment, as the Targum translates it, and perhaps were also common women: but then, the Jews suppose, they were not Israelites, but strangers; and so not comprehended in the law, Deut. xxiii. 17.

And stood before the king.] As they used to do, who brought any cause before a court to be judged.

Ver. 17. *And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a son with her in the house.*] This case, as Abarbinel thinks, should have been first brought into some of the inferior courts,

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near the place where they lived; and if they could not have determined it, then to the great Sanhedrin: and if they found it too hard for them, then they should have brought it to the king; who otherwise might have easily erred, no inquisition having been made into the matter, if a Divine Spirit had not directed him. But this opinion of Abarbinel is grounded on another fancy, that there was a great Sanhedrin in these days, which cannot be proved.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, that the third day after I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also.*] Of another son; which being born so soon after the other, they could not be distinguished by their age.

And we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.] So that there was no witness of what passed between them; but all relied on their own credit; which made the case more difficult.

Ver. 19. *And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.*] Some marks upon the body, it is likely, discovered that it was smothered: and Kimchi here notes, that if it had died of a disease it would have cried, and the neighbours been called in, and the thing been known.

Ver. 20. *And she rose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thy handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.*] This made the matter obscure; for how should she know what her companion did, when she was asleep?

Ver. 21. *And when I arose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead; but when I had considered in the morning.*] When it was perfect day; which it was not when she arose to suckle the child.

Behold, it was not my son which I did bear.] There was some resemblance, it is likely, in the features of the two children; so that the neighbours did not know the one from the other: but the mother, who had carefully observed it, knew by some tokens that this dead child was none of hers.

Ver. 22. *And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is mine. Thus they spake before the king.*] One affirming what the other denied; but having no evidence to make proof of what they said.

Ver. 23. *Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.*] From hence the Jews argue, that the judges before they pronounced sentence were bound to sum up the evidence that had been given on both sides: that it might be seen they had observed and understood their allegations, and accordingly gave judgment. For thus Solomon doth in this case, where there was no more than he repeated; there being no witnesses on either side.

Ver. 24. *And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword to him.*] As much as to say, Here is nothing but affirming on one part, and denying on the other, without any proof: I must therefore try some other way to decide this controversy.

Ver. 25. *And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.*] For both pretended to it, and this he thought the best way to end the dispute. For he knew the woman, whose the child really was, would be moved with such tender compassion to it, that she would never suffer it to be divided: and so he should discover the true mother. Thus interpreters commonly expound it. But Abarbinel thinks this would have been no extraordinary proof of Solomon's wisdom above other men's; nor have begot such a fear in the Israelites as this judgment did. Therefore he thinks Solomon made a discovery of the truth, antecedent to this experiment; by observing the countenance, the manner of speech, and all the motions of the women, whereby he discerned the secrets of their hearts, and penetrated to the bottom of the business; which this command to divide the child discovered to all.

Ver. 26. *Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king (for her bowels yearned upon her child), and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: but the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.*] Natural affection clearly discovered the truth, without any other evidence.

Ver. 27. *Then the king said, Give her the child, and in no wise slay it: for she is the mother of it.*] As appeared by the pity which her love excited to it.

Ver. 28. *And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared the king.*] Very much reverenced, and stood in awe of him.

For they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment.] That is, saith Abarbinel, the wisdom proper to God; which searches the reins, and trieth the hearts. Therefore they *feared him*, persuading themselves, they could not have a thought of any evil design against him, which he would not discover.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *So king Solomon was king over all Israel.*] Reigned with the full consent of all the tribes of Israel.

Ver. 2. *And these are the princes which he had.*] The principal officers employed under him.

Azariah the son of Zadok the priest.] He was the son of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok; and therefore was Zadok's grandson, (1 Chron. vi. 8, 9.) But such are usually called sons in Scripture, as Rasi observes upon Gen. xx. 12. And Zadok, it is probable, in his old age, bred him up in his house as his child. It is not said here what office he had, unless we translate the word *priest*, as we do in the margin, *chief officer*, or prime minister of state. But this Abarbinel thinks is a mistake; and he takes him to have been one of the scribes, together with those two that follow in the next words, Elihoreph and Ahiah. For thus he thinks the words should be translated, *Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, and Elihoreph, and Ahiah the son of Shisha, were scribes;* there wanting a *vau* before Elihoreph, as is frequent in Scripture, (Exod. i. 1, 2.) And these three secretaries had each their several employments. One, he thinks, was in matters of judgment; the other in the revenue; and the third was concerned in writing annals, keeping the records, and was a public register.

Ver. 3. *Elihoreph and Ahiah the sons of Shisha, scribes: Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder.*] Or master of requests. So Rasi understands the word *hammaskir:* one that heard all men's causes, and brought them before the king.

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Ver. 4. *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host; and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests.*] That is, the principal, or high-priests. Kimchi thinks this was not that Abiathar whom Solomon ejected, and placed Zadok in his room, (ii. 35.) but another of that name. But Ralbag takes him to be the same that was thrust out of the priesthood; yet suffered to minister, when Zadok was not well, or could not attend: and Abarbinel approves of this opinion. Or, perhaps, Solomon permitted him, upon his petition, to come to Jerusalem, not to officiate as high-priest, but to live upon the altar, (according to the prediction, 1 Sam. ii. 36.) and he retained the name and title of high-priest, though Zadok only enjoyed the office. L'Empereur thinks he is here joined with Zadok, because in the beginning of Solomon's reign he did discharge the office of high-priest: and after he was deposed, he retained the title of that dignity as long as he lived, because of his precedent function. (Annot. upon Bertram de Rep. Jud. p. 420.)

Ver. 5. *And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers.*] That is, the twelve officers mentioned below, (ver. 7, 8, &c.) who gave accounts unto him, who was their overseer.

And Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend.] The word *cohen* signifies here, as it doth 2 Sam. viii. 18. *minister of state,* among whom Zabud was the chief: one whom the king entrusted with the management of all affairs, and with his most secret counsels, he being always with him, as Abarbinel observes. Dr. Hammond notes upon St. Matt. ix. Annot. 2. that the king's friend was an officer of nearness to the king: as Mr. Selden observed before him, in his Uxor. Hebr. lib. ii. cap. 16. p. 201, 202. For Nathan having bred up Solomon, (see 2 Sam. xii. 25.) it was easy for him to get his sons preferred by him to the highest dignities under him, when he came to be king; especially since he was very instrumental in placing him upon the throne.

Ver. 6. *And Ahishar was over the household.*] Lord high-chamberlain (as we speak in our language), who took in, and displaced officers in the family.

And Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.] Which was imposed on the people for the support of the government. Such contributions were raised several ways in several kingdoms: but good and wise princes took care not to lay burdens on such things as were necessary for the livelihood of the poor; and that they were not too heavy upon any thing: as Solomon's were, if the people's complaints were just, after his death: but perhaps this word *tribute,* which we translate *levy* in the margin, may refer not to the levying of money, but of men. Concerning which we read in the next chapter, ver. 13, 14. where Adoniram is said to be over the levy: and so he might be over both, of men and money.

Ver. 7. *And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man in his month made provision.*] The country being divided into twelve parts, there were so many persons (called Nitzavium, because there they were placed) constituted to buy provisions for the king and his family, at the best hand, and every thing in its proper season; to be sent to the place where the king resided, by every one in his month. By which means there was great plenty for all that belonged to the court; both for his house, and his stables of horses; for domestics, and for all foreigners that came thither about business, or to hear his wisdom: who were there entertained without any grievance to his people.

Ver. 8. *And these are their names: The son of Hur.*] He tells only the name of the father, who it seems was more illustrious than the son: unless we translate these words, *Ben-Hur.*

In Mount Ephraim.] And the territory belonging to it: which must be understood of the rest of the places mentioned in the following verses.

Ver. 9. *The son of Bekar.*] Or *Ben-Bekar,* as those that follow may be translated: though it is probable, as I said before, that the fathers are named, not the sons, because they were very illustrious persons, and better known: who managed, perhaps, this affair by their sons.

In Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan.] It is not material in what country these places were; and therefore I shall not inquire after them.

Ver. 10. *The son of Hesed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hepher.*] There were more Sochos than one, as we find Josh. xv. 35. 48. It is uncertain which is here meant. The land of Hepher possibly may be the portion given to the daughters of Hepher, (Josh. xvii. 3, &c.)

Ver. 11. *The son of Abinabab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife.*] Solomon had no daughters marriageable when these officers were made: but in process of time this man, and Ahimaaz mentioned ver. 15. had behaved themselves so well in their office, that Solomon did them the honour to give them two of his daughters to be their wives.

Ver. 12. *Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah, beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jockneam.*] These places have been named in the foregoing books: where I have noted as much as I can find about them. Here the author names the person himself that was employed (as he doth in some of the following verses) and not merely the father. The reason of which I cannot give, unless it were that he was a very noted person.

Ver. 13. *The son of Geber, in Ramoth-Gilead: to him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead: to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls, and brazen bars.*] These countries beyond Jordan are also well known, being often mentioned in the foregoing books.

Ver. 14. *Abinadab the son of Iddo had Mahanaim.*] And the territory belonging to it, which was very fertile: but this seems to some not to bear proportion to the rest, being not a twelfth part of the whole country. Therefore they follow the marginal translation, *to Mahanaim:* that is, all the territory from the places beforenamed unto this place.

Ver. 15. *Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife.*] As Abinadab had married another of his daughters, (see ver. 11.)

Ver. 16. *Baanah the son of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth.*] This man, perhaps, was the son of Hushai, the friend of David; and therefore preferred by Solomon.

Ver. 17. *Jehoshaphat the son of Parnah in Issachar.*] It appears by this, and the foregoing and following verses,

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that some of these officers had whole tribes assigned them for their province.

Ver. 18. *Shimei the son of Elah in Benjamin.*] Concerning this person, see chap. i. ver. 8.

Ver. 19. *Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan.*] That is, in the rest of the country of Gilead beforementioned, ver. 13.

And he was the only officer which was in the land.] There is nothing in the Hebrew answering to those words, *he was:* therefore this doth not relate to the officer beforementioned; but the meaning is, as Abarbinel expounds it, that besides all those officers beforenamed, there was another who took care of strangers, who were going to court, or coming from it: as the other twelve took care of his family, and all belonging to it. This officer made provision in that country where the king then dwelt; and therefore is not named, because he was not fixed and settled in his office, as the others were; but chosen by the citizens of that city, where the king resided.

Ver. 20. *And Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude.*] The same Abarbinel thinks this and the next verses explain the reason why this officer was appointed: first, because Israel and Judah were so great a people; and secondly, because strangers came from several regions, to bring presents, or about other business. And therefore it was necessary this officer should set a reasonable price upon all things sold in the market, that they might not exact upon any body, when they saw a multitude of buyers, which might tempt them to sell their commodities too dear.

Eating and drinking, and making merry.] In perfect security; and being well-pleased and highly satisfied.

Ver. 21. *And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the river to the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt.*] The bounds of his kingdom were Euphrates on the east, the country of the Philistines on the west, and Egypt on the south. For so God promised that their dominion should be extended, *from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,* (Gen. xv. 18.) And accordingly David conquered so far, and Solomon maintained his conquests.

They brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.] This explains what went before: which is not to be understood as if all those countries had no other king than Solomon; but that their kings were tributaries to him, and made him presents in token of their subjection.

Ver. 22. *And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and sixty measures of meal.*] By *meal* is meant a coarser sort of flour for inferior servants: and the measure here spoken of contained ten ephahs. So here was bread enough provided for near three thousand persons, as some compute it.

Ver. 23. *Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred sheep.*] This and the foregoing verse Abarbinel thinks are added, to satisfy some questions that arise about the constitution of so many officers: for why might he not be supplied out of the neighbouring cities and towns? which he shews here could not be; because of the vast quantity of provision which was necessary for one day. And it is observable, that oxen are here mentioned in the first place (both those fatted at home, and those fatted in the pastures), being anciently esteemed the most noble meat: as appears by Homer's heroes. Who, as Dioscorides notes, never had any thing in their feasts, no, not at marriages, but fat oxen. See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 32. where he mentions the great entertainments made by Agamemnon, Menelaus, Nestor, Alcinous. Nor did they that courted Penelope, though the most voluptuous of all men, eat any other meat.

Besides harts, and roe-bucks, and fallow-deer.] Which were meats highly esteemed among the Jews, and mentioned next to the foregoing, Deut. xiv. 4, 5.

And fatted fowl.] Many restrain the word *Barburim* to birds, or fowl, as we do: and some think they were capons: Kimchi and others say, *fatted fowl* out of Barbary; from whence they had the name of *Barburim.* But the name of Barbary was not known in Solomon's time: and therefore Bochart thinks the word should be translated, *the choicest of all fatted things,* (Hieroz. par. ii. lib. i. cap. 19.) and so Gousset, in his late Commentaries of the Hebrew Tongue.

Ver. 24. *And he had dominion over all the regions on this side the river.*] It might be objected to what was said before, that all the country of Israel could not afford such a constant supply of provisions: which he prevents by this observation, that his dominion extended to a great many other regions, from whence they might be furnished with more than his own country afforded.

From Tiphsah even unto Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river.] This is an explication of what is said ver. 21. that he reigned from the river, that is Euphrates, to the land of the Philistines: for Tiphsah is the same with the city Tapsæus; where there was a bridge, and a ferry over Euphrates, as Strabo testifies in many places: (see lib. xvi. p. 747.) and the very name implies as much, for עבר is *transire, to pass over,* in the Hebrew language.

And he had peace on all sides round about him.] None of his neighbours gave him any disturbance: so that the Israelites had nothing to divert them (as Abarbinel observes) from improving their lands, and increasing their rents; whereby there was a greater plenty of all things. Machiavel magnifies those who by force of arms achieved mighty things, and raised themselves to a great height of glory: but Hermannus Conringius well corrects him with this observation, that Solomon among the Jews, and Numa Pompilius among the Romans, got a more lasting name in all future ages by the art of peace. For which he refers to Cicero, lib. ii. de Officiis.

Ver. 25. *And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.*] This he saith (the same author thinks) to shew the great plenty of corn, and wine, and oil, as well as of cattle and all other things: *vines* and *fig-trees* are particularly mentioned, because they were planted in Judea more than any other trees; for the sweetness of their fruit, and the benefits of their shade.

All the days of Solomon.] That is, till the end of his life. When some adversaries were stirred up against him: but for so short a time, in his old age, that he had peace the far greater part of his reign, (1 Chron. xxii. 9.)

Ver. 26. *And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots.*] In 2 Chron. ix. 25. it is said he had but four thousand. But there is no disagreement between these two places: for he speaks here of his horses, and

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there of their stalls or stables; there being ten in every stable, which make forty thousand, as Abarbinel observes. But this doth not satisfy Bochartus, who rather inclines to Jacobus Capellus's opinion, that the Hebrew word *arbaim* here signifies *four* not forty, (Hierozoicon, lib. ii. par. i. p. 155, &c.) But this is without example; therefore others think that in the Chronicles the author speaks of those stalls for horses which he had in Jerusalem for his constant guard, which were but four thousand: whereas here he speaks of those which were dispersed throughout his whole kingdom.

And twelve thousand horsemen.] Which were distributed, it is likely, in every tribe; to keep them in peace, and to be ready to oppose any enemy that might invade them: wherein Abarbinel thinks that Solomon did not offend against the law in Deuteronomy, which commanded them not to multiply horses, (xvii. 16.) because he did it not out of pride and vanity; but to preserve peace, by keeping all his neighbours in awe. And he professes not to trust in them, Prov. xxi. 31.

Ver. 27. *These officers provided victuals for king Solomon, and for all that came to king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing.*] This is repeated, to shew their diligence, exactness, and care, which were remarkable: especially since they took care of his stables, as well as of his household, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 28. *Barley also and straw.*] Barley was anciently horse-corn, as appears by many places in Homer; which Bochartus hath observed in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 9.

For the horses and dromedaries.] The Hebrew word *rechesh* signifies swift horses, as Abarbinel thinks. (See Esther viii. 14.) But others take them for *mules*, as we translate it in the margin. Bochartus thinks it certain, that this word imports a kind of horse, Micah i. 13. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 6. 21.)

Brought they unto the place where the officers were.] Or rather, *where the beasts were.* For there is no word for *officers* in the Hebrew.

Every man according to his charge.] Which lasted for a month, every year.

Ver. 29. *And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much.*] Knowledge of all manner of things; and prudence in the administration of the government.

And largeness of heart.] A mind very comprehensive of all sort of knowledge; and a heart to do a vast deal of good.

Even as the sand that is on the sea-shore.] As the sand there encloses a vast body of waters; so his mind contained an ocean of knowledge, as the lord Bacon somewhere observes.

Ver. 30. *And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country.*] Some, by these eastern sages, understand the Chaldeans: who were rather a northern people, as Jeremiah describes them, (i. 14.) and were not famous for learning in Solomon's time; nor began to be so till the reign of Nabonassar: nor are the Tyrians here meant, as Pineda imagines; for they were a western people: but the Oriental Arabians; who were famous for wisdom in ancient times, as appears by the book of Job. And in after-ages Porphyry reports (as St. Cyril tells us, lib. x. contra Julianum), that Pythagoras travelled into this country, to improve himself in learning: where were many of those wise men called *magi*, as well as among the Persians. Thus Conringius in his Supplementum 5. ad L. de Antiq. Academicis. But after all, Abarbinel takes the word *kedem* not to signify *east*, but *ancient time.* And so *the children of kedem* are those who were born in the days of old: when men lived some hundreds of years; and so improved themselves in knowledge (especially in astronomical learning), far more than it was possible for men to do, after their lives became very short. This makes our wisdom defective, as was observed by Hippocrates in his Aphorisms, "Art is long, and life is short." But Solomon, by a special gift of God, was more knowing than they who lived above ten times as long as he did. But this is a forced sense, as appears by the next words, concerning Egypt.

And all the wisdom of Egypt.] Which country was celebrated for wisdom in Moses's time, as appears from Acts vii. 22. and in aftertimes Macrobius calls Egypt, *matrem artium, the mother of arts.* But it was famous, especially, for the knowledge of the motions of the heavenly bodies: for he saith, (lib. i. Saturnal. cap. 15.) "Primos omnium cœlos scrutari et metiri ausos fuisse;" *that they were the first who attempted to search and measure the heavens:* for which the great serenity of their air gave them opportunity. As for their civil prudence, it is sufficiently indicated in the words of Isaiah, xix. 11.

Ver. 31. *And he was wiser than all men.*] Of that age wherein he lived. But some extend this to all men that were before him, or should come after him. For in Midrasch Koheleth (upon Eccl. vii. 24.) they thus gloss, "Wiser than *col Adam, all men* (this is the first Adam), and than Ethan (this is Abraham), and than Heman (this is Moses)." But Maimonides discreetly confines the words to the men of that age, whom he mentions, Ethan, Heman, &c. and will by no means allow him to have been wiser than Moses. (See More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 4.)

Than Ethan the Ezrahite, than Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda.] If these were the sons of Zerah the son of Judah, mentioned 1 Chron. ii. 6. then it is not true that Solomon is compared only with the wise men of his age; for these lived long before him. And the two former are thought to have been endued with the spirit of prophecy, being the authors, as some think, of two psalms. For Psalm lxxxviii. is said to be an instructive Psalm of Heman the Ezrahite, and the next (lxxxix.) of Ethan the Ezrahite. Of this opinion is Dr. Lightfoot. But it is more probable that other men are here meant; for we read of Heman, the grandchild of Samuel, 1 Chron. vi. 33. who was also a prophet, 1 Chron. xxv. 5. and in the same time there was one Ethan, a Levite of the posterity of Merari, 1 Chron. vi. 46. who is joined with Heman and Asaph as principal singers, 1 Chron. xv. 17. Now the forementioned psalms may more reasonably be ascribed to them; there being express mention of David and his kingdom in one of them: and then Solomon is compared only with the wise men of his own time, and not with those that lived before Moses. They that think otherwise of these men, were misled by the Jews, who would have some psalms to have been composed before David. This they began to suppose (as a most learned friend of mine, Dr. Alix, hath observed to

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me) after the times of the apostles, as Justin Martyr affirms in his Apology, p. 76.

The sons of Mahol.] This confutes those that make them the sons of Zerah: unless we suppose him to have had two names, as it must be confessed was common among the Jews. And this last name might be given him, because he was a skilful musician: for *Mahol* signifies a *pipe.*

And his fame was in all nations round about.] All the neighbouring countries heard the fame of his wisdom.

Ver. 32. *And he spake three thousand proverbs.*] Being an excellent moral philosopher, as well as a natural. St. Jerome thinks these are those we read in the book of the Proverbs, which doth not contain so many: but is more probable than what Josephus affirms, that he wrote three thousand books of Proverbs: which is an extravagant conceit; for the Scripture mentions only three thousand proverbs, many of which we must confess to have been lost, as other composures of his are.

And his songs were a thousand and five.] He was a great poet also: for anciently wise men were wont to give good instructions in songs; which made them to be more easily remembered. But none of these compositions were thought to be divinely inspired, but only the *song of songs:* which was therefore joined to the sacred books. The rest were not adapted to stir up a sense of piety; as the Psalms of David were: who is therefore called the *sweet singer of Israel,* 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

Ver. 33. *And he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.*] That is, of all sorts of plants, from the greatest to the smallest. For *ezub* (which we commonly translate *hyssop)* seems to be the same with the Ethiopian word *azub,* which signifies *mint;* and is more agreeable to this place, being more directly opposed to the cedar than hyssop: which hath a stalk, and sometimes of great strength, as De Dieu and Job Ludolphus have observed. And for this reason Hottinger (in his Smegma Oriental. p. 580.) takes it for the wall-flower, which is less than hyssop. But Bochartus maintains hyssop to be here meant; of which the Jews reckoned four sorts: and one of them may well be thought to grow upon walls. Though there is no necessity, he thinks, to put that interpretation upon the word *bekir,* which we translate *on the wall:* which may signify, as the particle *beth* doth in many places, *near* or *hard by* the wall. Of Jerusalem, that is, which was encompassed with mountains: and the Arabians observe that hyssop grew in the mountains, especially about Jerusalem. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 50.) From Solomon's great skill in the properties and virtues of all plants, Nachmanides makes bold to conclude that he wrote a book of medicine.

And he spake also of beasts, and fowl, and creeping things, and fishes.] This shews the vastness of his learning; which comprehended the whole history of animals, as well as of plants; whose nature and qualities he understood. Some Jews fancy that Aristotle saw these books, and published them in his own name, in his Historia Animalium. It is a rule given by those who write books of civil prudence, that they who apply themselves to the management of public affairs, should not follow other studies; which by their delight may draw their minds too much from business: but Solomon had so vast a genius, that he pursued all manner of knowledge, while he governed his kingdom with great prudence. For he composed a great number of songs, and discoursed of all sorts of creatures, both in the sea and in the land: which belonged to contemplative, not to practical studies. So that in his days the wish of Plato was fulfilled, that "either philosophers might be kings, or kings be philosophers."

Ver. 34. *And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.*] It is a conceit of Kimchi, that kings came from all parts of the countries round about to hear his wisdom; and their people, when they returned, came to their kings to learn what Solomon had said. But this is not the literal sense of the words; nor is it probable that any but the queen of Sheba came in person to hear his wisdom. For they would have been mentioned, as she is. Therefore the plain meaning is, that people came from all the neighbouring nations, being sent by their kings, who heard of his fame. Nay, their own natural desires might carry them to him. For, as Dion Prusæus observes, (Orat. de Regno, p. 6.) there is no spectacle so grateful as a wise and good king. All men flock to see him, and partake, τῆς καλῆς διανοίας καὶ ἀγαθῆς, *of his good and pious mind.* Especially if he be mild and gentle, there is no spectacle so sweet and lovely; insomuch, that they who see him are loath to leave him (as he speaks a little before), and they that hear him, ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἰδεῖν, &c. *are desirous to see him,* more than children are to find their unknown father.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *AND Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto king Solomon.*] That is, he sent ambassadors to condole with king Solomon on the death of his father (as the manner was), and to congratulate his accession to the throne. Eupolemus calls this king Suron (as he is called Huram in the book of the Chronicles), and makes mention of those letters which were sent by these ambassadors. (See Eusebius in his Præpar. Evang. lib. ix. cap. 33, 34.)

(For he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father); for Hiram was ever a lover of David.] And therefore was desirous to continue in friendship with his son.

Ver. 2. *And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying.*] There were three embassies passed between them, as Abarbinel observes; for Hiram began, and Solomon returned it; and then Hiram sent to him again, ver. 8. But two only are mentioned in 2 Chron. ii. 3. 11. For Ezra there (as he observes) minded only what concerned the building of the temple; and so omitted the first embassy, which was no more than a compliment.

Ver. 3. *Thou knowest how that David my father could not build a house to the name of the Lord his God, for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet.*] This was one reason; but not the chief: for God commanded him to desist, when he had it in design.

Ver. 4. *And now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.*] Nothing to make him fear any disturbance.

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Ver. 5. *And, behold, I purpose to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God.*] For his worship and service.

As the Lord spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build a house unto my name.] This he spake by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. vii. 13.

Ver. 6. *Now therefore command them.*] That is, his servants who were skilled in such work.

To hew me cedar-trees.] Which were the most firm and durable, as well as most fragrant of all other.

Out of Lebanon.] Which was, if not all, yet a great part of it within the dominion of Solomon. Who therefore doth not ask trees of him which were his own; but only that his servants should hew and prepare them for his use, which they understood better than the Israelites.

And my servants shall be with thy servants.] To assist them, as they should be directed by them; and to receive the timber from them, and convey it to Solomon, when it was prepared.

And unto thee will I give hire for thy servants, according to all that thou shalt appoint.] Pay them what wages they pleased to demand for their work.

For thou knowest there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like the Sidonians.] Both Tyre and Sidon were now under one and the same king, and both of them very ingenious in mechanics; especially the Sidonians: whom Homer calls πολυδαιδάλους, excellent artists in divers things. For he ascribes to them all the neater sort of work, both in his Iliads and his Odyssey, as Bochartus observes, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 35. By which arts they grew very rich, in a time of long peace, which they enjoyed, as we learn from Judg. xviii. 7. where the Sidonians are made the example of those that lived very securely. But as for the Israelites, they did not mind manufactures, but applied themselves wholly to agriculture and feeding of cattle. There had been most admirable workmen among them, who knew how to cut and engrave precious stones, to cast and work up metals, &c. but this was before they came into the land of Canaan, in the time of Moses, when Bezaleel and Aholiab excelled in many different arts, which were necessary for the work of the tabernacle. But the Scripture acquaints us, that they had their skill by inspiration from God; and it doth not appear that they had any successors; so that in the time of Solomon there were no professed artificers who could undertake the work of the temple.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, that when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly.*] Which demonstrates a more than ordinary friendship which he had for king David and the people of Israel.

And said, Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.] If he was not become a proselyte to the Jews' religion (which one would have expected should have been recorded if he had), yet he had a great veneration for the God of Israel, who was properly called the Lord: and, it is likely, he worshipped him together with his own God.

Ver. 8. *And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.*] The word which we translate *fir*, others think signifies *pine* or *cypress*. For fir seems not so fit for this work, being a light wood, and not durable, and apt to take fire. Their conjecture is most reasonable, who think it was a kind of *cedar:* and therefore comprehended under that name, ver. 6. where Solomon desires of him only, that his servants might hew him *cedar-trees.*

Ver. 9. *My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea.*] The Mediterranean Sea; in which his city stood.

And I will convey them by sea in floats.] Some think they were tied together, and drawn in the water by vessels; as the manner now frequently is: but they wanted not vessels wherein to convey them; for Diodorus Siculus saith, (lib. vi.) that Sidon had in his time, τριήρεις καὶ πεντήρεις πλείους τῶν ἑκατὸν, *more than a hundred three-oar and five-oar vessels belonging to it:* and that city was but two thousand furlongs from Tyre, as Strabo saith.

Unto the place that thou shalt appoint me.] Which was Joppa: a famous sea-port in the country of Israel, (2 Chron. ii. 16.)

And will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them.] When they were landed in that place.

And thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.] For, living in barren islands, they wanted corn; though they had plenty of money; being great merchants. And in aftertimes, it appears, they were supported by provisions from Judea, (Acts xii. 20.)

Ver. 10. *And Hiram gave Solomon cedar-trees, and fir-trees, according to all his desire.*] That is, he agreed to give him all that he desired: but the trees were not yet cut down and prepared.

Ver. 11. *And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil.*] In 2 Chron. ii. 10. it is said twenty thousand baths of oil. How *corim* and *bathim* differ I shall not examine; but that place in the Chronicles plainly speaks of what was given to the workmen, who had other things besides (there mentioned) to support them in their labours: but here the prophet speaks of what was given for the use of Hiram's family, as Kimchi and Ralbag solve this seeming contradiction. Abarbinel hath another solution. (See Buxtorf's Vindicæ Hebr. Veritatis, par. ii. cap. 2. p. 424.)

Thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.] During their lives.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom as he promised.*] His wisdom appeared more and more in all his transactions.

And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.] It was lawful in ancient times, before the law of Moses was given, to make leagues with strangers to their religion for their mutual benefit: as appears by the story of Jacob and Laban, Isaac and Abimelech (though some doubt whether he was an idolater), and the law of Moses made no alteration, as Grotius observes, lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 16. sect. 9. If Hiram therefore worshipped other gods, Solomon might notwithstanding make a league with him, (insomuch that Hiram calls him brother, ix. 13.) he being none of the seven nations of Canaan.

Ver. 13. *And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.*] To cut down the trees which Hiram's servants were to hew.

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Ver. 14. *And sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses; a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home.*] That they might not be tired with their labour; nor neglect their own families while they were employed abroad.

And Adoniram was over the levy.] Took care to raise them, and to see them disposed according to Solomon's order. (See iv. 6.)

Ver. 15. *And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens.*] *viz.* Porters, carters, seamen, and such-like.

And fourscore thousand that were hewers in the mountains.] That is, hewers of stone, for timber was hewed by Hiram's servants in Lebanon. And these hundred and fifty thousand were not Israelites, as the thirty thousand beforementioned were; but strangers of other nations, as may be gathered from ix. 21, 22. It may seem strange to some, that so many men should be employed about the building of so small a place as the temple was: but they must consider that there were many other works besides which Solomon designed, and which he finished; (ix. 15.) for which we read of no other preparation of materials but what was now made.

Ver. 16. *Besides the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.*] In 2 Chron. ii. 18. they are said to have been three thousand and six hundred: for three hundred were overseers even of the three thousand three hundred, who were to oversee the rest. That is, superior officers, who surveyed the whole, as Kimchi observes. Or, as Abarbinel takes it, there were three hundred supernumeraries, who were employed in the more exquisite sort of work: or when any of the other failed, were ready to supply their places.

Ver. 17. *And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.*] All things being now prepared, Solomon himself seems to have been present at the laying of the foundation of the house; which was not only very strong, but also very magnificent. For he caused stones of great bigness to be laid for the foundation, and some of great price, (such as marble, some think, see vii. 10.) and those also hewn and polished, not rough, that they might lie more regularly and even: which shews the nobleness of his mind, in making that which was not exposed to open view suitable to that which was seen.

Ver. 18. *And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them.*] It seems Solomon's servants learned of Hiram's; or at least were directed by them to assist in the work.

And the stone-squarers.] Or the Giblites, as it is in the margin, who are mentioned in Josh. xiii. 5. being Phœnicians, inhabitants of Gabala, a promontory mentioned by Pliny, (see Psal. lxxxiii. 7.) who were the most excellent artists in those parts.

So they prepared timber and stones to build the house.] Made all ready not only to lay the foundation, but to build the house.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt.*] These years are variously computed by the Jewish doctors; with which I shall not trouble the reader: but only observe, that they are plainly divided into two intervals, by the words of Jephthah to the Ammonites, Judg. xi. 26. where he tells them the Israelites had dwelt in the land of Canaan three hundred years. Unto which if we add the forty years wherein they wandered in the wilderness, there were three hundred and forty years past at that time, since they came out of Egypt. And so the other interval from thence unto the building of the temple was a hundred and forty years: which is not hard to make out, according to Sir John Marsham's computation. (See my annotations on that place of the book of Judges.)

In the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel.] But why did he not begin the work sooner, according to the command of his father David, who left him all things necessary, gold, silver, brass, &c. for the building of it; and also a draught of it: so that he might have begun when he began to reign? To which Abarbinel answers, that Solomon would not make use of what his father had prepared, but resolved to build the house at his own cost and charge; and put into the treasury of the Lord's house, that which David had dedicated to this work; (vii. 51.) and therefore he stood in need of four years' time, to gather so much gold and silver as was necessary to defray the charges of this work.

In the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.] Either to lay the foundation of it, or to build upon the foundation beforementioned.

Ver. 2. *And the house which king Solomon built for the Lord.*] For his worship and service: and wherein his Divine presence might dwell among them, (ver. 13.)

The length of it was sixty cubits.] Forty of which belonged to the holy place; and twenty to the most holy.

And the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.] The length and breadth of it was twice as big (Abarbinel and others observe) as the tabernacle of Moses: which was in length but thirty cubits, and in breadth but ten. Whereas the temple was twenty cubits wide through the whole, and sixty long: besides the porch. When it is said the height was thirty cubits, it must be understood of the holy place: for the holy of holies was only twenty. (See ver. 20.) And so the height of the holy place was three times more than it was in the tabernacle: for his temple was to resemble a high tower; having chambers above it, in three stories one above another, as the Jewish doctors observe. (See 1 Chron. xxviii. 11.)

Ver. 3. *And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.*] He gives no account of the height of it: but in 2 Chron. iii. 4. Ezra seems to say, it was a *hundred and twenty cubits.* Which words Kimchi imagines relate to the porch alone: but Abarbinel wonders how this could come into his head; when this height belongs to the whole house. For if it belonged only to the porch, then nothing is there said of the house itself: and besides, it immediately follows that he *overlaid it with pure gold.* Which is not true of the porch (for that was not overlaid with gold) but only of the house of God. Which, from the foundation to

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the covering of it, was thirty cubits high; and above that covering were three stories of chambers, which were ninety cubits: and so in all the height of the house was a hundred and twenty.

Ver. 4. *And for the house he made windows of narrow lights.*] Or, as it is in the margin, *broad within and narrow without.* By which means the house was better secured from the weather; and yet had lights enough. See Casaubon upon Athenæus, p. 363. where he observes, the Greeks call such windows τοξικὰς, "fenestras longas et angustas, ad emittenda tela, quam ad lucem admittendam factas;" *long and narrow windows made to shoot out weapons, than to let in light.* And he translates these Hebrew words, *fenestras, prospectu clausas,* viz. from the outward part.

Ver. 5. *And against the wall of the house.*] Or, *joining to it,* as it is in the margin: for the beams were not fastened in the walls of the house, as we read in the next verse; but a wooden wall, some think, went round the house, unto which these chambers were fastened.

He built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle.] But not of the porch where the entrance into the house was. It appears out of Ezekiel and Josephus, as Peter Martyr observes, that there were twelve of these chambers on the south side, and as many on the north; and six on the west.

And he made chambers round about.] In the Hebrew, he made *ribs:* by which some understand galleries. Which encompassed all the forenamed chambers, as our ribs do the entrails of our bodies. Without which there could not have been a convenient passage to the several chambers: which were made to serve the priests to lay their garments in, and wherein they rested, and ate of the sacrifices, and other uses.

Ver. 6. *The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad.*] It appears by ver. 10. that they were but five cubits high, and built over one another three stories, increasing in breadth, every story, one cubit, by the contrivance which follows.

For without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about.] In the margin we translate it, *narrowings* or *rebatements.* By which seem to be meant, that the wall to which they were adjoined was thicker below and above narrower: so that there was more space to make the upper chambers wider.

That the beams should not be fastened to the walls of the house.] But in that outward wall which I mentioned before, made of wood: for he would have no holes made in the wall of the temple. (See L'Empereur upon Codex Middoth, p. 147, 148. and Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, p. 40.)

Ver. 7. *And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither.*] So fitted for their several uses and places, that they might be joined together, without any other labour, by putting them one by, or upon, another.

So that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building.] The sense is plain, that the stones were laid without any noise, there being nothing to be done but to join them together. But the Jews are so foolish as to fancy, that they were not hewn nor planed by any instrument before they came thither; but a worm called *samir,* which God created on purpose, did the business: and that the stones of their own accord came to the temple; and there the angels laid them in their place and order. (See L'Empereur upon Codex Middoth, p. 183.) Which fable arose from somebody that did not understand the word *samir,* which signifies a very hard stone called *smiris* (as Bochartus hath observed), with which stones might be cut and polished as diamonds are. (See Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. vi. cap. 11.) An emblem this was, as all interpreters note, of that peace and quiet which should be in the Christian church, where all things should be done without contention. "Utinam Deus hoc tandem aliquando elargiatur, ut omnes in domo suo idem dicamus et sentiamus," as P. Martyr prays upon this place.

Ver. 8. *The door of the middle chamber.*] By which they were to go into the middle row of chambers.

Was in the right side of the house.] On the south side, which in Hebrew is called the *right side,* because, when men look towards the east, the south is on their right hand. Some think there was the like door in the north; but it is more likely, that one door served to carry them round to all the chambers.

And they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber.] That they might take up the less room.

And out of the middle into the third.] There was the like pair of stairs into the third story.

Ver. 9. *So he built the house, and finished it.*] That is, the walls of the house.

And also covered the house.] He also covered the top of it.

With beams and boards of cedar.] In the margin, the *vaultings and the ceilings* of cedar. That is, the roof was an arch within, which made it look more noble, though without it was flat.

Ver. 10. *And then he built chambers against all the house five cubits high.*] The word *then* is not in the Hebrew; and being omitted the sense is plain, that he gives an account of the height of these chambers, as before (ver. 6.) of the breadth. But it is very briefly; and we are to understand that those below, and those in the middle, and those above, were every one of an equal height; *viz.* five cubits. So they were fifteen cubits in all: which was five less than the height of the house, for that was twenty cubits. Otherwise there would have been no room for the windows: which, I suppose, were above all these chambers, in the top of the house.

Ver. 11. *And the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying.*] By the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite, as the Jews say, in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 20. For it is not said that God appeared to him now, as he did iii. 5. and ix. 2, 3. In which latter place it is said God appeared to him, *the second time:* which is a proof (as Abarbinel notes) that now God did not appear to him, but spake to him by a prophet.

Ver. 12. *Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father.*] See 2 Sam. vii. 13. Here Abarbinel makes a query, why this prophecy is inserted in the middle of the work, which might seem to have been more proper in the beginning, or after it was ended: but Solomon laying the founda-

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tion, and raising the building very firm and strong, which might last to many generations, God would not have him presume upon its duration, unless he and the people of Israel were obedient to him: and therefore told him he had better not proceed, nor be at any further charge, unless he intended to be a good man, and observe all his laws. And the continuance of this house, and of God's presence among them, depending on this, plainly signified, that let him build it ever so strong it should be demolished, if he proved disobedient.

Ver. 13. *And I will dwell among the children of Israel.*] As he had done in the tabernacle, (Exod. xxv. 8.)

And I will not forsake my people Israel.] But protect them in the good land he had given them.

Ver. 14. *So Solomon built the house, and finished it.*] God spake the foregoing words, while he was building it, that he might desist, if he did not intend to be obedient to him. But these words import, that notwithstanding this admonition, he went on to build the house, as magnificent and durable as he intended; resolving to keep God's commandments.

Ver. 15. *And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar.*] He wainscotted, as we now speak, the whole house with cedar.

Both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling.] Or, as we translate it in the margin, From the floor of the house, unto the walls of the ceiling. That is, from the bottom to the top.

And he covered them on the inside with wood.] The word *them* is not in the Hebrew. Which if we retain, it relates to the walls of the ceiling: that is, to the top of the house, which in the inside was covered with wood, (ver. 9.)

And covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.] Or, with another sort of cedar, which was a great deal firmer and more lasting than fir. (See chap. v. 8.)

Ver. 16. *And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house.*] The *house* here meant is the most holy place: for he had spoken of the other part of the house, called the sanctuary, in the foregoing words.

Both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar.] Or, as the foregoing verse, from the floor to the walls of the ceiling.

He even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place.] Here he explains what he meant by the *house* in the beginning of the verse. And this was most properly *the house* of all the parts of the temple: because here the Divine Glory inhabited, and from hence God gave answer, when he was consulted. It is called *Debir:* as the outward house is called *Hechal.*

Ver. 17. *And the house.*] That is, the holy place, as the next words explain it.

That is, the temple before it.] The part of the house which was before the most holy place. In the Hebrew the words are *before my face:* that is, before the place where the Divine Glory appeared.

Was forty cubits long.] As long again as the most holy place. (See ver. 2. 16.)

Ver. 18. *And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops.*] Of an oblong figure, like an egg, as Forsterus thinks, comparing this place with 2 Kings iv. where there is the like word, and there translated *gourds.*

And open flowers.] Not buds, but flowers, spread and full-blown.

All was cedar; there was no stone seen.] This relates, I suppose, to the knops and flowers, which were all of cedar: and so doth not contradict 2 Chron. iii. 5.

Ver. 19. *And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord.*] In the innermost part of the house he fitted the most holy place to receive the ark of God. It seems to be called the innermost part, because it was furthest from the entrance into the building. The Jewish doctors have a conceit, that this signifies a room which he made under ground (under the floor of the oracle), where the ark might be hid, in case the house should be laid desolate. And he made this cave in very deep and winding burrows, putting a stone upon the mouth of it, upon which the ark stood. Here Josiah they fancy hid the ark, and the pot of manna, and the rod of Aaron, and the holy oil, where they were found after their return from Babylon. For which story there is no foundation; and it contradicts what they all acknowledge, that there was no ark in the second temple. It is far more reasonable to think, that by *debir,* which we translate *oracle,* is here meant the partition which separated the holy place from the most holy: which Solomon is here said to have prepared or established, *in the midst of the house,* as the words are in the Hebrew. This Gousset hath made probable: though it appears from ver. 23. (where the cherubims are said to be *within the oracle*), that this word signifies not only the partition which made the separation, but the place itself, which was separated thereby from the sanctuary, to be God's dwelling-place.

Ver. 20. *And the oracle in the fore-part.*] That is, in the innermost part beforementioned: which is also called the fore-part, because it was before him that entered into the house.

Was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof.] It was a perfect square.

And he overlaid it with pure gold.] Not merely gilt it, but covered it with plates of gold: for the gold amounted to six hundred talents, as Ezra saith, 2 Chron. iii. 8.

And so covered the altar.] Of incense, which was before it in the holy place.

Which was of cedar.] Or, *he covered the altar with cedar,* that the gold might the better lie upon it.

Ver. 21. *So Solomon overlaid the house with pure gold.*] That is, the most holy place (called the oracle in the foregoing verse), which he made as sumptuous as he could for the Divine residence.

And he made a partition by the chains of gold.] The most holy place was separated from the sanctuary by a partition: before which there was a veil also, which hung upon golden chains. Thus this passage is to be understood, for the partition itself did not depend upon chains.

And he overlaid it with gold.] That is, overlaid the partition.

Ver. 22. *And the whole house he overlaid with gold.*] This is meant of the sanctuary, which was overlaid with gold, as well as the oracle.

Until he had finished all the house.] Some think the very chambers, which were without the house, were likewise made thus splendid. But I see no ground to affirm it.

Also the altar, that was before the oracle, he covered with gold.] That is, the altar of incense; thence called the *golden*

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altar: which was in the upper end of the sanctuary, near the entrance in the oracle. This he covered with cedar, (ver. 20.) and now overlaid with gold.

Ver. 23. *And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive-tree, each ten cubits high.*] These were different from those made by Moses, which were of solid gold: and arose out of each end of the mercy-seat; being of one piece with it, and looking one upon the other, (Exod. xxv. 18, 19.) But these were made of olive-wood; or, as it is in the Hebrew, of *tree of oil.* For many such sorts of wood there were besides olive; as pine, cedar, &c. And these two are plainly distinguished; olive and oily-wood, in Nehem. viii. 15. Here it may be proper to note, that the word *debir* (which we constantly translate *oracle*) comes from *debar,* which signifies to *speak;* because God, who dwelt between the cherubims, declared his mind from hence, when he was consulted by the high-priest with *urim* and *thummim:* and it still retained this name (though we never read of any answer by *urim* and *thummim* while this temple stood), because it had been the place from whence God had been wont to speak to the high-priest. I have observed elsewhere, that there might be the use of *urim* and *thummim* in this temple, though it be not recorded: but it is highly probable, that upon their rejecting the government of God, and turning the theocracy into a human government by kings, God ceased to direct and govern them by that Divine oracle. During the reign of David, indeed, there is some footsteps of it, their new government by kings being not yet well established: so that we may think there was a mixture of the theocracy still with it, as may be gathered from 2 Sam. ii. 1. iii. 19. 23. xxi. 1. But after that, there is not the least glimpse of it; but they inquired of God by the prophets, 1 Kings xxii. 3. 2 Kings iii. 11. 29. xxii. 14. where the high-priest himself, being sent by king Josiah to inquire of God, went to Huldah the prophetess. Which is a demonstration, that the answer by *urim* and *thummim* ceased, when God's government was cast off by them: to which that oracle properly appertained.

Ver. 24. *And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing to the uttermost part of the other wing was ten cubits.*] Whereas those of Moses were only so long as to cover the mercy-seat; which was but two cubits and a half in length, (Exod. xxv. 17.)

Ver. 25. *And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size.*] So that they filled the whole breadth of the house, which was twenty cubits.

Ver. 26. *The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub.*] They stood upon their feet, upon the floor of the house, (2 Chron. iii. 13.) each being ten cubits high, as was said at the first, (ver. 23.) that is, half as high as the house.

Ver. 27. *And he set the cherubims within the inner house.*] With their faces towards the sanctuary: so that they looked upon him that entered into the oracle.

And they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims.] Or rather (as in the margin) *the cherubims stretched forth their wings.*

So that the wings of the one touched the one wall, and the wings of the other touched the other wall.] That is, the south and the north walls of the house. Whereas the wings of those cherubims that Moses made stretched from east to west: for they looked one upon the other over the mercy-seat.

And their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.] Where they must needs meet, being five cubits long on each side, (ver. 24.) and the house twenty cubits wide.

Ver. 28. *And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.*] So that there were four cherubims in the most holy place of Solomon's temple. Two lesser made by Moses of massy gold; and two larger made by Solomon, overlaid with gold. Those made by Moses were part of the mercy-seat, and inseparable from it; these of Solomon seem to have spread their wings over it, being added only for the greater ornament and glory of God's house. So Abarbinel observes, that Solomon did not make a new ark, which was the only thing made by Moses, which Solomon did not imitate and make more glorious. But this he durst not presume to open, and to take out the book of the law, and put it into an ark of his own making. It being unlawful for him to touch it, and therefore he let it remain, with its cover, the mercy-seat, and the cherubims belonging to it; and only placed these new cherubims over it, as a covering to it, for the greater beauty of the house.

Ver. 29. *And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers, within and without.*] Both in the most holy place, and in the sanctuary.

Ver. 30. *And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, both within and without.*] This hath the same meaning with the foregoing words: that the floor of the whole house, both the inner and outward part, was overlaid with gold, which made it wonderfully splendid and magnificent.

Ver. 31. *And for the entrance of the oracle he made doors of olive-tree.*] Or some tree that was oily. (See Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, p. 87.)

The lintel and side-posts were a fifth part of the wall.] These words are very obscure; for the words *of the wall* are not in the Hebrew, but only *a fifth.* Which may be understood to signify, that they held the proportion of a fifth part of the doors. But there are those who think the meaning is, that this gate was the fifth in number belonging to the house. The first they make account was that which let into the court of the people; the second, into the court of the priests; the third, was the door of the porch; the fourth, of the holy place; and this fifth of the oracle. And accordingly they interpret these words, ver. 33. *the fourth.*

Ver. 32. *The two doors also were of olive-tree.*] Or, as it is in the margin, *the leaves of the doors:* explaining what sort of doors they were, *viz.* folding-doors; as it follows, ver. 34.

And he carved upon them carvings of cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims and palm-trees.] The meaning seems to be, that he laid plates of gold upon the doors of the house, and gilt the cherubims, trees, and flowers.

Ver. 33. *So also he made for the doors of the temple.*] That is, of the holy place.

Posts of olive-tree, a fourth part of the wall.] See ver. 31.

Ver. 34. *And the two doors were of fir-tree.*] Or, of a kind of cedar; as was before observed.

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The two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding.] Whereby they took up less room, when they were opened.

Ver. 35. *And he carved thereon cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers; and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.*] This was said before, ver. 32. therefore repeated, I suppose, to signify that both sides of the doors were thus carved and covered with gold. I have not meddled with the mystical signification of any of these things: in which men's fancies differ very much; though in one thing they all agree: that by the *cherubims*, which were so plentiful in every part of the house, the hosts of angels are represented, there attending upon the Divine Majesty, as his ministers to execute his pleasure.

Ver. 36. *And he built the inner court.*] Which was that wherein the priests officiated.

With three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar-beams.] That the people who were in the outward court might see what the priests did: the wall which separated the priests from the court of the people being but three cubits high (as most understand these words); for the cedar was not laid upon the top of the wall, but was the facing of it within side. The priests likewise from hence might speak and deliver any message from God to the people.

I conclude this account of Solomon's works with an observation of Abarbinel: That this Divine writer doth not mention several things belonging to the house of God, as the *altar of burnt-offering*, the *candlestick*, the *table*, the *laver*, (though they were ten times as many as Moses made, see 2 Chron. iii.) because his intention was only to explain the great things which he did, and such as wrought in men admiration: not things in which there was no majesty, nor any great cost bestowed upon them. Therefore he takes notice of the great and precious stones (that is, stones of great price) wherewith he laid the foundation of the house, (ver. 17.) and the rest of the things mentioned in this chapter; which were very chargeable, and which shewed the greatness of his mind, his wisdom, prophecy (as his words are), and riches: but other things, as the court of the temple, &c. he passes over compendiously. But this observation is not altogether true; for though this Divine writer does not take notice of every thing made by Solomon in this chapter; yet in the next, I think, he omits nothing, save only the brazen altar of burnt-offering, which is not mentioned in this book among Solomon's works; but taken particular notice of in 2 Chron. iv. 1. where its large dimensions are described. All other things, as the lavers, the candlestick, the table, &c. are here mentioned in the following chapter.

Ver. 37. *In the fourth year was the foundation of the house laid, in the month Zif.*] He repeats this (which was said ver. 1.) to subjoin in the next words, how long the house was in building.

Ver. 38. *And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul (which is the eighth month).*] As Zif was the second.

Was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it.] Every thing was completely finished, according to his design; without any need of addition or alteration.

So was he seven years in building it.] And a half: but the lesser number is omitted, as is usual in these books, and in other authors: particularly half a year is omitted in the reign of David, who is only said to have reigned forty years. (See the second chapter of this book, ver. 11.) And considering the curiosity of the work, and the scarcity of men of skill, it is no wonder that it was so long before it was perfected: but rather the alacrity and diligence of Solomon (as Abarbinel notes) is to be admired; who finished this work with all the speed he could make; when he was almost as many more years in building his own house, which was not so costly and sumptuous. An account of which is given us, in the beginning of the next chapter: where the author tells us he built two houses, and sets down the dimensions of one of them.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *BUT Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.*] He did not begin to build his own house till he had finished the house of God; that nothing might hinder that holy work. This appears from ix. 10. where we read he was twenty years in building both.

Ver. 2. *And he built also the house of the forest of Lebanon.*] The forenamed house was in Jerusalem: near to which he built another, in a cool, shady mountain; which made it resemble Mount Lebanon. And here he dwelt in summer, as in the other in winter. But it is not likely it was in Mount Lebanon; for that was in the very extremity of his kingdom, where he would not have set his throne; (as he seems to have done in this house, ver. 7.) for that was too far distant from the usual place of his residence. And for the same reason he would not have there placed the golden shields that he made; as we find he did, x. 17. It was therefore near to Jerusalem, (appears from xiv. 25, 26.) and called by the name of the Forest of Lebanon: just as many pleasant and delightful places in that country were called Carmel. Because it was in a lofty place like Lebanon; and the trees which grew there made it very shady and cool.

The length thereof was a hundred cubits.] Which was not longer than the house of God, if we take in all the courts belonging to it.

And the height thereof thirty cubits.] The height of the first story was so many cubits: upon which, in all likelihood, there was another of the like height.

Upon four rows of cedar pillars.] Which supported the building; and made four walks under it.

With cedar-beams upon the pillars.] Upon which was laid the floor of the next story.

Ver. 3. *And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty-five pillars, fifteen in a row.*] So there were but three rows of pillars in the second story, which were sufficient for the support of the roof. And we may guess from hence that there were threescore pillars below.

Ver. 4. *And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light.*] Directly opposite one against the other, which we call thorough lights.

In three ranks.] Or, on three sides of the house, the south, the north, and the east; that it might have the freer air. On the west side was the porch, and so no windows were there. Others interpret it, the windows were exactly one under another in three rows.

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Ver. 5. *And all the doors and posts were square with the windows.*] The figures of the doors and of the windows were one and the same; *viz.* square.

And light was against light in three ranks.] This is meant of the smaller windows that were over the doors; which, it is likely, were also square.

Ver. 6. *And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits.*] This was for his guard, and for people to walk in who came about business (as well as for state and ornament), and therefore was covered to keep them dry in rainy weather.

And the porch was before them.] That is, before the pillars of the great house, before spoken of.

And the other pillars and the thick beams were before them.] That is, they were directly opposite one to the other. Or, if we follow the marginal translation (*according to them*), the sense is, that it had its pillars and beams just like the great house; and, it is likely, rooms built upon those beams for his servants.

Ver. 7. *Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment.*] So it was called, because here he sat to hear and determine the causes that people brought before him. With whom he would not have his house cumbered; but made this porch without the house, where he dispatched such business.

And it was covered with cedar from one side to the other.] In the Hebrew, *from floor to floor:* that is, from the ground to the roof of the porch.

Ver. 8. *And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work.*] There was a court between the porch and the house, which may be called the inner court; and then another beyond the porch, which may be called the outward. So that it stood between two courts, which were both alike.

Solomon also built a house for Pharaoh's daughter.] Near, I suppose, to his own house; she being a person of the highest quality, and his first wife.

(Which he had taken to wife).] See iii. 1.

Like unto this porch.] Not for figure, or bigness; but for the materials of which it was built.

Ver. 9. *All these were of costly stones, according to the measure of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without.*] All the forementioned buildings were polished on both sides: so that they appeared both within and without; that is, both on the inside which was towards the palace of Solomon, and on the outside which was towards the great court.

Even from the foundation unto the coping.] From the bottom of the building to the top of it.

And so on the outside towards the great court.] Not only on the front of the house, but on the back side of it, towards the great court.

Ver. 10. *And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones; of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.*] By costly stones (mentioned here and in the foregoing and following verses) are not to be understood precious stones; but stones that being bigger and firmer, and better polished than others, were of greater price: as Bochartus explains it, both here and v. 17.

Ver. 11. *And above were costly stones (after the measure of hewed stones), and cedars.*] The roof was finished after the same manner; with stones and cedar-beams.

Ver. 12. *And the great court round about.*] *viz.* Of Solomon's palace.

Was with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar-beams.] Just like the inner court of the house of the Lord; (vi. 36.) and so the following words are to be understood.

Both for the inner court of the house of the Lord.] Or rather, *as for the inner court of the Lord's house;* for so the particle *vau* sometimes signifies.

And for the porch of the house.] Of Solomon's own house.

Ver. 13. *And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.*] For though he was an Israelite by birth, yet he dwelt at Tyre: and it is likely had the privileges of that city, and so was one of king Hiram's subjects. And therefore in 2 Chron. ii. 13. that king saith he sent him to Solomon: that is, granted his request, that this man might come and serve him. And accordingly Solomon sent for him, and fetched him to Jerusalem.

Ver. 14. *He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali.*] She herself was of the tribe of Dan, (2 Chron. ii. 14.) but her first husband was of the tribe of Naphtali; by whom she had this son.

And his father was a man of Tyre.] When she was a widow she married a man of Tyre; who is called Hiram's father, because he bred him up, and was the husband of his mother.

A worker in brass.] And in stone, and purple, and a great many other things, as we read in the place abovementioned But *brass* is only mentioned here; because he is going to speak only of such works.

And he was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all work in brass.] He had an excellent genius to this work; and besides the instructions of his father, it is not improbable that God endued him with great skill in contriving, and also working all manner of work of this sort.

And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.] He presently found him to be an excellent artist; and so employed him in all his business.

Ver. 15. *And he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high a-piece.*] In 2 Chron. iii. 15. it is said, he made two pillars of thirty-five cubits high: which doth not contradict these words, it being evident that there he speaks of both the pillars (as Abarbinel observes), which were thirty-five cubits. But here he speaks of them singly, which were each but eighteen cubits. Both of them, indeed, made thirty-six cubits; but one cubit must be allowed for the basis of each, which is not considered in the book of Chronicles. This seems a better solution of this small difficulty than that of L'Empereur, in his preface to Codex Middoth, where he saith, one of these writers speaks of the common cubit, and the other of the sacred, which was double to the common. Each pillar, therefore, he thinks, was eighteen sacred cubits, but thirty-five common; to which one common cubit must be added for the basis. But this distinction of common and sacred cubits is not allowed by every body.

And a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.] So they were four cubits in thickness. (See Dr. Lightfoot, of the Temple, p. 61—63. and L'Empereur's preface to Benjamin Tudelensis.) Eupolemus, a heathen writer, takes notice of these pillars, and says they were as

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high as the temple. (Eusebius, lib. ix. Præpar. Evang. cap. 34.)

Ver. 16. *And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the top of the pillars: the height of the one chapiter was five cubits, and the height of the other was five cubits.*] This account of them Ezra also gives, 2 Chron. iii. 15. Yet in 2 Kings xxv. 17. they are said to be but three cubits. But it is to be observed, that it immediately follows in that place, there was *a wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapiters;* which in all made five cubits; and are all here comprehended in the word *chapiter.*

Ver. 17. *And nets of checker-work, and wreaths of chain-work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars.*] This curious work encompassed the chapiter, and contained, as it were, the pomegranates afterward mentioned; which might be seen through these nets.

Seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other chapiter.] Some think that each chapiter was adorned with leaves, and flowers, and fruit, in four orders; which were bound about with three chains. But it is very hard to explain this work, which is so very briefly described. (See Dr. Lightfoot, in the forenamed place.)

Ver. 18. *And he made the pillars.*] That is, he finished them in this manner. (See the same author, p. 63.)

And two rows round about upon the one net-work, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapiter.] There were two rows of pomegranates; which took up one of the five cubits, whereof the chapiter consisted.

Ver. 19. *And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily-work.*] In imitation of lilies.

In the porch.] Such as were in the porch of the temple.

Four cubits.] The other four cubits were of lily-work, except the middle.

Ver. 20. *And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the net-work.*] This is very obscure, because shortly delivered. But the meaning seems to be, that the lily-work being above and below, at the top and the bottom of the chapiters, the middle cubit (called the belly) was all covered with pomegranates.

And the pomegranates were two hundred, round about upon the other chapiter.] In the book of Jeremiah, lii. 23. it is said that there were ninety-six on a side; but all of them, upon the net-work, were a hundred in all; which Abarbinel thus explains: The pomegranates on the net-work were towards the four quarters of the world, being twenty-four towards each quarter; which in all made ninety-six. And in each angle there being one great pomegranate, they made up the number a hundred.

Ver. 21. *And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name of it Jachin; and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.*] It is generally thought, that these pillars were made and erected only for ornament; because they supported no building. But Abarbinel's conjecture is not improbable, that Solomon had respect to the pillar of the cloud, and the pillar of fire, that went before them and conducted them in the wilderness, and was the token of the Divine providence over them. These he set at the porch or entrance of the temple (Jachin representing the pillar of the cloud, and Boaz the pillar of fire), praying and hoping that the Divine Light, and the cloud of his glory would vouchsafe to enter in there; and by them God and his providence would dwell among them in this house.

Ver. 22. *And upon the top of the pillars was lily-work.*] This seems to have been said before, (ver. 19.) but the next words, *So was the work of the pillars finished,* shew that this was a new addition, to crown all, after the pillars were erected, as Abarbinel observes.

Ver. 23. *And he made a molten sea.*] The Hebrews call any great collection of waters by the name of a *sea.* So the lake of Gennesaret, and others, are called in the gospel; and here it signifies a great vessel, containing abundance of water. Which served for the washing of the sacrifices, and of the priests and Levites; who washed their hands and their feet; not in it, but with water drawn out of it by pipes or conduits.

Ten cubits from the one brim to the other: and it was round about.] Of a circular figure.

And its height was five cubits.] Beside the height of the oxen whereon it stood.

And a line of thirty cubits did compass it about.] For the diameter being ten cubits, this must be the compass of it. This sea was filled with water by the Gibeonites; who were afterward called Nethinims.

Ver. 24. *And under the brim round about there were knops compassing it.*] They were in the shape of an egg; on the top of every one of which was an ox head; from whose mouth water gushed out: so Abarbinel gathers from 2 Chron. ii. 3. where they are called oxen, from the figure of their head.

Ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about.] So there were three hundred of these knops in all; the sea being thirty cubits round.

The knops were cast in two rows when it was cast.] They were not carved afterward, but cast at first, when the sea was molten. And there being two rows of them, Abarbinel thence concludes there were six hundred in all, one under another. From whence water might flow out of the sea, to wash a great number at a time.

Ver. 25. *And it stood upon twelve oxen.*] Oxen were used not only for drawing the plough, but for carrying burdens upon their backs; as they are still employed among the Indians. Whence Solomon placed the figure of these creatures under his molten sea, as the supporters of it. There was so little danger of their being worshipped, that the meanness of the use to which they served, had made some believe that Solomon made them in contempt of the golden calf, which the Israelites worshipped in the wilderness; and placed them under the sea, that the people might see there was nothing worthy of adoration in these figures. Josephus, indeed, thinks Solomon offended in making these images: but this is confuted by the glory of the Lord filling the temple after it was finished. Which shewed that he approved of all this work; which it is likely was done by his instruction: but some great men think Josephus is in the right.

Three looking towards the north, and three looking towards the west, and three looking towards the south, and three looking towards the east.] This seems to import that this sea was square (the oxen looking towards the four quarters of the world), whereas it is said before, (ver. 25.) that it was round all about. And so it was (as the Jewish interpreters, particularly Abarbinel and Ralbag, expound

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this) in the brim of it, it was perfectly round, and so it continued in the two upper cubits: but below the brim (in the three lower cubits) it was square. And, as Kimchi thinks, in the two upper cubits there were no knops; but in the three lower, just above the oxen that supported the sea.

And the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.] Under the sea, that they might not be seen.

Ver. 26. *And it was a hand-breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies.*] In the shape of lilies: that is, not plain and straight, but bending downwards, after the manner of those flowers. (See Dr. Lightfoot, of the Temple, p. 230, &c.)

It contained two thousand baths.] A *bath*, being of the same bigness with an *ephah*, (Ezek. xlv. 11.) is thought to contain eight gallons: so that this sea contained five hundred barrels; that is, it had thus much water constantly in it. But if it had been filled up to the brim, it would have held three thousand baths, as we read 2 Chron. iv. 5. which quantity they were not wont to put into it, lest with the wind it should run over. Or, as the most learned of the Jews reconcile these two places, these words in the book of the Kings are to be understood of moist things; but those in the Chronicles of dry; which being heaped up, it would contain a third part more than of things liquid. With which some compare those words of our Saviour, (Luke vi. 38.) "Good measure heaped up, shaken together, and running over."

Ver. 27. *And he made ten bases of brass.*] Tables or stands upon which the lavers (mentioned below, ver. 38.) were to rest. (See Dr. Lightfoot, of the Temple, p. 228, &c.)

Four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth, and three cubits the height thereof.] They were made so broad that the lavers might stand more firmly, being each four cubits; but not so high, that the priests might more easily reach to wash the sacrifices in them, (2 Chron. iv. 6.)

Ver. 28. *And the work of the bases was in this manner: they had borders.*] To keep up the lavers from falling.

And the borders were between the ledges.] It is not easy to apprehend what he means by *ledges;* because, as P. Martyr observes, we have no such work in these days.

Ver. 29. *And on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, and oxen, and cherubims.*] Oxen are called *cherubims* in Ezek. x. 14. Therefore the meaning here is, that, besides lions and oxen, there were other cherubims (the figures of eagles perhaps) which adorned these borders.

And upon the ledges there was a base above.] This is so darkly expressed, that I do not apprehend the meaning; unless it be this, that the upper ledge was over the heads of these animals; and the under ledge was that upon which their feet rested, as the next words signify.

And beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions of thin work.] Under these figures there was some other work added (which was not cast together with them), and drawn very thin.

Ver. 30. *And every base had four brazen wheels.*] They run upon wheels like a coach, or chariot; so might easily be removed from place to place, as the convenience of the priests required.

And plates of brass.] Between the wheels and the bases. (See Dr. Lightfoot in the same book, p. 226.)

And the four corners thereof.] For they were square, (ver. 27.)

Had undersetters.] In the Hebrew, *shoulders.* Which were fitly so called, because, as burdens are borne upon men's shoulders, so were the lavers upon these; which supported them, when set upon the bases, and kept them from falling when they run upon the wheels.

Under the laver were undersetters molten, at the side of every addition.] These were molten with the bases, when they were cast.

Ver. 31. *And the mouth of it.*] The bases seem to have been hollow at the top; that the feet of the lavers might enter in, and be fastened there: and this he calls the *mouth* of it.

Within the chapiter and above.] Nothing of a chapiter is mentioned until now: therefore it is hard to know what is meant by it. Many take it for a smaller basis, rising out of the greater; in which was the mouth, or hollow place before spoken of.

Was a cubit.] In height. See ver. 35. where it is said, *on the top of the base was a round compass half a cubit high.* Which seems to be meant of this chapiter, which rose but half a cubit above the base, the other half being below it.

But the mouth thereof was round, after the work of the base, a cubit and a half.] This was the wideness of it.

And also upon the mouth of it were gravings with their borders, four-square, not round.] Though this hollow place, called the mouth, was round within; yet on the outside it was square, and had borders which were engraved.

Ver. 32. *And under the borders were four wheels; and the axle-trees of the wheels were joined to the base; and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit.*] So that the bottom of the base was not far from the ground.

Ver. 33. *And the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot-wheel.*] Only the hinder-wheels and the fore-wheels were all of a height.

Their axle-trees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, were all molten.] Cast together with the wheels.

Ver. 34. *And there were four undersetters to the four corners of one base: and the undersetters were of the very base itself.*] He mentioned the undersetters before, (ver. 30.) Now he relates the number of them; and that they were of the same piece with the base itself; being cast together with it, and not made afterward.

Ver. 35. *And on the top of the base there was a round compass of half a cubit high.*] See ver. 31.

And on the top of the base, the ledges thereof, and the borders thereof, were the same.] Cast altogether at the same time.

Ver. 36. *For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm-trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about.*] In the Hebrew, According *to the nakedness* of every one: which seems to signify that these figures were as big as the void spaces in the plates would admit.

Ver. 37. *After this manner he made the ten bases; all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size.*] They were cast in the same mould; and all of the same bigness and shape.

Ver. 38. *Then made he ten lavers of brass.*] Which were to stand upon the bases forementioned.

One laver contained forty baths.] See ver. 26. From

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whence it will appear that each of these lavers contained ten barrels of water.

And every laver was four cubits.] Some think that they were of this height. But these words rather relate to the diameter of them, which was four cubits: and then their compass was twelve cubits.

Upon every one of the ten bases one laver.] The bases being exactly fitted to receive them: for they were each four cubits in length and breadth, (ver. 27.)

Ver. 39. *And he put five on the right side.*] That is, on the south side, (see vi. 8.)

Of the house.] That is, of the court where the priests ministered.

And five on the left side of the house.] That is, on the north side of that court.

And he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, over against the south.] That is, in the south-east: so that as soon as the priests entered (which they did at the east gate) they might have water to wash their hands and their feet.

Ver. 40. *And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons: so Hiram made an end of all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the Lord.*] These seem to have been the last things that he made: and so he finished all the work, which he recapitulates, with the addition of some other not mentioned before. *Shovels*, for instance, or *besoms*, wherewith they cleansed the altar from the ashes, that they might not hinder the fire from burning: and *basons*, wherein the priests received the blood of the sacrifices that were offered.

Ver. 41. *The two pillars, and two bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the two pillars; and the two networks, to cover the bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the pillars.*

Ver. 42. *And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one net-work, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that were upon the pillars.*] Being to sum up all the works he had finished, he now adds the number of pomegranates that were upon the pillars: which had not been mentioned before.

Ver. 43. *And ten bases, and ten lavers upon the bases.*

Ver. 44. *And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea.*

Ver. 45. *And the pots.*] Pots or caldrons were those vessels, wherein they boiled those sacrifices which were divided between the priest and the people that offered them: that is, *peace-offerings*, that they might eat them before the Lord, and feast with him upon his own meat.

Shovels, and basons.] They are mentioned before, but here I suppose have a different signification (though in the Hebrew the words are the same) from what they had in ver. 40. And the first word signifies *flesh-hooks*, wherewith they took the meat out of the pots: and the second the *platters*, or dishes, into which it was put, to be set before them.

And all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the Lord, were of bright brass.] Or polished brass: or, the purest and finest that could be got. The Syriac and Arabic translators render it, *Corinthian brass*. But it is not credible, that it was known in the days of Solomon.

Ver. 46. *In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay-ground between Succoth and Zarthan.*] In the Hebrew the words for *clay-ground* are, *in the thickness of the ground*. That is, the earth was stiff and glutinous, and upon that account more fit to make moulds of all kinds. And in a plain country, such moulds were more easily fixed than on the sides of hills, or steep places.

Ver. 47. *And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out.*] In the Hebrew, *it was not searched*, or inquired into; because it would have been very troublesome to take an exact account of it.

Ver. 48. *And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the Lord.*] He made them all new, except the ark, the mercy-seat, and the cherubims annexed to it.

The altar of gold.] That is, the altar of incense, which stood in the holy place before the oracle.

And the table of gold, whereon the shew-bread was.] That is, all the table-work: there being no less than ten, (2 Chron. iv. 7, 8.) Upon one of which, in all probability, which was more noble than the rest, the shew-bread was placed. Unless we suppose the table which Moses made was preserved for that use; and Solomon added the rest for the greater ornament of the place. And (as Josephus writes) the gold and silver basons were set upon them; together with a vast number of phials.

Ver. 49. *And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle.*] He made ten candlesticks instead of one which was in the tabernacle of Moses: because the place was more capacious; and the vessels were not to be removed from place to place as they were before: and therefore there might well be more of them.

The flowers.] Which were wrought upon the candlesticks.

The lamps, and the tongs, of gold.] Wherewith to take coals from the altar of burnt-offering.

Ver. 50. *And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers, of pure gold.*] The use of these is visible. The first being to keep oil for the lamps; the next to trim them: the *basons* (which were a hundred, as we learn from the book of Chronicles) were to receive the water of sprinkling, and the blood of the sacrifices which was sometimes brought into the most holy place: the *spoons* served to take up the oil: the *censers* were for offering incense; though some translate this word *dish-pans*, wherein the incense was kept. There were other censers of silver, which received the coals from the altar upon all days but the tenth of Tisri (which was the great day of expiation), when the golden censer received them, and by it the most holy place was incensed. On other days it was not employed, but at the altar of incense; where the coals were poured out of the silver censer (which received them from the altar of burnt-offering) into the golden, to burn the incense: as the Talmudists say, both in Codex Joma and Tamid. Where they also say, that the foregoing word *capoth*, which we translate *spoons*, signifies a vessel which contained the *incense* that was to be offered upon the coals in the golden censer. See Braunius, in his Selecta Sacra, lib. ii. cap. 5. where he hath learnedly explained both these words, *caph* and *machtah*, which we translate *spoons* and *censers*, where he hath demonstrated the latter signifies the instrument that received the coals from the altar of burnt-offering, and the former that which had the incense in it to be poured upon them.

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And the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the house, to wit, of the temple.] This shews the vast riches of Solomon, and his great piety: which made him spare no cost to beautify the house of God, and the meanest thing belonging to it. Whereby the people, who were much taken with outward splendour, were preserved from idolatry: for they could go no where and see a place comparable to this of Solomon; there being then nothing in the whole world like to it for riches and glory.

Ver. 51. *So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord.*] I observed upon vi. 1. that Abarbinel thinks he would use none of the things that were dedicated by his father; but do all at his own cost and charges. Yet others think these words mean no more, but that all the remaining silver and gold, which David left, and was not spent in this work, Solomon would not employ to his own uses; but religiously preserved in the treasury of the temple. Where the altar of burnt-offering, which Moses made, and some other things, which were now of no use (far better and larger being made), were also laid up, as the tabernacle itself was. For the temple being built, there was no further occasion for the tabernacle; and yet it was fit to preserve it, as a place that had been holy to the Lord.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *AND Solomon assembled the elders of Israel.*] That is, the judges in their several cities.

And all the heads of the tribes.] Every tribe had one or more principal ruler in it.

And the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel.] The principal persons of every family in those tribes.

Unto king Solomon in Jerusalem.] Where the house of the Lord was now fixed.

That they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion.] For thither David had brought it from the house of Obed-Edom, and made a tabernacle for it, (2 Sam. vi. 12. 17.) until a fixed house should be prepared for it, which was now built upon a neighbouring mountain.

Ver. 2. *And all the men of Israel.*] All the forenamed persons, with their attendants, which, no doubt, were numerous.

Assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.] Here the Targum thus paraphrases, *In the month which anciently was called the first month, but now is the seventh:* and called *Ethanim*, because more sacred solemnities (which were the support and strength of their religion and government) were appointed in this month than in any other. And among the rest the feast of tabernacles; which is here meant, as Kimchi, and Abarbinel, and others think. And upon the occasion of this assembly the Jews observe, in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 15. that "the Schechinah doth not dwell but in the congregation."

Ver. 3. *And all the elders of Israel came.*] All the forementioned great persons were called *elders*, and are here comprehended under that name.

And the priests took up the ark.] The ark had been carried by the priests three times before this: when they went over Jordan; when they encompassed the walls of Jericho; and when David sent it back, when he fled from Absalom, (2 Sam. xv. 29, 30.) It was the office of the Levites to carry the ark upon their shoulders, except upon special occasions: and now they could not, because it was not lawful for them to enter into the holy place, into which it was to be carried, and then into the most holy. It is said, indeed, 2 Chron. v. 4. that *the Levites took it up:* but the meaning is, that they took it up and carried it to the temple, and then the priests took it up, (ver. 6.) and carried it into the holy place.

Ver. 4. *And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation.*] Together with the ark, they brought up the tabernacle. But the question is, what tabernacle, whether that made by Moses, which was in Gibeon, (2 Chron. i. 3.) or that made by David, which was at Jerusalem, (2 Sam. vi. 17.) I think the latter is never called *the tabernacle of the congregation*, as the former frequently is. But it may be probably thought that both of them were now carried into the temple, and laid up there; to avoid all danger of superstition and idolatry: and that no worship might be performed any where, but only at this house of God, which he now dedicated to him.

And all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle.] *viz.* The altar of incense, and the table, and the candlestick, and every thing belonging to them: which remained in the tabernacle, when the ark was removed from it.

These did the priests and the Levites bring up.] The priests brought up the ark; and the Levites carried the tabernacle, and the vessels of the sanctuary.

Ver. 5. *And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark.*] When it was brought into the house of God, and settled there; for it is not likely such a multitude of sacrifices as follow, could be offered in the way from Mount Sion to the temple, as some were when David brought it from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem, (2 Sam. vi. 13.)

And sacrificed sheep and oxen, that could not be numbered for multitude.] That is, a vast number; which might have been told, but not easily; as was said before of the weight of the brass employed about the vessels of the house of God, vii. 47. (See there.) Here is no mention of Solomon's dancing before the ark as David did; for all holy men were not alike moved by God; their tempers and conditions being very different. Solomon was now in a state of great tranquillity, and constant pleasure: but David had been disturbed by the stroke upon Uzzah, a little before his great transport of joy, at the safe conduct of the ark to Jerusalem.

Ver. 6. *And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place.*] Before the glory of the Lord filled the house, the priests were permitted to enter into the oracle: but afterward none but the high-priest might approach so near unto the Divine presence, which dwelt there: and he but once a year.

Even under the wings of the cherubims.] Which Solomon

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had made. For the cherubims made by Moses were fixed to the mercy-seat, and inseparable from it: and stood together with the ark under these cherubims.

Ver. 7. *For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark, and the staves thereof.*] For they were very large, stretching forth their wings from one side of the house unto the other, (vi. 22. 24, &c.)

Ver. 8. *And they drew out the staves, that the end of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle.*] By the *holy place* is here meant the most holy, where the ark was under the cherubims: which covered both the ark and the staves. But the staves were so drawn out that the ends of them might be seen: whereby the high-priest was directed in the way he should go just before the mercy-seat on the day of expiation; when he went between these two staves to sprinkle the blood before God. See 2 Chron. v. 9. and Buxtorf. in his Arca Fœderis, where he explains both this and the next verse, and gives a large account of drawing out the staves, (p. 96, 97.)

And they were not seen without.] In the sanctuary.

And there they are unto this day.] And in this posture.

Ver. 9. *There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.*] The very same words, in a manner, are repeated, 2 Chron. v. 10. But it is commonly observed that both these places seem to contradict the apostle's words, Heb. ix. 4. For it is said here in these books, that nothing was in the ark save only the two tables of stone: but that there, the pot of manna and Aaron's rod were also in the ark. For so they generally interpret those words ἐν ᾗ, *in which, i. e.* in the ark, στάμνος χρυσῆ, *the golden pot containing the manna,* &c. Many learned men have endeavoured to reconcile these places several ways, which Andreas Sennertus hath collected in a treatise on purpose about it. Which might have been spared by this easy observation, that the preposition ἐν doth not always signify *in*, but *by:* and so the place in the Hebrews is to be rendered, not *in which,* but *by which.* Bochartus hath given a great many instances of such use of the particle *beth* in the Old Testament, (Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 50.) And indeed it is never said there that the pot of manna was laid up in the ark, but "before the Lord and before the testimony;" (Exod. xvi. 33, 34.) and the same is said of Aaron's rod, (Numb. xvii. 4.) Which signifies no more than putting them by the ark. (See Huetius, Demonst. Evang. p. 322.)

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place.*] That is, the oracle, where they had set down the ark.

That the cloud filled the house of the Lord.] In this cloud was the glory of the Lord (ver. 11.) which now filled the temple, as it had anciently done the tabernacle, when it was first erected, (Exod. xl. 34.) Only there the cloud covered the tabernacle without, and the glory of the Lord shined within: but here the house itself was filled with the cloud, out of which the glory of the Lord broke; and after it had filled the whole house, settled in the most holy place.

Ver. 11. *So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.*] By this it appears that the cloud filled the sanctuary, as well as the most holy place: for in the sanctuary the priests ministered at the altar of incense. And it appears also by the next verse, that, at the first, nothing but a dark cloud filled the house, which was very astonishing: but afterward the glory of the Lord (as I said) broke out, which was more amazing. Insomuch, that Moses himself was not able to enter into the tabernacle of the congregation, when this cloud and glory first appeared, (Exod. xl. 35.)

Ver. 12. *Then spake Solomon.*] When he saw the priests come out of the house of God in great consternation, he uttered these words which follow, with his face turned towards the altar, to compose and comfort them. This shews that the cloud filled the house before Solomon prayed: whereas in 2 Chron. vii. 1—3. it appears the Divine glory did not fill it till after he had prayed. Which Abarbinel reconciles with very good reason:—The cloud, in which was the glory of the Lord, or the fire, came into the temple before Solomon prayed: which made him say here, *the Lord dwelleth in thick darkness.* Which he beholding, prayed to God, who gave such a sensible token of his presence there. Now when he had made an end of his prayer, then the fire that was in the cloud broke forth, and consumed the sacrifices on the altar: and the glory of the Lord filled the house, as it is recorded in the book of Chronicles.

The Lord said that he would dwell in thick darkness.] As much as to say, Be not afraid; but look upon this cloud as a token of God's presence and protection: and that he owns this for his house where he intends to dwell, according to what he said, Lev. xvi. 2. This cloud is called *thick darkness,* because it hindered the sight of any other thing that was in the holy place; either the altar, candlestick, or table. Nothing was seen but the glory of the Lord when it broke out, which dazzled their eyes rather than enlightened them. And it is observable, that the better to represent this, the high-priest when he went into the most holy place was to fill it with a cloud of smoke by the incense he offered, which made the place dark, (Lev. xvi. 12, 13.) that he might not lose his life by the splendour of the Divine Glory.

Ver. 13. *I have surely built thee a house to dwell in.*] He turns his speech from them to God; and expresses his hope that he would be pleased to continue in this house: which he perceived by this glorious cloud he intended to make his habitation.

A settled place for thee to abide in for ever.] Not like the tabernacle, which was a moveable habitation; but a place wherein he hoped he would settle, and never remove from it. From hence the Jews call this Beth-haolam, the eternal house, or the house of ages. Which was not like Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob, and Gibeon (as Abarbinel explains it), which did not last long, though God for some time dwelt there: they not being in the place which the Lord had chosen to place his name there: which was in Mount Moriah.

Ver. 14. *And the king turned his face about.*] From the court of the priests to the court of the congregation, having the altar on his back.

And blessed all the congregation of Israel.] In that form, perhaps, which God himself prescribed, (Numb. vi. 23, 24, &c.)

(And all the congregation of Israel stood).] Both out of reverence to God, and respect unto the king.

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Ver. 15. *And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it, saying.*] He acknowledges the goodness of God in his gracious promise; and his faithfulness in fulfilling it. Which promise was made by Nathan, unto whom the word of the Lord came about this matter, (2 Sam. vii. 4.)

Ver. 16. *Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build a house, that my name might be therein.*] He had often told them that they should worship him in the place which he would choose; but he never declared his choice of a place till David's time, (2 Sam. vii. 6.)

But I chose David to be over my people Israel.] See 2 Sam. vii. 8. to whom he shewed the place which he would make his dwelling, and where he would be worshipped.

Ver. 17. *And it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.*] This is, as I said before, where God would dwell among them, and be graciously present with them. (See 2 Sam. vii. 2.)

Ver. 18. *And the Lord said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build a house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.*] He accepted and commended his good intentions, but would not let him put them in execution. This honour he reserved for his son, as it follows in the next words.

Ver. 19. *Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son, that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.*] See 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord hath performed the word that he spake; and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.*] He concludes as he began, with a thankful acknowledgment of the faithfulness of God in performing his promise.

Ver. 21. *And have set there a place for the ark.*] The token of God's presence among them.

Wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which he made with our fathers.] That is, the tables of the covenant: which by a figure are called *the covenant*, because they contained it.

When he brought them out of the land of Egypt.] And told them, that by the tenure of this covenant they were to hold the land of Canaan.

Ver. 22. *And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord.*] Having spoken the foregoing words with his face towards the people, and blessed them; now he turned about again with his face towards the altar, to make a solemn prayer to God.

In the presence of all the congregation of Israel.] Being advanced upon a scaffold which he had made, of three cubits high, (as we read in 2 Chron. vi. 13.) so that all might see and hear him.

And spread forth his hands towards heaven.] Which was a solemn posture of prayer among other nations. And it is evident both from that place in the Chronicles, and from ver. 54. of this chapter, that when he had stood awhile with his face towards the altar, he fell down upon his knees, and spread forth his hands towards heaven.

Ver. 23. *And he said, O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their hearts.*] He acknowledges the transcendent excellences of the Divine Majesty; and particularly again commemorates his faithfulness to those who serve him sincerely.

Ver. 24. *Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day.*] This relates to that part of God's promise to David, that his son should build him a house. (See ver. 15, 16, &c.)

Ver. 25. *Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel.*] He looked upon that as an earnest he would fulfil the other part of his promise to David, which he made at the same time, concerning his kindness to his posterity, (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.)

So that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.] He speaks like a wise man, who was fully acquainted with the mind of God: whose promise concerning the inheritance of the kingdom he acknowledges depended upon this condition, *if they took heed to their way*, &c.; that is, continued in the faith and worship of God, as David did. But if they proved idolaters, then they made themselves unworthy of this privilege to the seed of David (as Abarbinel speaks), and lost the inheritance of the kingdom, because they were none of his children. And therefore, after Solomon and Jeroboam also turned away from God and followed idols (as he goes on), God might justly have taken the divided kingdom away from their children. And when all Israel forsook the Lord, and worshipped the gods of the nations round about them, he did forsake their land, and would no longer dwell among them, nor continue the kingdom to them.

Ver. 26. *And now, O Lord God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.*] This is not an unnecessary repetition; but (as Abarbinel notes) God, when he spake to David of building the temple by his son, promised two things: first, the stability of his kingdom in his family; (2 Sam. vii. 16.) and secondly, that he would shew the greatest kindness and friendship to them; such as a father doth to his son, (ver. 13.) Solomon here begs of God in this prayer both these benefits: the first in the foregoing verse, and the other in this.

Ver. 27. *But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?*] He would not have the people possessed with such gross imaginations as were among the heathens; who fancied their gods were confined to their temples. No, saith Solomon, the heaven itself, no, not the highest heaven, can comprehend his infinite majesty.

Ver. 28. *Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day.*] But he would have them know that God, who could be confined no where, was in a special manner present here, to grant the requests of those who piously made their supplications to him, as he now did, in this place.

Abarbinel observes upon ver. 39. that Solomon uses

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three words in this verse, which in some places signify the very same thing: but being all used here together, he thinks have distinct meanings. For the word *rinnah* (which we translate *cry*), he thinks, signifies setting forth with a loud voice the praises of God: concerning which their wise men in Beracoth say, "Let a man first commemorate the praises of God, and then let him pray." Then the word *tepillah* (which we translate *prayer*), he thinks, signifies men's judging and condemning themselves before God for their offences: confessing they are unworthy to have their petitions granted. And the other word *techinah* (*supplication* we translate it) imports men's petitions to God for what they want, and deprecating his displeasure, &c.

Ver. 29. *That thine eyes may be open towards this house night and day, even towards the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there.*] He prays that God would have a gracious respect unto all that came to make their petitions there. For as, in the former verse (as Abarbinel observes), he prays God would hear his own petitions: so in this, that he would hear all other pious worshippers.

That thou mayest hearken to the prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place.] He beseeches God to hear him, if he looked towards this place in his prayer; though he was not present at the temple to prefer his petition. For thus pious men were wont to direct their prayer, when they were far distant from it; nay, when the temple was demolished, (Dan. vi. 10.) And when they were at the temple, they could only look towards the most holy place: for the people came no nearer than into the outward court of the temple, and the priests no further than to the next court to it. Save only when they went to order the lamps, and burn incense morning and evening, and renew the shew-bread: otherwise they also stood and officiated at a distance in the court appointed for them, called the court of the priests. So both people and priests stood in their several courts, and worshipped with their faces towards the temple, where the ark and mercy-seat were. From whence came the expression of worshipping the Lord *towards his holy temple:* that is, towards the place where the mercy-seat was. And also the expression of *worshipping towards his footstool:* for if the glory of the Lord sat upon the cherubims, under which the ark stood, then it was his footstool. (See Psal. xcix. 5. cxxxviii. 2.)

Ver. 30. *And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place.*] Here, as the same Abarbinel observes, he desires, whether there was one or many that prayed, he would hear them.

And hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place.] He directs the people's mind up to heaven, the place where he dwells in the highest majesty and glory: of which the bright cloud in the temple was a token and resemblance.

And when thou hearest, forgive.] For sins unpardoned would hinder his blessing from descending on them; and therefore, in the first place, he implores forgiveness of them.

Ver. 31. *If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear.*] This seems to relate to such as were accused of denying that which was said to be deposited with them by their neighbour. Who were to purge themselves by an oath, there being no witness to convince them.

And the oath come before thine altar in this house.] It was the custom of all nations to touch the altar when they made a solemn oath: calling God, that is, to witness the truth of what they said, and to punish them if they did not speak the truth.

Ver. 32. *Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.*] He desires God to hear the complaint of him who was defrauded, or unjustly accused: and shew who had right on his side; by punishing the offender, and acquitting the injured person.

Ver. 33. *When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name.*] Acknowledge him to be God alone, and renounce all false gods.

And pray, and make supplication to thee in this house.] Or, towards this house; expecting help from God alone.

Ver. 34. *Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them back into the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.*] Deliver them out of the captivity into which their enemies had carried them, and restore them to their own country. The Jews think the Schechinah was always in captivity with them, and brought them forth from thence.

Ver. 35. *When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee.*] As God is said to *bring the wind,* (Psal. cxxxv. 7.) so he doth the rain *out of his treasures.* Which when he shuts up, no showers can fall, till he open them again.

If they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them.] That had been the frequent fruit of their affliction in former ages; though as soon as God had delivered them, they revolted from him; as we read in the whole book of Judges.

Ver. 36. *Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk.*] These words are better translated in 2 Chron. vi. 27. (where the Hebrew words are the very same with these here) *When thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk.* He doth not desire their pardon, till their affliction had taught them better obedience.

And give rain upon thy land which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.] He first desires their amendment, and then that the times and seasons might be amended.

Ver. 37. *If there be in the land famine.*] Which arose sometimes from other causes, besides want of rain.

If there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar.] These two creatures, locusts and caterpillars, made great desolations where they swarmed, (Exod. x. 4, 5. Psal. cv. 34, 35.) Mildew, also, the heathens themselves were sensible was a punishment sent from heaven. And therefore Numa Pompilius (as Strigelius observes) ordained a solemn festival called *rubigalia,* in the beginning of May, to pray for their preservation from this *rubigo,* as they called it, which corrupted their corn. (See Pliny's Nat. Hist. lib. xviii. cap. 29.)

If their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities.] In *their gates;* whereby they were so straitened, that none could go in, or out.

Whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness, there be.] The

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word *plague* signifies some extraordinary stroke by the hand of God.

Ver. 38. *What prayer and supplication shall be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel.*] Who in national calamities were wont to beseech God's mercies with public fasting and prayer; which, if they neglected, he entreats him not to reject the supplications of any particular person who besought his favour for himself and family.

Which shall know every man the plague of his own heart.] We are taught by Ezra, in 2 Chron. vi. 29. to understand these words of any private trouble or grief which any man laboured under: for so the words are there, *when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief.* That is, shall make his secret moan for any affliction which lies heavy upon his spirit.

And spread forth his hands towards this house.] That is, pray as Solomon now did to God. (See ver. 22.)

Ver. 39. *Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest.*] He would have the people know that God could not be deceived with words; but have them expect an answer from him, according to the sincerity of their hearts, in their professions of repentance.

(For thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men).] This sense begets in men the greatest awe of the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 40. *That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land that thou gavest unto our fathers.*] That they might learn by his great goodness, to worship him alone religiously all their days: and by that means possess in peace and plenty the good land he had bestowed upon them.

Ver. 41. *Moreover, concerning a stranger that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake.*] To become a proselyte to the true religion, and worship God alone, though he was not circumcised, and thereby bound to keep the whole law. Such strangers came to pray at the temple, though they might not offer any sacrifices, except only a burnt-offering. And therefore we may observe, that in the New Testament the Greeks are said to come to a feast, ἵνα προσκυνήσωσιν, *that they might worship*, not that they might keep the Passover, (John xii. 20.) And the like is said of the eunuch, Acts viii. 22. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 4, 5.)

Ver. 42. *(For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and thy stretched-out arm).*] All the stupendous wonders he had done: which declared him to be above all gods; the most High, and Holy One.

When they shall come, and pray towards this place.] In the court behind that of the Israelites: which was made on purpose for the religious uncircumcised gentiles. Such, saith Victorinus Strigelius (whose words I think fit here to transcribe), were Naaman the Syrian; Nebuchadnezzar, and his son Evilmerodach; Darius the Mede; Cyrus the Persian; Cornelius, and the Ethiopian eunuch, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; and many such-like heathens; who were members of the true church. By which means, and by the dispersion of the Jews among other nations, many heathens were called to the acknowledgment of the only true God. (See Josephus's last book of Antiquities, chap. 2.)

Ver. 43. *Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for.*] He had the same sense with St. Peter, that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him," (Acts x. 35.)

That all the people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel.] By this it is evident, that truly good men in ancient time desired all the gentile world might be incorporated with them: unto which, in our Saviour's time, the Jews were unaccountably averse.

And that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.] Hath thy glorious presence in it.

Ver. 44. *If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and pray unto the Lord towards this city which thou hast chosen, and towards the house that I have built for thy name.*] Some of the Jews wonder that Solomon should mix his prayer for strangers with those for the people of Israel, and not rather finish first what he had to desire for the Israelites, and then pray for the gentiles. If there be any thing in this, it was to shew that God made no difference between them and pious people of other nations. It is here remarkable, that they were not to make war, without a warrant and commission from God, upon the neighbouring nations. Not to satisfy their ambition and vain-glory, but by his command, or upon just and necessary reasons; which would warrant them to implore and expect God's blessing upon their arms.

Ver. 45. *Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and supplications, and maintain their cause.*] Shew the justice of it, by making them victorious.

Ver. 46. *If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy.*] The weakness of human nature, and its proneness to sin, doth not excuse wilful offences against God; especially apostacy from him, which was the cause of all their calamities.

So that they carry them away captives into the land of the enemy, far or near.] A good cause sometimes miscarries for the iniquity of those that are engaged in it.

Ver. 47. *Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication to thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, we have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;*

Ver. 48. *And so return to thee with all their heart, and all their soul, in the land of their enemies which have led them away captive.*] In these, and in the foregoing words, (ver. 47.) he gives a full description of true repentance. Which begins in the serious reflection which men make upon their past lives, and their present miseries into which their sins have brought them. Which begets an unfeigned sorrow and resolution of amendment, with earnest supplication for mercy and grace: confessing themselves unworthy of it, and condemning themselves for their sins, and the high aggravations of them (expressed here by *doing perversely, and committing wickedness*), which at last concludes in their quitting that wicked course of life, and their sincere conversion to the service of God.

And pray unto thee towards the land which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the

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house which I have built for thy name.] The very looking towards this place, with earnest imploring the mercy of God, and desire of his helps, was to own him that dwelt here, and acknowledge him alone for their God. Which was a means (as that excellent person Dr. Alix admonishes me) to keep them from idolatry; all the nations of the world turning their faces towards the east, when they worshipped; but the Jews to the west, where the holy place was. And for this cause, when the temple and the holy city were destroyed, and the ark of the testimony was gone; yet good men looked and prayed towards the place where it was wont to be, as appears by the prophet Daniel. And therefore Solomon much more supposes they would do so, when they were all standing. Which may seem, as Mr. Mede observes, to have been done out of the use of all mankind, without any special precept to that purpose; which is no where to be found. Nature having taught mankind, as in their addresses to great persons, to look unto their face; so in their addresses to the Divine Majesty, to look that way, or towards that place, where his presence is more demonstrated than elsewhere. From whence he concludes, that to worship towards the place, where there is any sign or specification of his presence, is no idolatry. (See his Discourse upon Psal. cxxxii. 7.)

Ver. 49. *Then hear thou their prayer and supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause.*] In the Hebrew *their right:* which they had forfeited by their disobedience; but he prayed it might be restored unto them upon their repentance.

Ver. 50. *And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them that have carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them.*] Treat them mercifully while they continued their slaves; and give them their liberty to return to their own land. Solomon enlarges much upon this in the following verses, as a thing of the greatest importance. Because he knew that they, as well as all men else, were prone to offend God, (ver. 46.) and might provoke him to expel them from this land. Towards which the Jews now at this day turn their faces, when they pray to God; but to no purpose: for it only demonstrates they have so provoked God by a crime more heinous than ever was committed, that he will have no regard to their petition.

Ver. 51. *For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron.*] Wherein they wrought with cruel labour. (See Deut. iv. 20.)

Ver. 52. *That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee.*] He brings two arguments for the Divine compassion towards them. First, that it might not lose the glory of what he had formerly done for them; and then, that it might appear he dwelt in this house, and had respect unto the penitent prayers that were here made to him.

Ver. 53. *For thou didst separate them from all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord our God.*] See Exod. xix. 5. Here he adds a third argument; the peculiar laws that he had given them; whereby they were distinguished from all people: in the observance of which he beseeches him to preserve them. It was not a mere angel that brought them out of Egypt, but the Divine Λόγος conducted them; to whom therefore this prayer of Solomon's was directed. For the Schechinah or Divine Glory that settled in the temple, and there was worshipped, was this Divine Person, and not an angel personating God.

Ver. 54. *And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he rose up from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees, with his hands spread up to heaven.*] See ver. 22.

Ver. 55. *And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying.*] Now he turned about again, with his face the other way, from the altar to the people.

Ver. 56. *Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.*] He celebrates again the faithfulness of God, which continued now, as it had done in the days of Joshua. (See Josh. xxi. 45. xxiii. 14.)

Ver. 57. *And the Lord God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us.*] Of which there was no doubt, if they cleaved steadfastly unto him, as it follows in the next words.

Ver. 58. *That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.*] This was the greatest blessing he could ask for them; as the means to preserve them in his favour.

Ver. 59. *And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night.*] Be ever acceptable to him.

That he maintain the cause of his servant.] That is, of Solomon, and his successors.

And the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require.] That is, according to his and their necessities.

Ver. 60. *That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else.*] That by his signal favours to the Israelites, all the world might be invited to acknowledge him to be God alone.

Ver. 61. *Let your hearts therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments, as at this day.*] When they were perfectly free from all false worship, and served God alone; as he exhorted them to continue still to do, with sincerity of heart.

Ver. 62. *And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifices before the Lord.*] Which was a solemn act of worship, whereby they acknowledged him to be their God. And these sacrifices seem to have been laid upon the altar before Solomon begun his prayer, ready to be offered: and when he had done, fire came from heaven (as we read 2 Chron. vii. 1.) and consumed the sacrifices. Which was another token of God's presence in this house; as the cloud had testified, and hereby was further confirmed: for the fire from heaven declared how acceptable the sacrifices were that were offered in that place.

Ver. 63. *And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace-offerings,*

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which he offered unto the Lord.] Besides the burnt-offerings beforementioned.

Two-and-twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep.] Which could not be all offered upon that day when he made his prayer, but while the feast lasted, which was in the whole fourteen days, ver. 65. (See upon iii. 4.) The heathen imitated these sacrifices in their hecatombs, which they offered of a hundred beasts of a kind; as, suppose, a hundred oxen, a hundred goats, and a hundred swine. They are described by Julius Capitolinus, in the life of the emperors Pupienus Maximus and Balbinus; the last of which, he saith, was so transported with joy, being fuller of fear, that he offered a hecatomb; which was such a sacrifice as this. A hundred altars of turf were raised in one place, at them a hundred swine and a hundred birds were killed. But if it were the sacrifice of an emperor, a hundred lions, a hundred eagles, and a hundred of other such kind of animals were offered: but no such ravenous creatures were ever offered to the true God.

And all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord.] By this prayer of Solomon, and by the sacrifices, whereby all the people supplicated and gave thanks to God, this house was set apart for God's worship and service. For then a thing or place is said to be *dedicated,* when it is first employed to that use unto which it is hereafter designed. Concerning which see Selden, lib. iii. de Synedriis, p. 204, &c.

Ver. 64. *The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord.*] That is, the court of the priests, which he did not consecrate (for that was done before), but employed it to holy uses, and, as it were, honoured it by religious acts, (as Mr. Mede speaks upon Lev. xix. 30.) And so the name of God is said to be *hallowed,* or sanctified by us, when we use it holily and reverently. Thus they explain it in the Gemara, he *hallowed it;* that is, he set up another altar there, as L'Empereur observes upon Codex Middoth, cap. 3. sect. 1.

For there he offered burnt-offerings, and meat-offerings, and the fat of peace-offerings.] In the middle of the court he erected several altars, for the reason following: and, indeed, the whole court was little enough upon this occasion, as Dr. Lightfoot acknowledges in his book of the Temple, p. 192, 193.

Because the brazen altar that was before the Lord.] Near the door of this court.

Was too little to receive the burnt-offerings, and meat-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings.] Therefore, by a special licence from God, he set up other altars; which were to serve only during this present solemnity, when such a vast number of sacrifices were to be offered. But afterward no other altar was to be allowed, but that one brazen altar where God by Moses appointed all sacrifices should be offered; that they might be preserved in the worship of one only God. Therefore the Jews say these other altars which Solomon erected were of stone; which were soon pulled down again. But Fortunatus Scacchus hath said a great deal to make it probable that he did not erect any altars besides the brazen, but sacrificed upon the ground, (Myrothec. ii. cap. 56.)

Ver. 65. *And at that time Solomon made a feast, and all Israel with him.*] Such solemnities were usual among the heathen, when they celebrated the presence of any of their gods, as the illustrious Ezek. Spanhemius hath observed upon Callimachus's Hymn to Apollo, (ver. 13.) where he justly makes account that they derived this custom from this famous festival of king Solomon: which Josephus sets out admirably. (See lib. viii. Archæolog. cap. 2.)

A great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt.] Hamath was the utmost bounds of Judea to the north, called afterward Epiphania, and by the inhabitants at this day is called Hama. Sometimes the bounds of this kingdom this way are said to be the great river Euphrates; as by the *river of Egypt,* which was the south bounds, is commonly understood *Nilus.* So *Nahal* is translated by Jonathan, and the Jerusalem interpreter upon Numb. xxxiv. 5. And, indeed, the word *Nilus* comes from thence, for the Hebrew word was anciently pronounced not *Nahal,* but *Neel:* from whence the Greek Νεῖλος, and the Latin *Nilus,* as Bochartus observes in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. v. cap. 15. But here the *river of Egypt* is that little stream which discharges itself into the sea, by the Lacus Sirbonides, between Mount Casius and Rhinocolura, the last town of Palestine. It is called by Joshua, (xiii. 1.) Sichor, the same with Nile, because it was but a branch from the *alveus pelusiacus* of that great river. (See Gen. xv. 18.)

Before the Lord, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days.] It appears by 2 Chron. vii. 9. that the feast of the dedication of the altar lasted seven days; and then the other seven days were the feast of tabernacles, which followed after the other.

Ver. 66. *On the eighth day he sent the people away.*] So Ezra likewise saith, 2 Chron. vii. 10. but adds, that it was the twenty-third day of the seventh month: whereas the last day of the feast of tabernacles (which was the eighth from the beginning) was the twenty-second. Therefore Solomon took his leave of them on the last day of the feast, which was the two-and-twentieth day of the month; and they went home the next day. By this also it appears, these fourteen days of feasting were not kept all together, without intermission: for the great day of expiation was on the tenth of this month; seven days before which, I suppose, the feast of dedication was kept, and then they rested till the fifteenth, when the feast of tabernacles began.

And they blessed the king.] Gave him thanks for his kindness, and prayed God to make his reign prosperous.

And went to their tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness that God had done for David his servant, and for his people Israel.] In the book of Chronicles it is added, *and unto Solomon:* but that is here included in the goodness of God to David, on whom God bestowed such a successor. With whose magnificent entertainment they were abundantly satisfied; and rejoiced exceedingly, that God had done such great things for David and his family; and made all Israel happy in the great peace and plenty which they enjoyed, together with God's holy religion so gloriously established among them.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire that he was pleased to do.*] We

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are taught by Ezra (2 Chron. vii. 11.) to understand these words in this manner: *Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord*, &c.; and concluded all with the foregoing prayer, and the great festival which he kept.

Ver. 2. *That the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared to him in Gibeon.*] When he appeared to him in a dream: and so it is said, 2 Chron. vii. 10. *the Lord appeared to Solomon by night.* Which he had done once before, and no more: for that which he spake to him vi. 11, 12. was by a prophet. (See there.)

Ver. 3. *And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me.*] This shews that the first verse is to be understood as I have there observed; for otherwise, we must suppose this appearance of God to Solomon was eleven years after he had finished the house of the Lord. Which is not likely; but it is more natural to think it was the very next night after he had dismissed the people.

I have hallowed this house which thou hast built.] By the glorious cloud which came into it and filled it; and by the fire which, descending from heaven to consume the sacrifices, testified his acceptance of them.

To put my name there for ever.] Besides those visible tokens of his presence there, he now declares by word of mouth, that he owned this for his house; and would always dwell in it, if they kept his covenant, as the Targum here interprets it.

And mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually.] By his *eyes* and his *heart* he means his gracious providence, and his tender love and affection, should always have regard to what was done there; and it should be most acceptable to him.

Ver. 4. *And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, to keep my statutes and my judgments.*] In all things relating to religion and civil government, which David commonly did: though some time, and in one thing, he foully miscarried.

Ver. 5. *Then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.*] See 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.

Ver. 6. *But if you shall at all turn from following me, you and your children.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *if in turning you turn from me:* which signifies more than their *at all turning from him.* Rather it should be translated, *if they altogether turned from following him;* that is, fell to idolatry: for he did not intend to forsake them for every offence; but only when they forsook him, as the next words explain it.

And will not keep my commandments, and my statutes, which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them.] There was a general corruption of their manners, when they fell to idolatry.

Ver. 7. *Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them.*] This shews that he speaks in the foregoing words of a general apostacy from him.

And this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight.] No longer continue his gracious presence there, which he had promised, ver. 3.

And Israel shall be a proverb.] So that when men would express how unhappy any one was, they should say, "As miserable as the Jews."

And a by-word among the people.] Who mocked at their calamity.

Ver. 8. *And at this house, which is high.*] Renowned for its riches, and splendour, and great resort unto it.

Every one that passeth by it shall be astonished.] To see such a marvellous change; for Pliny testifies that Jerusalem was the most famous city in the east, as Grotius observes.

And shall hiss; and shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house?] Out of scorn and derision shall ask what is the matter, that this famous place, which boasted so much of the favour of God, is laid in ruin.

Ver. 9. *And they shall answer, Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and worshipped them, and served them; therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil.*] The Jews were forced to give this account of their calamity.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass in the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord, and the king's house.*] The former of which was seven years in building, the latter thirteen, (vi. 38. vii. 1.)

Ver. 11. *(Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar-trees, and fir-trees, and with gold, according to all his desire).*] See chap. v. 8. 10. where mention is made of these trees, but nothing said of gold: but in the fourteenth verse of this chapter we find that Hiram sent him a hundred and twenty talents of gold. Which it is not likely he gave Solomon; who rather purchased so much of him for wheat and oil, and such-like things which Hiram's country wanted; though it abounded with gold. For the Tyrians were great merchants, fetching gold from Ophir, (ver. 27, 28.)

That then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.] They were near, or adjoining to the country of Galilee (as the particle *beth* frequently signifies), but were no part of the land of Canaan, when it was divided among the Israelites: for that could not be alienated, being God's heritage. They were therefore cities out of the territories of Israel, as appears from Josh. ix. 27. but had been conquered partly by Pharaoh, who gave them to Solomon, as part of his daughter's portion; and partly by Solomon himself, who had power to dispose of them; especially since at that time they were not inhabited by the Israelites. (See 2 Chron. viii. 2. and Grotius, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. i. cap. 3. sect. 12. n. 3.) Hotoman, indeed, a famous lawyer, thinks that Solomon did not give Hiram a propriety, and perpetual right in these cities; but only the possession and enjoyment of them till the debt was satisfied, which Solomon had contracted, by the assistance which Hiram afforded him in building the temple. But his ground is not solid: for, as our Selden also hath shewn, (lib. vi. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 16.) the kings of Israel might dispose of those lands which they had conquered in a voluntary war, without the consent of the senate. Bochartus also is of the same mind, that these cities were no part of the country of Judea: but Abarbinel confirms Hotoman's opinion, that the revenues of these cities were given to him till the debt was discharged.

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Ver. 12. *And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not.*] Were not suitable to his desire, and the genius of his people; for the soil being fat and very deep (as is generally thought), it required great labour to till it, and was not pleasant to dwell in.

Ver. 13. *And he said, What cities are these that thou hast given me, my brother?*] These are not words of contempt; for it is not likely that Solomon, who had been highly obliged to Hiram (and was in his own temper very generous), would give him that which was of little value. But his meaning is, these cities were not such as would serve his purpose; which made him return them to Solomon again, (2 Chron. viii. 2.) who, no doubt, made him some other recompence, which gave him better satisfaction. Abarbinel thinks, that Solomon having agreed to give Hiram so many measures of wheat and oil, as are mentioned, v. 11. with which he had supplied him every year; now that this work was ended, gave him this country, out of which he might raise this provision for his household himself. Which Hiram did not like, because his people were addicted to merchandise, not to agriculture: but did not upon this account break off friendship with Solomon, as appears by the following history.

And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day.] It is commonly thought that Hiram called them, by way of contempt, *Cabul;* which signifies *a dirty country:* or, as Josephus will have it, *displeasing* (as we translate it in the margin of our Bibles). For *Chabulon*, he saith, in the Phœnician language, signifies as much as οὐκ ἀρέσκον, *that which doth not please*, (lib. viii. Archæol. cap. 2.) But the LXX. seem to have understood the word better; who translate it ὅριον, the *term* or *bound:* as if *Cabul* were the same with *Gebul; caph* and *gimel* being frequently changed, as Bochartus observes; who approves of this signification of the word. For *Chabulon* was that tract of ground which bounded the lower Galilee: extending from Tiberias unto this place, as Josephus himself saith, lib. iii. de Bello Judaico, cap. 2. (See Bochartus, in his Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 4.)

Ver. 14. *And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.*] It may be better translated, *and Hiram had sent*, &c. See ver. 11. where the reason is given why Solomon offered him so rich a country. Which, though he did not like, yet these words, Abarbinel thinks, signify, that notwithstanding Hiram continued his generous friendship with Solomon, and after that sent him all this gold; or, it was sent him as his share in their traffic to Ophir, mentioned in the conclusion of this chapter.

Ver. 15. *And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised.*] That the raising of a great tribute upon the people, and employing so many men in his works, might not seem strange, he here shews the cause of it; which was his great and numerous buildings; suitable to the high dignity to which God had advanced him. But Mr. Selden hath shewn, by many instances, that the word *mas* is used, not only for pecuniary tribute, but for corporeal labour. And thus he interprets these words, *this is the cause of requiring the labour and work of so many men.* Which when he had declared, *viz.* his great buildings, then he proceeds (ver. 20.) to relate who they were that he employed in this service, (lib. vi. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 14.)

For to build the house of the Lord, and his own house.] Of which an account hath been already given.

And Millo.] Which was a large and very beautiful place (as Abarbinel takes it), near to Zion; where the Israelites were wont to meet, and take their pleasure: and because it was *full* of people, was therefore called *Millo;* which signifies *fulness*, or repletion. Now David had built round about Zion, *from Millo inward*, (as we read 2 Sam. v. 9.) but had left the structure of Millo itself imperfect; which Solomon now completed, with a particular respect to Pharaoh's daughter, whose house was near to it, (ver. 24. of this chapter.) In this place some think there was a strong fortress built, which they gather from xi. 27. and 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. But others will have it to signify that deep valley or ditch (it may be called) which was between Mount Zion (the city of David) and Mount Moriah, on which the temple stood. Therefore, that there might be a convenient passage from the king's palace to the house of God, Solomon joined these two mountains by a bridge or a causeway, which could not be done without filling up the valley, or making great arches; some think the one, and some the other.

And the wall of Jerusalem.] Which was a great structure. For there were three walls, one within another, as Abarbinel and Joseph ben Gorion explain it: the inner wall compassing the house of God and the house of the king; the middle wall compassing the houses of the prophets and great persons; (which explains 2 Kings xxii. 14.) and the third compassed the houses of all the people.

And Hazor.] Which had been a very eminent city, and the head of some kingdoms before the conquest of Canaan, (Josh. xi. 10.) and was given to the tribe of Naphtali, (Josh. xix. 36.)

And Megiddo.] A city in the tribe of Manasseh, (Josh. xvii. 11.)

And Gezer.] In the tribe of Ephraim, (Josh. xxi. 21.)

Ver. 16. *For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city.*] For the Israelites could not dispossess the Canaanites, but they continued in Joshua's time, and after, to dwell in Gezer, (Josh. xvi. 10. Judg. i. 29.) And it seems David and Solomon did not expel them, but continued them under tribute; until Pharaoh, upon some provocation (which is not recorded), utterly extirpated them, and burnt their city. This was done, I suppose, before the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter; and was the very first expedition that the Egyptians made out of their own country, as Sir John Marsham thinks, in his Can. Chron. Seculum 14.

And given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.] It is likely he had begun to repair the city: and now upon the marriage of his daughter restored it to Solomon, who perfectly rebuilt it.

Ver. 17. *And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether.*] This is, having finished the building of Gezer, he built the lower Beth-horon, which was in the tribe of Benjamin; (Josh. xviii. 13, 14.) and Ezra tells us also (in 2 Chron. viii. 5.) Beth-horon the upper, which was in the tribe of Ephraim, (Josh. xvi. 5.) but not here mentioned: either because it was not of so great consequence, or did not need so much reparation as the other.

Ver. 18. *And Baalath.*] There was a city of this name in the tribe of Dan, (Josh. xix. 44.) But it is likely this

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was a city near Tadmor, where Baal had been formerly worshipped: for Baal was one of the gods of that people, it appears in the following observation.

And Tadmor in the wilderness.] This word *Tadmor* signifies in Hebrew as much as *Palma* in Latin. From whence it was called by the Romans Palmyra; which was one of the most splendid cities in the eastern countries: which gave name to the Palmyrenæ Solitudines, mentioned by Pliny and Ptolemy. There have been lately, after twelve hundred years' obscurity, several noble inscriptions found in this place by some that travelled into this wilderness: but Bochartus hath one of far greater antiquity, of two Phœnician gods, Aglibelus and Melachbelus, *viz.* the summer and the winter sun: in his Geogr. Sacra, par. ii. called Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 8. p. 811. where he calls this Tadmor a city of Phœnicia.

In the land.] Of Hamath Zobah (a part of Syria), as Ezra seems to expound it, (2 Chron. viii. 3, 4.) which country Solomon had conquered.

Ver. 19. *And all the cities of store that Solomon had.*] Where he laid up corn against a time of need; or arms and ammunition, in case of war. Some will have them cities where he kept his treasure, which is not likely.

And cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen.] Which he had in great number, (iv. 26.)

And that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.] So that whithersoever he went, he had a house for his entertainment in every part of his country. Behold, saith Abarbinel, the reason of the tribute (ver. 15.) is given from all these buildings: and after he had finished them, he laid no further tribute upon his people: who murmured at these impositions, as we find, after he was dead: but in these public buildings a great number of hands were employed, whereby idleness was expelled, manufactures were learnt, the poor were relieved, all the meaner people exercised, cities adorned, diseases driven away, and no place left for envy and sedition: while the subjects found the treasure that was raised employed for the benefit of so many of them; as Bodinus discourses, in his book De Republica, lib. xi. cap. 2. where he observes how Augustus, having settled the empire in peace, kept the people in their duty by this means; repairing many temples, decayed by time, or burnt by fire: laying out vast sums upon the chapel of Jupiter Capitolinus, and other public edifices; insomuch, that he gloried, "he left Rome a marble city, which he found a brick."

Ver. 20. *And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel.*] But by this time were become, I suppose, proselytes to the Jewish religion, as the Gibeonites were, or at least renounced their idolatry.

Ver. 21. *Their children which were left after them, whom the children of Israel also were not able to destroy, upon them did Solomon levy a tribute of bond-service unto this day.*] He was able to have rooted them all out, as the law required; but that command did not take place after they had submitted, and made peace with the Israelites, (as those words suppose, Josh. ix. 19.) And they seem now to have been in so poor a condition, that Solomon did not lay any tribute of money upon them; but only of burdensome labour. Of these were the seventy thousand that bare burdens, and eighty thousand that were hewers in the mountains; mentioned v. 15. Thus Mr. Selden, in the place abovementioned, explains these words, *they were not able utterly to destroy:* which was not for want of power, but because they had made a covenant with them, and did not consume them, (as it is in 2 Chron. viii. 8:) But they would not receive them into peace with them, till they became proselytes of the gate: and when they had done so, they became tributaries; and therefore such persons, by virtue of their covenant, Solomon now commanded to this service. (See lib. vi. de Jure Nat. et Gentium, cap. 14.)

Ver. 22. *But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen.*] By this means he spared the children of Israel, whom he did not employ in any servile labours about his public works; but put them into nobler offices, as it here follows. Yet this implies that his royal power might have laid such loads on them, if he had not designed to rule with great gentleness over them.

But they were men of war.] Which was accounted an honourable employment.

And were his servants.] Officers in his court.

And his princes.] Governors of provinces.

And his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen.] Commanders of his guards.

Ver. 23. *And these were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.*] In 2 Chron. viii. 10. they are said to be but two hundred and fifty. For the Hebrew doctors commonly say that there were of these officers but two hundred and fifty Israelites: the other three hundred were proselytes. But the plainest account of this is given by Abarbinel, that there were only two hundred and fifty set over those that wrought in the temple: the rest were employed in looking after his public works in other places. And it must be observed, also, that there were far greater numbers employed when the temple work was carried on with great speed, as we read before, (v. 16.)

Ver. 24. *But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which Solomon had built for her: then did he build Millo.*] There was not the like necessity for building Millo that there was for building the walls of Jerusalem, and the cities beforenamed: but he did it (as Abarbinel observes) in honour, and for the pleasure of Pharaoh's daughter; who was to remove unto a house near to it. And the reason she did not continue in the house where David had dwelt, we are told in 2 Chron. viii. 11. which was, because it was a kind of holy place, where it was not fit for her to remain; the ark of God having dwelt there.

Ver. 25. *And three times in the year did Solomon offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord.*] The meaning is not, that he offered sacrifices no oftener; but that he never failed to keep the three solemn festivals, which God commanded to be observed by every body, when he offered sacrifices suitable to those great mercies which were then commemorated; and to the great blessings God had bestowed upon his family.

And he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the Lord.] In the holy place, before the oracle. Where he could not burn it himself; but he gave it to the priests at

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his own charge, to be offered with a particular respect to him. This, it is likely, he did every day, morning and evening.

So he finished the house.] This was said before, but now repeated; because, after he had kept the three great festivals there, it was not only consecrated, but all Divine offices had been performed in it; and there was nothing more to be added.

Ver. 26. *And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber.*] This name *Ezion-geber* signifies *spina viri;* it lying in a rocky, ragged shore, running out into the sea like the back-bone of a man. So Arrianus (as Bochartus observes) in his Periplus describes the inmost part of the Sinus Arabicus (where Ezion-geber lay) as very dangerous, because of the rocks and shelves. Which makes it less strange, that the ships of Jehoshaphat were broken there in pieces, in the very port, before they put out to sea, (2 Kings xxii. 48.) Insomuch that in aftertimes this port was forsaken, and they frequented Elath. Josephus will have Ezion-geber to be the same with Berenice, a city on the African shore, over against Syene; others have different conjectures: when the Scripture plainly teaches us that it was a port of Idumea, not far from Aela upon the Red Sea; and not far distant from the wilderness of Zin. For the Israelites removed their camp from this place to that wilderness, as we read Numb. xxxiii. 36.

Which is beside Eloth.] Or *Elath,* for it is called by both names: and by the Greeks and Romans, Aela, and Ailat, and Elat, and Elana, &c. Which was a port known in the days of Moses, (Deut. ii. 8.) belonging to the Edomites; and, as St. Jerome saith, to the Egyptians: for it was *ambigui juris,* lying on the confines of both countries. Insomuch that Sir John Marsham thinks Solomon and Hiram now built ships there, with the good leave of Pharaoh; the Egyptians now not minding merchandise, but were set upon conquering countries: but David having conquered Edom, (2 Sam. viii. 14.) I rather think became master of this port; where Solomon built a navy of ships in his own right, and went thither himself to see it, (2 Chron. viii. 17.) It continued in the possession of the Israelites about a hundred and fifty years, till, in the time of Joram, the Edomites recovered it, (2 Kings viii. 20.) But it was again taken from them by Azariah, and left by him to his son, (2 Kings xiv. 22.) but lost again by his grandson Ahaz, from whom the king of Syria took it, (2 Kings xvi. 6.) The Syrians held it a long time, till, after many changes under the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ, it came into the hands of the Romans; who quartered there the tenth legion, as St. Jerome tells us. (See Bochartus, in the second part of his Geographica Sacra, called Canaan, lib. i. cap. 44.)

On the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.] What the Hebrews call the sea of Suph, other nations call the sea of Edom, from the country which it washes, *viz.* Idumea; as appears from this place. From whence the Greeks (not knowing the reason of the name) call it ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν, *the Red Sea:* the word *Edom* signifying *rubrum* or *rufrum, red* or *yellow,* as Bochartus and Ludolphus have observed.

Ver. 27. *And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.*] The navy was Solomon's, who had servants of his own on board the ships, to go and traffic at Ophir: but they had no skill in navigation, and therefore Hiram sent as many Tyrians as were necessary to man the ships; they having been always bred at sea.

Ver. 28. *And they came to Ophir.*] It is certain there was a place called Ophir, or as the LXX. call it Σόφιρ (which word Josephus also uses instead of Ophir), and by others called Ὀρφῆν, which was in Arabia Felix. But this cannot be the place here meant, as Bochartus hath demonstrated by many arguments, in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 27. This one is sufficient, that it was a three years' voyage to Ophir here mentioned; whereas the other was very near the place where the navy was prepared. And besides, they fetched ivory from Ophir, whereas there are no elephants in Arabia; therefore we must search for it somewhere else: and there is little doubt it was in India: but in what part of it, is not so easy to be determined. The famous Bochartus thinks it was Taprobana; which is the same with that now called Zeilan, or Seilan. For what the ancients say of Taprobana, that the moderns say of Zeilan; as he hath shewn in a very large diagram of both countries, in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 46. And, indeed, Grotius before him concluded, there was no better way to guess where this place was, than by considering what commodities were brought from thence, and inquiring of merchants (who have been in the remote parts of the world) where not only gold, and silver, and precious stones, but ivory, and all the rest that were fetched from Ophir, are to be found now. And, in a letter to his brother, he desires him to make this inquiry for him. (See Epistol. 483.)

And fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents.] It is said in 2 Chron. viii. 18. that they brought four hundred and fifty: but we may well suppose that thirty talents might be spent in the charges of the voyage to and fro; so that only four hundred and twenty came to Solomon's coffers. Or rather, as Abarbinel thinks, Solomon gave the servants of Hiram, who managed the ships, thirty talents for a gratuity. Or, as Laniado (who delights to contradict Abarbinel), the Jerusalem talent was bigger than that of Ophir: so that four hundred and fifty Ophir talents made but four hundred and twenty Jerusalem talents. It is easy also to say, that there came of gold refined only four hundred and twenty into Solomon's treasury; though the whole mass was four hundred and fifty.

And brought it to king Solomon.] It is no improbable conjecture of Abarbinel, that Solomon at first trafficked in the ships of Hiram; which voyage brought him for his share the hundred and twenty talents mentioned ver. 14. of this chapter: which Hiram is said to have sent to him, as the profit (that is) of his adventure. Which was so great that Solomon resolved to build a navy of his own; at which Hiram was so far from being offended, that, like a true friend, he furnished him with mariners to manage the ships; and they brought him this great quantity of gold at their return from their first voyage.

The imperial laws forbid noblemen to exercise merchandise as a thing below them: and therefore it much less becomes a king; as Bodinus discourses, lib. vi. de Republ. cap. 2. But we must not measure antiquity by our own times: and that author well adds, that though he would not have kings now to be merchants, yet if he might have his choice, "Mercatorem eum malo quam tyrannum," &c. *I had rather a prince should be a merchant than a tyrant;*

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and noblemen should rather trade than oppress and make a prey of their tenants.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *AND when the queen of Sheba.*] Josephus thinks she was queen of Meroe, which was anciently called Saba. But a great many of his countrymen more rightly understand this matter; who say she came from Aljemin, which was the south part of Arabia Felix, near the Red Sea; and so our Saviour calls her the *queen of the south*, which is the signification of *Jemin* in Hebrew; and in Arabic, with the addition of *Al*, is called *Aljemin*.

Heard of the fame of Solomon, concerning the name of the Lord.] Theodoret thinks she was a religious woman, as far as the light of nature guided her; and if we may believe the Hebrew tradition, she had some tincture of revealed religion from her pious ancestors: for they think she was descended from Abraham by Keturah, one of whose sons begat Sheba, (1 Chron. i. 32.) Now she came to hear of Solomon's fame by the ships that went to Ophir: for they sailed by her coast, and in all likelihood spread his fame there, as they did in all other places where they touched, proclaiming his magnificence, and especially his wisdom, and his glorious temple which he had built for the worship of his God: whose praise they set forth as far above all gods.

She came to prove him with hard questions.] To try whether he was so wise as report made him; by propounding difficult questions to him, which none but a man divinely illuminated could resolve, as Abarbinel understands it.

Ver. 2. *And she came to Jerusalem.*] The fable of Agatharcides is confuted by this, which saith the royal dignity among the Sabæans was but a kind of captivity. For after the inauguration of their king, it was forbid, by an ancient oracle, that he should stir out of his palace upon pain of stoning: but there he enjoyed himself in all manner of pleasure.

With a very great train.] Royally attended.

And with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones.] These presents which she brought to Solomon are a great argument she came from Arabia Felix, which abounded with such things, but none of them are in Meroe: nor can Meroe be said to be the ends of the earth, from whence our Saviour saith this queen came, there being many large countries in Africa beyond Meroe, but none beyond the Sabæans in Arabia, whose country lay upon the sea. See Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 26. where he shews they abounded in gold, having such plenty of it from Ophir, that they exchanged it for brass and iron, &c. giving double, or thrice the weight of them. And yet the Abyssine Christians (who say her name was Marqueda) are very confident she came from their country; where it is as constant a tradition that she had a son by Solomon, from whom their kings are derived. So Ludolphus observes, in his notes upon the confession of Claudius king of Ethiopia, where he saith, this was "the faith of his father the Israelitish king."

And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.] Had the liberty to propound whatsoever she desired to be resolved about; either in natural, I suppose, or Divine things.

Ver. 3. *And Solomon told her all her questions.*] That is, answered them to her satisfaction.

There was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.] There was nothing so secret, which he did not reveal to her.

Ver. 4. *And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom.*] Had fully discovered the wonderful variety of wisdom wherewith he was endowed.

And the house which he had built.] Both for God and for himself; the magnificence of which was admirable.

Ver. 5. *And the meat of his table.*] Where it is likely she was entertained while she stayed at Jerusalem.

And the sitting of his servants.] At their table.

And the attendance of his ministers.] Who waited on him at his table, and in his chamber, and other places.

And their apparel.] Which was different, I suppose, according to their several offices; but all very stately.

And his cup-bearers.] Who filled out his wine, and brought and delivered it to him; with such ceremony as made his grandeur appear in that small thing.

And his ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord.] From his own palace; of which L'Empereur gives an account, upon Codex Middoth, p. 50. But the ancient interpreters understand by the word *olatho* not his *ascent*, but his *burnt-offering*, which he offered in the house of the Lord. And it is very likely, she saw the service of God's ministers in his house, as well as Solomon's in his own house; and was made by Solomon to understand the meaning of every thing that was done there. Which must needs put her into an ecstacy of admiration, as it here follows. And thus the LXX. translate these words, καὶ τὴν ὁλοκαύτωσιν αὐτοῦ ἣν ἂν ἔφερεν ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου, whom P. Martyr, Victorinus Strigelius, and others, follow in these words: "Et holocausta ejus, quæ in domo Domini offerebat;" *and his burnt-offerings, which he offered in the house of the Lord.*

There was no more spirit in her.] She was perfectly astonished. For as he discoursed of all sorts of natural things, so he was no less skilful in political government; and transcended in the knowledge of Divine matters, as his book shews us; having all things likewise in such order both in his house, and every where else, that it was amazing. A very great man of our own observes, that such things as these—the apparel, the sitting and attendance of his servants, were justly admired by her as an indication of Solomon's wisdom. For they are the outworks which preserve majesty itself from approaches and surprisals. And whatsoever prince departs from these forms, and trappings, and ornaments of his dignity and pre-eminence, will hardly be able, at some time, to preserve the body itself of majesty from intrusion, invasion, and violation.

Ver. 6. *And she said unto the king.*] When she had recovered herself out of her astonishment.

It was a true report that I heard in my own country of thy acts, and of thy wisdom.] They did not deceive her, who, by their reports of him, moved her to take this long journey.

Ver. 7. *Howbeit, I believed not the words, till I came, and mine eyes had seen it.*] She thought they might magnify things too much, as travellers are wont to do; especially when they speak of their own country.

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And, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.] This was very extraordinary; for commonly men find things fall far short of their expectations.

Ver. 8. *Happy are thy men.*] His subjects.

And happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.] Especially those that were about his person, and ministered unto him; who had opportunity every day to hear his wise sayings and discourses.

Ver. 9. *Blessed be the Lord thy God.*] One would think, by this, that she became a proselyte before she returned to her own country; whither she carried better things than she presented to Solomon (which the next verses mention); the treasures of heavenly wisdom. Philostorgius, indeed, saith, that in his time the Sabæans sacrificed to the sun and moon, and certain demons of their own country; and yet ἐκ περιτόμου τὸ ἔθνος, &c. *the nation was circumcised after the Jewish manner on the eighth day.* Which rite they received, one would think, from this queen, and retained it a long time, though they continued their old superstition. It is possible, indeed, that the Jews who lived among them, might persuade them to it. For the same Philostorgius saith, οὐκ ὀλίγον πλῆθος Ἰουδαίων αὐτοῖς ἀναπέφυραι, *no small number of Jews was mingled with them.*

Which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.] A most excellent admonition both to the people and to the king; that they should think themselves highly obliged to God, who had given them such a king; and he should think God made him king to govern his people justly. This sense the wise heathen had, that governors were set over men by God for their good: as Aristotle told Alexander in a letter to him, wherein he exhorts him to keep in mind, that his kingdom was given him by God for the sake of mankind, εἰς εὐεργεσίαν, οὐ πρὸς ὕβριν, *that he might do them good, and not abuse them.*

Ver. 10. *And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold.*] Though we do not find that the ancients speak of any mines of gold in the Sabæans' country; yet they abounded with it, being near to that Ophir which I before mentioned, and is spoken of in the book of Job, xxii. 24. xxviii. 16. (in an age when they were not acquainted with the Indian Ophir, which was very remote from them.) And several other places there were also near to them, who had plenty of gold, as Bochartus shews in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 27. p. 159, &c.

And of spices very great store, and precious stones.] This country was famous for myrrh, frankincense, and cinnamon (Josephus adds balsam, also), as Bochart observes, out of many authors in the same book, cap. 26. p. 149. 153. For their very fires were made of cassia and cinnamon. Precious stones also he shews were so common in this country, that they adorned their cups, and their beds, and their stools, &c. with them. (See him, p. 150.)

There came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.] For it seems the Jews maintained no trade with this country.

Ver. 11. *And the navy also of Hiram that brought gold from Ophir.*] This is meant of Ophir in India, mentioned ix. 28. From which Hiram's navy is said to bring gold, though the ships were Solomon's, because Hiram's servants had the management of them.

Brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug-trees, and precious stones.] It is very uncertain what these almug, or algum-trees were (as they are called by a transposition of letters in 2 Chron. ii. 8.) Our famous Dr. Castell thinks it was the wood called *sanctulum*, which is proper for all the uses mentioned in the next verse, and is still in India. And R. D. Kimchi upon that place in the Chronicles saith it was a red wood which is now called *brezil.* By which cannot be meant the wood that comes from Brazil, for that country was not known in his days; but probably he calls it *brezil*, from the Hebrew word *barzel*, which signifies *iron;* it being of such a dark colour. And such a wood there is now in the kingdom of Java, as Gousset observes out of Thevet, and other authors, in his Comment. Linguæ Hebr.

Ver. 12. *And the king made of the almug-trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for his own house.*] Or rather *rails* (as we translate it in the margin of our Bibles), which were made on either side the causey which went up from the king's house to the house of the Lord. Compare this with 1 Chron. xxvi. 16. 18. and 2 Chron. ix. 11. and see Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, p. 125. where he only quotes Ralbag, who saith he made battlements, *i. e.* rails, on either side, that men by them might stay themselves as they went along the highway of that ascent.

Harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug-trees, nor were seen unto this day.] This account of almug-trees is mixed with the story of the queen of Sheba, because she is said (ver. 5.) to have admired the ascent (as we translate it) which Solomon made to the house of the Lord. Which appeared the more magnificent, because the rails thereof were made of this rare wood. Which Abarbinel fancies was *coral*, which grows in the very sea, and they had never seen before; nor did any come after.

Ver. 13. *And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty.*] By their mutual presents, which she made to him, (ver. 10.) and he at her departure made to her, they testified their friendship to each other; desiring by these to be remembered. And Solomon desired to know what would be most acceptable to her, among all the rarities she had seen, which he bestowed upon her: besides, he generously added more things of value, which it is likely she had not in her own country.

So she turned, and went to her own country, she and her servants.] Accompanied, it is probable, with many of the Israelites, who went and planted themselves there: from whom sprung those Jews, who, Philostorgius saith, were mixed with the Sabæans in no small numbers, as I observed, ver. 9. But the Jews of whom he speaks were such as settled there after the last captivity; and it was not lawful for a Jew, while the temple stood, to settle in a place, from whence he could not come three times a year to worship at Jerusalem.

Ver. 14. *Now the weight of gold which came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold.*] The history of the queen of Sheba being ended, he returns to give an account of Solomon's riches and magnificence; which he had begun to set forth before. And first he relates what a vast quantity of gold was brought

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into his country every year; not only from Ophir, but from other countries, unto which perhaps the queen of Sheba opened him a passage.

Ver. 15. *Besides that he had of the merchantmen.*] Who paid custom for the goods they brought from several countries; or, as Abarbinel thinks, the *men of Hattarim* (as the words are in the Hebrew) signify a certain nation, *viz.* the Tartars (as they are now called), who brought commodities from the north country to the people of Israel, as others did from the south.

And of the traffic of the spice-merchants.] There is no reason thus to translate these words, as the same author thinks: but they signify in general all sorts of traders, who brought in merchandise, by sea or land.

And all the kings of Arabia.] Who sent him presents.

And of the governors of the countries.] Which David or he had conquered, and placed governors there; who gathered his tribute, and sent it to him every year.

Ver. 16. *And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.*

Ver. 17. *And he made three hundred shekels of beaten gold; three pound of gold went to every shield.*] These *targets* and *shields* seem to have been made for state and pomp; to be carried before him, upon some special occasions. Though we do read in the Roman authors of some great captains to whom golden shields were granted, as a reward of their great valour: and these perhaps might be intended for the same purpose. But then we must not think that the shields weighed but six hundred shekels (which would have been so small as to be of no use), but that each cost six hundred shekels of gold; as Fortunatus Scacchus observes, Myrothec. iii. cap. 3.

And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.] Where, it is likely, he kept his most precious treasure. See concerning this house, vii. 2. which Josephus saith the queen of Sheba admired above all things she saw in Judea: the vast multitude of cedar pillars that were in it, making it look like the forest of Lebanon: from whence some think it had its name.

Ver. 18. *And the king made a great throne of ivory.*] We never read of ivory until about Solomon's time; who, perhaps, brought elephants out of India, and took care to have a great deal of ivory brought with them. Insomuch, that we read of *ivory palaces,* (Psal. xlv. 9.) whose walls were overlaid with ivory; which was more precious than gold in ancient times, as Pliny tells in many places.

And overlaid it with the best gold.] Not entirely, so as to cover the ivory (for then it might as well have been made of wood), but here and there; as P. Martyr reasonably conjectures. Which made the throne appear more beautiful by the mixture of gold and ivory; with which, at due distances, it was studded. In this throne he sat when he administered justice, and gave audience to ambassadors, and the like.

Ver. 19. *The throne had six steps.*] Was advanced to a just height, that he might be seen and heard by all.

And the top of the throne was round behind.] Making a half circle over his head.

And there were stays on either side of the place of the seat.] Like one of our great chairs, which have rests to lean one's arms upon, on either side.

And two lions stood beside the stays.] As their supporters.

Ver. 20. *And twelve lions stood on the one side, and on the other upon the six steps.*] Upon every step a lion stood reared up, on each side, as if he was falling upon his prey: which many interpreters think had a mystical meaning in it, as every thing else had belonging to this throne; with which I shall not trouble the reader. Grotius thinks he offended in making these figures; and having once begun to transgress the law, he grew still worse and worse.

There was not the like made in any kingdom.] That is, in those times there was none to be compared with it; but in after-ages there were perhaps more glorious. For Athenæus saith, the throne of the Parthian kings was of gold, encompassed with four golden pillars, beset with precious stones, (lib. xii. Deipnos.) And the Persian kings, he saith, sat in judgment under a golden vine (and other trees of gold), the bunches of whose grapes were made of several sorts of precious stones.

Ver. 21. *And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.*] Who brought in such plenty of gold, that it made silver of less value while he lived.

Ver. 22. *For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram.*] These words are added to give a further account how Solomon came to have gold in such abundance: for he trafficked for it in another fleet, besides that which went to Ophir. That fleet, it is plain, was Solomon's, and sailed out of his own port Ezion-geber, (ix. 26.) though it was manned by Tyrians, because they understood the sea. Whereas this navy here spoken of belonged to Hiram, and went out of his port at Tyre; and Solomon had only the liberty to trade in it to Tarshish. Which was a place wherewith the Tyrians had very ancient commerce; and therefore Hiram was the chief in this voyage, as Solomon was in that to Ophir.

Once in three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver.] It was not so far off, that they could not return in less than three years: but, as Abarbinel supposes, they went thither in the end of one year, and stayed there the next to vend and to buy their commodities; and then returned in the beginning of the third year. Bochartus hath made it very probable that this place was Tartessus in Spain, where gold and silver in ancient times, if we may believe Strabo and others, whom he quotes, were plentiful. But I do not find any proof that ivory, apes, and peacocks, were the commodities of that country. (See his Phaleg. lib. iii. cap. 7.)

And ivory.] The Hebrew word *senhabim* is of doubtful signification: but the word *sen,* or *shen,* certainly signifying a *tooth,* interpreters have supposed that *habim* signifies an *elephant;* and both together import elephants' teeth, *i. e. ivory.* But it is hard to give an account of this word *habim:* therefore Bochartus rather thinks that the whole word *senhabim* signifies an *elephant:* which best agrees with what follows, apes and peacocks, all three signifying living creatures: and, indeed, *ivory* itself, in this chapter, is simply called by the name of *sen:* where he speaks of Solomon's throne, ver. 18. (See his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 20.)

And apes.] The Hebrew word *kephim* is both by the ancients and moderns translated *apes:* which creature Pliny calls *cephos;* and saith they were seen but once at Romo

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in his days, and that they came out of Ethiopia. So that if Tarshish was in Spain, they that sailed thither trafficked in Afric also before they came home. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iii. cap. 31.)

And peacocks.] The LXX. do not adventure to translate the Hebrew word *thuccijim:* but the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and Latin, translate it as we do, *peacocks:* and so do the most learned among the Jews, as Bochartus shews in a long dissertation; where he probably guesses this creature had its name by a small transposition of letters from *Cuthajim;* as much as to say a bird of Cuth, or a Persian bird. Which transpositions are so usual, that we have an instance of it in this chapter: the trees here called *almugim,* being called in the Chronicles *algumim.* See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 23. where he shews how beautiful a creature this is: which might well be brought from foreign countries to Judea, where there were none of them.

Ver. 23. *So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.*] The latter of which he begged of God; who graciously promised to add the former; which he did to admiration.

Ver. 24. *And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.*] That is, the great men of the neighbouring countries came, as the queen of Sheba did, to be acquainted with his wisdom; which they heard was a Divine gift.

Ver. 25. *And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules.*] This shews that he speaks, in the former verse, of the great men of the earth; who made these presents to him, when they came into his country.

A rate year by year.] This seems to signify that they so highly prized his wisdom, that they courted his friendship; and voluntarily sent him a certain present every year, as a token of the continuance of it.

Ver. 26. *And Solomon gathered together chariots, and horsemen.*] In a time of profound peace, he thought it a piece of wisdom to be ready for war, as a means to preserve the peace. Though the surest way to enjoy the happiness wherein he lived, had been to observe strictly the commands of God.

And he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.] Four hundred of these chariots, Josephus saith, were presented from the kings and princes beforementioned: and he had a thousand of his own before. But what need was there for so many stables for his horses as seem to be mentioned, iv. 26. *viz.* forty thousand? The word is not *stables,* but *stalls;* every horse having a stall, not a stable to himself: and some chariots had two, some four horses belonging to them. And yet even thus there were too many: therefore we must suppose they did not always stand in one place; but sometimes in one country, sometimes in another. Where it was necessary there should be stalls for them, when he removed from city to city.

Whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.] The former part of these words relates to the chariots, which were kept in the country, in the cities Solomon built for them, (ix. 19.) and the latter to the horsemen, which were always with the king in Jerusalem; as Abarbinel understands these words. Thus Solomon took care they should not be burdensome to his people, by keeping them all in one place: but they were distributed through the country, only a great body of horse in the royal city.

Ver. 27. *And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones.*] As common as pebbles.

And cedars made he to be as the sycamore-trees which are in the vale, in abundance.] Ordinary things, like willows, that among us grow numerously in low grounds.

Ver. 28. *And king Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt.*] Here he again openly transgressed the law of God (as Grotius observes), presuming he had no need of those cautions, which were given against this by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, (xvii. 16.)

And linen yarn.] Most think *byssus,* fine linen, is hereby meant; which was a great commodity in Egypt.

The king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.] It is acknowledged by all interpreters that these, and the following words in the next verse, are very obscure.

Ver. 29. *And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.*] These words Bochartus seems to me to have cleared with the greatest perspicuity, by taking the Hebrew word *mikveh,* not for *linen yarn,* or fine linen; but for the *toll* or *custom* that was taken for the horses that were brought out of Egypt. And thus he translates the whole; *Horses were brought up to Solomon out of Egypt; and as for the toll or custom, the merchants of king Solomon hired it at a price* (that is, redeemed it of the king of Egypt for so much constantly); *and a chariot coming out of Egypt went out for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty; and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring by their hands.* The sense of which words is plainly this, that noble horses being found in those times in few countries but Egypt, Pharaoh would not suffer them to be carried from thence without a great tribute, which he exacted from them; which was six hundred shekels for a chariot, and a hundred and fifty for a horse. This must not be understood to be the price at which they were bought, but the custom paid for them; otherwise every horse would have been of the same value, which is absurd. Solomon, therefore, bringing many thousand horses out of Egypt, prevailed with his father-in-law to free him from this grievous tribute, and to accept of a certain sum of money to be paid him every year instead of it. Thus being freed from the custom, which was demanded of all others; all the kings of the Hittites and Syrians bought their chariots and horses of Solomon's merchants, who could afford to sell them cheaper than they could have them in Egypt. (See Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 9.)

By the *kings of the Hittites* are meant the rulers of some of that nation, who were driven out by the Israelites; and lived in the north-east of the land of Canaan, or in some part of Arabia. (See Judg. i. 26.)

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *AND king Solomon loved many strange women (together with the daughter of Pharaoh).*] It was not a

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fault in him that he married Pharaoh's daughter; she being a proselyte, as is generally supposed, to the Jewish religion. But in marrying so many other women besides, he committed two sins against the law; one in multiplying wives, and another in marrying those of strange nations, who still retained their idolatrous religion; which was expressly against their law, as the next verse declares it. The Jewish doctors, indeed, are so very desirous to excuse Solomon, that they say these strange women were proselyted: but Mr. Selden well observes, that then it had been no sin to have married with some of them; and yet Nehemiah says it was a sin, xiii. 26. (lib. v. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 15. p. 625, 626. and Buxtorf. de Sponsal. et Divort. p. 40, 41.)

Women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites.] Some think Solomon would not have taken wives out of these nations, had it not been out of some political principle: which some think was, that he might by their means gain intelligence of the state of those countries: others, that he might extinguish the old enmity which was between the Israelites and those nations; to which he might probably hope to put an end, by contracting these marriages with them. But good intentions will not justify the doing unlawful things.

Ver. 2. *Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.*] This relates particularly to the Hittites and the Zidonians beforementioned; and consequently the rest of the seven nations of Canaan, with whom they were forbidden to make any marriage, (Exod. xxxiv. 16. Deut. vii. 3.) for the weighty reason here mentioned. For though they might marry wives of other nations, if they embraced the Jewish religion; yet of the seven nations of Canaan they might not, though they were converted to their religion: lest the venom might lurk and lie hid; and at last break out, and infect them. Great was the foresight of Moses (wherewith God endowed him) in giving this precept (as Grotius notes); for the not observing it undid the Israelites, and was the foundation of their utter ruin.

Solomon clave unto these in love.] He not only married them, but had a great affection to them; whereby his heart was easily alienated from God.

Ver. 3. *And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines.*] Of these princesses, few or none had the name of queens, as Abarbinel observes; but they only who were of the highest esteem with him, or who were of royal extraction. He thinks Solomon enjoyed every one of these once, and then shut them up, that nobody might touch them afterward. (See Buxtorf. de Sponsal. et Divert. p. 48, 49. and Hackspan's Miscellanies, lib. i. cap. 6.) But it seems to me more probable, that he kept so many wives merely for state and pomp; after the manner of the eastern princes; but never used many of them. Just as they do now in China, where the emperor hath a great multitude of wives, chosen out of the prime beauties of the country: many of which he never saw in his life; as Father la Compte tells us in his history of China, par. i. p. 62. The same is said of the Great Mogul, that he hath as many women as will make up a full thousand (which is Solomon's number), as the author of the Voyage to the Indies tells us, in the end of P. le Valle's History, sect. 20. p. 469. It must be considered, also, that Solomon had not brought them to this number in the beginning of his reign, but towards the latter end; when his riches increasing, he made vast expenses; and studied to outdo all other kings, in magnificence of all kinds.

And his wives turned away his heart.] He was so delighted in their company, that they turned away his thoughts from serious business; yea, from God himself.

Ver. 4. *For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods.*] For, indulging himself too much in pleasure, he weakened both his body and his mind: and growing old betime, began to doat upon other gods; which he suffered his wives to worship privately, and at last openly to exercise the religious rites of their own country.

And his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.] He did not forsake the Lord, but joined other gods with him. Which a man of his sense could never have done, (who had solemnly acknowledged in his prayer, that there was no god like to the Lord, yea, that there was no god else, viii. 23. 60.) if his mind had not been enervated, and his understanding darkened by sensual pleasures.

Ver. 5. *And Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians.*] He worshipped Astarte, of which see in the book of Judges, ii. 13. and 1 Sam. vii. 3, 4.

And after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.] This god was the same with Moloch; whom he calls an abomination, because highly detested by God: who had given them a particular caution against worshipping the host of heaven, (Deut. iv. 10.) Now Moloch signifies the prince of that host, as I may call it, the sun; the king of heaven, as the moon was called the queen: in this all agree, that Moloch comes from *melech*, which in the Hebrew language signifies a *king*, and is of the same import with Baal and Adonis (which signify *lord*), which were worshipped by many nations, as Moloch was: who was not the peculiar god of the Ammonites; but the god whom they principally worshipped.

Ver. 6. *And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as David his father did.*] And yet Abarbinel thinks he did not commit idolatry by offering sacrifices to these false gods; but was only persuaded by his wives so far as to learn the manner after which they worshipped their gods, by being present at the rites of their religion. Which was a dangerous piece of learning; which he might have known without being present at their sacrifices.

Ver. 7. *Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab.*] Concerning Chemosh I have said enough elsewhere. (See Numb. xxi. 29.)

In the hill that is before Jerusalem.] He set up an altar upon the Mount of Olives; where all the city of Jerusalem might see what they did. This contradicts Abarbinel, and shews he was more than a spectator of their worship: which he encouraged by building an altar for it. And indeed that author is much to blame in abusing his excellent parts, to find excuses for such a foul crime.

And for Moloch the abomination of the children of Ammon.] In the same place, I suppose, Moloch was worshipped: for he would not adventure to permit strange

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worship to be exercised in Jerusalem itself; though his posterity did. And so from little beginnings followed great mischiefs.

Ver. 8. *And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense, and sacrificed unto their gods.*] For what was granted to one, the rest would be apt to claim; or else complain of unkindness to them. It is an astonishing thing that a man of his wisdom should not rather have converted them all to his religion, than be seduced by them so much as to favour theirs. But he took no pains with them, having given up himself wholly to his pleasures; and growing conceited perhaps of his great wisdom, thought he could reconcile his religion with theirs; and find a good meaning in all their superstitions. Abarbinel observes, in several places, that it is never said Pharaoh's daughter turned away his heart from the Lord, or that he set up an altar for her: which is an argument she was proselyted to the true religion, and continued in it. As the rest might have been, if he had made it his business, and had not grown indifferent, and thought all religions alike. Which hath been the disease of some great wits.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared to him twice.*] First at Gibeon, in the beginning of his reign, iii. 5. and then at Jerusalem, after the building of the temple, ix. 2. There was another time when a message came to him, by the word of the Lord, vi. 12. But we do not read that God appeared to him more than twice; which was enough to establish him in his faith, fear, and love.

Ver. 10. *And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods.*] For in both those visions the happiness God promised him was declared to depend upon his observation of God's statutes, as David his father did. (See iii. 14. ix. 4, 5.) And when he had begun to build the temple, he admonished him, that he had better desist than go on in that work, unless he intended to keep all his commandments, vii. 12, 13.

But he kept not that which the Lord commanded.] Which was the greater crime, because he had so oft admonished him of his duty, and done such great things for him.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon.*] Either by some prophet, or by a vision: wherein he appeared to him as terribly as before he had done kindly, and pronounced this doom upon him. The former I think is most probable, that God would not vouchsafe to appear to him any more; but sent this message by Ahijah, or some other prophet.

Forasmuch as thou hast done this, and thou hast not kept my covenant, and my statutes, which I commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and give it unto thy servant.] Tear it in pieces, and give the greater part of it to one of his own subjects, *viz.* Jeroboam. This was enough to astonish any man, to hear that all his splendour should be so soon eclipsed, if he were not perfectly stupified: and it is likely it did make him reflect upon his folly; and, as many think, moved him to write the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ver. 12. *Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.*] Though this was some mitigation of the punishment, that in his days the kingdom should continue entire; yet he humbled him by letting him know this favour was not granted for his sake, but for his father's, who had served him faithfully.

Ver. 13. *Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for thy servant David's sake.*] In memory also of David's faithful service he adds another mitigation of the punishment: that the whole kingdom should not be torn from his son, but he would leave him one tribe, over which he should reign: which was that of Judah, unto which Benjamin was an appendix, being much mixed with it.

And for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen.] To be the place of his habitation, in the temple built there by Solomon, which he would suffer to remain to his posterity.

Ver. 14. *And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom.*] Though God did not execute the forementioned threatening till after his death, yet he began to afflict Solomon by raising up three adversaries against him; who disturbed his repose, in his old age, when he most desired to be quiet. The first of them is here mentioned, who had a mortal hatred to Solomon, ever since the death of David, who had endeavoured to destroy him with every male in the country. But God restrained his wrath from attempting any thing against Solomon, as long as he observed God's commands.

Ver. 15. *For it came to pass, when David was in Edom.*] To conquer the country: which he did entirely, and put garrisons into it, (2 Sam. viii. 14. 1 Chron. xviii. 12, 13.)

And Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain.] It is not to be supposed that the Edomites slew none of the Israelites in the defence of their country: and those are they, it is probable, unto whom Joab, after he had done his business, went up to give an honourable interment.

After he had smitten every male in Edom.] That is, all he could find; for some fled, as Hadad did.

Ver. 16. *(For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel.*] That is, with all his army.

Until he had cut off every male in Edom).] Intending to extirpate the nation.

Ver. 17. *That Hadad fled, he, and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad being yet a little child.*] He being very young, some of his father's servants took him and hid him, and themselves with him, in some secret place; and when Joab was busy in giving a solemn burial to the Israelites, they took that opportunity to carry Hadad into Egypt.

Ver. 18. *And they arose out of Midian.*] But first they went into Midian, that they might send from thence to know if Pharaoh would give them entertainment and protection.

And came to Paran.] Which was in the way to Egypt. For the wilderness of Paran lay between Edom and Egypt.

And they took men with them.] To attend Hadad; that he might appear like a young prince.

And they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt.] He invited him not only to come into his country, but to his own palace.

Which gave him a house, and appointed him a table, and gave him land.] According to the manner of generous princes, who pity noble persons that are in distress; Pharaoh not only assigned him a house, and kept a table for

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him, that he might want nothing; but moreover gave him land, that out of its revenues he might provide himself an equipage suitable to his quality.

Ver. 19. *And Hadad found great favour in the eyes of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen.*] This argues a high esteem of him, for the princely qualities which it is likely appeared in him. Though sometimes the affections of kings are unaccountable, and they prefer those who do not deserve it.

Ver. 20. *And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house.*] The queen had as great a fondness for the child, as the king had for his father; and would have him nursed and weaned in Pharaoh's palace.

And Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh.] He was educated among the king's children, as if he had been of them; which gave Hadad, no doubt, great reputation.

Ver. 21. *And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead.*] Whom he dreaded more than David; having done that terrible execution upon his country, of destroying their males for six months together.

Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to my own country.] Which he hoped to recover, now that the great enemies of it were dead, and Solomon young.

Ver. 22. *Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise.*] Nothing would satisfy him, but to go and attempt the regaining the dominion of Edom. Which some fancy he did, by the intercession of Pharaoh, who persuaded Solomon to let him reign in Edom, paying him a tribute; which now in the end of Solomon's reign he denied to pay, and rebelled against him. But this proceeds upon a supposition, that when David died Solomon was married, which is not true. Nor is it certain that he was the same Pharaoh whose daughter Solomon married, that had been so kind as to educate Hadad. It seems to me more likely, that though Hadad ventured to his own country, he durst not attempt any thing till Solomon began to decline in the favour of God, and of his people too. For if Hadad had moved any change of government, Solomon had forces enough to suppress him; and in his vigorous age, no doubt, would have done it; he being so great a prince, and having so many chariots and horsemen always ready, that I am apt to think Hadad did not so much as enter into his own country, but lived somewhere near it; watching an opportunity to get possession of it; which he found in the conclusion of Solomon's reign.

Ver. 23. *And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah.*] When he saw his army beaten by king David, 2 Sam. viii. 3.

Ver. 24. *And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah.*] Some of those that fled, when David defeated Hadadezer, enlisted themselves under Rezon; who became their commander. And it is probable, he lived after the manner of the Arabians, by plunder and robbery, all the days of David, and the best part of Solomon's reign.

And they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus.] Not in the days of David, who had put a garrison into Damascus, and brought the people under tribute, (2 Sam. viii. 5, 6.) And so they continued subject unto Solomon; till he, doating upon strange women, minded not the defence of his conquests. Which Rezon took the advantage of, and invaded and got possession of Damascus, and reigned there, as Hadad did in Edom.

Ver. 25. *And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon.*] This is not to be understood of the whole reign of Solomon, which for the most part was peaceable, (as was observed before, iv. 20. 25.) but of all the days which remained of his life, from the time that his wives publicly exercised their idolatry, unto the day of his death.

Beside the mischief that Hadad did.] This signifies, as Abarbinel thinks, that Hadad durst not have rebelled against Solomon, if Hadad had not led him the way; but seeing what success he had in Edom, he and his men seized on Damascus.

And he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.] In combination with Hadad he defied Israel, and made himself king, not only of Damascus, but over all the country thereabout.

Ver. 26. *And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant.*] In a public employment.

(Whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow-woman), even he lifted up his hand against the king.] Not against king Solomon, that we read of, but against his son; to whom he gave great disturbance, as soon as Solomon was dead.

Ver. 27. *And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.*] This was the occasion of Jeroboam's advancement, as it follows in the next verse. For Solomon being engaged in many buildings, chose fitting persons to oversee his works; among which Jeroboam was one. Who took this opportunity to work in the people a disaffection to Solomon and his government, as Abarbinel and other of the Jews imagine. For he represented, say they, the building of Millo as a work of vanity, only to gratify Pharaoh's daughter: and the breaches of the city of David they take to have been only open places, at which people might enter and come easily many ways to the king's palace; whereas, being stopped up by Solomon, access was not so easy, but they were forced to go about. This was represented as a grievance, especially since such heavy burdens were laid upon the people to maintain these expenses. But the text suggests nothing of this.

Ver. 28. *And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour.*] Of great courage and strength of body.

And Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious.] Very diligent in the business wherein he had employed him, of looking over his works.

He made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.] Gave him greater preferment, which was to look after the revenue of a whole province—the tribe of Ephraim, and, as some think, Manasseh also. This was a high obligation upon him; but it made him, the Hebrew doctors think, only more presumptuous to instil discontent into the people, who were unnecessarily burdened to support Solomon's vanity in such vast buildings as he undertook. If Jeroboam was guilty of joining with the people in

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their murmurings, and increasing them, this cannot properly be called lifting up the hand, that is, rebelling against Solomon: but was a preparation for it, and disposed the people to the revolt which afterward followed.

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem.*] Where he had been, it is likely, to give up his accounts, and was returning to his charge.

That the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way.] Met with him as he was going along. Some of the Jewish doctors will have this prophet to be one of those who came out of Egypt with Moses, and therefore must be five hundred years old. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. p. 668.) Which, if it could be believed, made him the fitter person to reprove Jeroboam afterward for the sin of the golden calves, and also for the rebellion which he had seen punished in Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

And he had clad himself with a new garment.] That he might make the better appearance at court, when he waited on the king.

And they two were alone in the field.] The prophet, I suppose, took Jeroboam aside to speak with him privately: for it cannot be thought that Jeroboam had no servants to attend him; but they were bid to stay where they were, until the prophet and he went to confer about some private business.

Ver. 30. *And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces.*] An emblem of what followed, or rather a prediction of it: for there were two ways in those ancient days of foretelling things; one in express words, the other in signs and resemblances; according to the manner of the eastern people in the eldest times. Many instances we have of it, after this of Ahijah. As Zedekiah made himself a pair of iron horns, and said to Ahab, "With these shalt thou push the Syrians," &c. (xxii. 11.) Elisha also foretold the victories of Joash, by shooting arrows and stamping on the ground so many times, (2 Kings xiii. 18, &c.) Jeremiah foretold the pulling down of Jerusalem's pride, by the rotting of his girdle, where it was buried by Euphrates; and a great many more in the Old Testament, which continued in the New; Agabus foretelling the bonds of St. Paul, by binding his own hands and feet with St. Paul's girdle.

Ver. 31. *And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces; for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee.*] Whence it is called frequently *the kingdom of the ten tribes.*

Ver. 32. *(But he shall have one tribe.*] Besides his own. Or Benjamin and Judah may be looked upon but as one tribe; both of them having a share in the city of Jerusalem, and lying near one to the other.

For my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel).] See above, ver. 13.

Ver. 33. *Because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon.*] It seems by this, that some of the people, at least of Solomon's court, followed his bad example.

And have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.] This was a great aggravation of his sin, that he had so good a father; who had given him an excellent education under Nathan the prophet, (as I observed, 2 Sam. xii. 25.) and a most pious example; having never gone after other gods, but celebrated the praises of the Lord with the highest strains of love and devotion.

Ver. 34. *Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand.*] No, not the kingdom of the ten tribes; which Solomon held as long as he lived. These and the following words explain the threatening, (ver. 32.) of *rending the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon,* not to be meant of taking any part of it from him, during his life.

But will make him a prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, because he kept my commandments and my statutes.] This was an admonition to Jeroboam not to molest Solomon in his lifetime, by raising rebellion against him; and also to walk in God's ways as David did, and not fall into idolatry; for which sin God resolved to punish Solomon so severely, as to rend the greatest part of his kingdom from his posterity.

Ver. 35. *But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.*] He bids him not doubt of what he promised; but he must stay for it till Solomon was dead.

Ver. 36. *And unto his son will I give one tribe.*] He saith *one* tribe, though there were two; because (as Abarbinel observes) they had their portion and possession together in Jerusalem; and, though two tribes, were both called by the name of Judah; because of the eminence and glory of that tribe; which was so great, that, before the division of the kingdom, Judah is often mentioned as distinct from the rest of Israel. (See 1 Sam. xi. 8. 2 Sam. v. 5.)

That David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen to put my name there.] By a *light* is meant a succession of kings, who are called the light of the people, (as David is, 2 Sam. xxi. 17.) because they cheer them by their comfortable influence, when they govern well. And these are said to be *before God* in Jerusalem; because there he dwelt where they reigned.

Ver. 37. *And I will take thee.*] From that condition wherein he was, and place him on a throne, as here follows.

And thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth.] Have a very flourishing kingdom.

And shalt be king over Israel.] But not reign in Jerusalem.

Ver. 38. *And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I commanded thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David.*] The same promise that he made to David, 2 Sam. vii. 16. only he doth not say he would establish *his kingdom for ever.*

And will give Israel unto thee.] Make them his obedient subjects.

Ver. 39. *And I will for this.*] For their sin, mentioned ver. 33.

Afflict the house of David.] By this rending the greatest part of the kingdom from them.

But not for ever.] For in the days of the Messiah, saith Rasi, the kingdom shall be restored to the house of David.

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And he might have added, that few returned out of their captivity but the house of Judah, who were delivered in a wonderful manner from Babylon.

Ver. 40. *Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam.*] A sign of his dotage; that he could entertain a thought of endeavouring to defeat the purpose of God! But how he came to know what was secretly transacted between Ahijah and Jeroboam alone, is a great question. Perhaps the prophet made no scruple to report what he had delivered in the name of the Lord. Or, Jeroboam himself, being puffed up with this assurance, could not contain, but told it to some of his confidants, who spread it abroad. Or, his servants, though they heard not a word spoken, yet seeing the rending of his garment into twelve parts, and the giving ten to him, might speak of it: the meaning of which Solomon easily understood; being told (by the same prophet, perhaps) that the kingdom should be rent from him, and given to his servant, ver. 11.

And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt.] This was a common refuge for discontented people. And it may seem strange that the king of Egypt, being nearly allied to Solomon, either his father-in-law, or brother-in-law (for many think the father of Solomon's wife was dead), should give such persons entertainment. But it is to be considered that *kingdoms are never married;* and princes commonly regard only their own interest.

Unto Shishak king of Egypt.] All the kings of Egypt had the title of Pharaoh, even from the time of Abraham: but we never find any of them, till now, called by his proper name, to distinguish from other Pharaoh's; unless Remesis (Gen. xlvii. 11.) be the name of a king, not of a country. Now all agree that this is the great king who is called by the Greeks Sesostris: who having subdued Ethiopia, extended his conquests into Asia, as far as the Assyrians and Medes, as Josephus tells us, who calls him Sethosis, lib. i. contra Apion.

And was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.] Being protected by Shishak: who, it is likely, was now projecting the great conquests he made afterward.

Ver. 41. *And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?*] All the kings of Israel, as Abarbinel thinks, maintained some wise men, who wrote all that passed in their reign. Perhaps this was begun by Solomon (for we read not of any book of the acts of David), and out of these annals, the sacred writer of this book took what he thought most useful, and omitted the rest, which he did not judge so necessary and instructive.

Ver. 42. *And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel.*] There seems to have been no need to say he reigned in Jerusalem, since he reigned over all Israel; if it had not been to shew the great tranquillity of his reign. Which was such, that he did not go out to war as other kings, but lived quietly in his royal city.

Was forty years.] He lost the great privilege of long life, which God promised if he performed such sincere obedience as David did; unto whose age he did not attain.

Ver. 43. *And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father; and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.*] Thus concludes the history of this great man; without any the least mention of his repentance; though he saw terrible punishments coming upon his family. Which should have moved him (one would think) to pull down the high places he had built for idolatrous worship, and abandon all his strange wives; and done some remarkable honour to the Lord God of Israel. Which if he did, the Divine writer did not think fit to record it, but to leave all in uncertainty, and leave a blot upon his memory; that all posterity might have a frightful example of human weakness, and learn thereby to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *AND Rehoboam went to Shechem.*] A multitude of children was accounted a great blessing among the Israelites: but if Solomon had any more besides this son and two daughters, mentioned iv. 11. 15. this holy writer would not do him the honour to mention them, but passes them by in silence: nor doth he vouchsafe to acquaint us (as is usual) in the beginning of his story, from whom Rehoboam was descended by the mother's side; but in the conclusion mentions it twice (xiv. 21. 31.) that she was an Ammonitess, one of an infamous nation. Howsoever, though he was not entirely an Israelite, he pretended to the kingdom; being the eldest, if not the only son of Solomon, to whom it belonged by the law then established; which ever after continued in Judah. That which follows shews this was the opinion of all the people.

For all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.] To acknowledge him for their sovereign, as rightful successor to Solomon. They met for this purpose at Shechem, because it was the most convenient place, being in the middle of the kingdom: or, as others think, because it was in the tribe of Ephraim; where they could speak their minds more freely than they durst at Jerusalem, which was in the tribe of Judah. And this hath some colour in it, from what follows; that they sent for Jeroboam to meet them there, who would not venture to come to Jerusalem.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it.*] The words *of it* are not in the original, but only that he *heard:* either of this meeting, or of the death of Solomon, or both: for he could not hear of this meeting without hearing of his death.

(For he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt).] As hath been related in the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 3. *That they sent and called him.*] At the same time that he heard of this meeting, and the occasion of it, a message came to him from the assembly, to desire his assistance.

And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying.] By *all the congregation* is meant all their elders, and heads of their tribes; who chose Jeroboam to be their speaker.

Ver. 4. *Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.*] They begin with a complaint against the former government; but promise to submit to Rehoboam as their king, and be his faithful subjects, if he would promise to ease them of those burdens which his father had imposed

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on them. Which were not so heavy as they represented them; considering the peace and plenty they enjoyed, (iv. 25.) and the vast riches he brought into the kingdom: so that silver was nothing accounted of in his days, (x. 21.) But people are more sensible of the smallest pressures, than of all their enjoyments: and most sensible of the least burden, when they are at perfect ease. Such were the tributes he exacted for his buildings, the expenses of his family, and maintenance of chariots and horsemen, which were all for the honour of the nation, and employed great numbers of them. Abarbinel thinks it is possible, when war was raised by Hadad and by Rezon against him, in his latter days, the tribute might be increased, and occasion their grumbling. But howsoever that be, it is observable that they make no complaints at all of Solomon's idolatry, and the strange worship he introduced; about which they were not concerned, but rather complied with him. (See xi. 33.)

Ver. 5. *And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.*] He desired time to consider, in so weighty a business; pretending, I suppose, he would examine the truth of their allegations: otherwise it had been dangerous to send them away without any answer, when it was evident they were disgusted.

Ver. 6. *And king Rehoboam.*] By this it is plain he had a title to the kingdom; though they had not yet made a recognition, as we speak, of his authority.

Consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father, while he yet lived.] Solomon was so wise, as in his best days not to depend solely on his own wisdom; but had other wise men, with whom he advised, as his counsellors, in all matters of moment.

And said, How do ye advise, that I may answer this people?] Being men of great experience, who had learned, no doubt, much wisdom under so wise a king as Solomon, he had reason both to consult such sages, and to depend upon their advice, as likely to be most prudent and safe.

Ver. 7. *And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people to-day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.*] This was most solid advice, to get possession of the kingdom, and then he might govern as his father had done. And he might easily be possessed of it, by condescending to them for once, and giving them such an answer as they desired; which would oblige them to him for ever. For to be *their servant one day*, signified no more than to court them with good words, and kind promises, to be an easy governor of them: which would win their hearts, and make them submit cheerfully to him; and give him the same power which his father had.

Ver. 8. *But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they gave him.*] He was proud and vain, I suppose, and scorned to court his people; expecting obedience unto him, as an absolute monarch.

And consulted with young men that were grown up with him, and stood before him.] He had made some of his familiars, who had been bred up with him and attended him, to be now of his privy-council: men inexperienced, and who understood not the humour of the people; which is a frequent fault of new kings, who, to shew their power, presently change their counsellors, and put in new officers; to gratify all their dependants; not considering who are wisest, but who have been their companions.

Ver. 9. *And he said unto them, What counsel give ye, that we may answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?*] It is likely he told them what the old counsellors had said; who, they thought, were too timorous, and therefore give more bold and fierce advice.

Ver. 10. *And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying.*] They were not so young but they might have had more wit (if they had not been men of pleasure); for Rehoboam being one-and-forty years old when he began to reign, (xiv. 21.) and these men growing up with him, were about the same age.

Thus shalt thou speak unto the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter to us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.] They advise him to threaten to lay burdens upon them as much heavier than his father's, as the loins are thicker than the little finger: words of infamy, madness, stupidity, and full of lies, as Abarbinel here glosses: for he magnifies himself, as if his power excelled his father's, unto whom he was nothing comparable. And if it had been true, it did not become him to boast on this fashion; but he ought rather to have highly magnified the glory and majesty of his father.

Ver. 11. *And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke.*] What a senseless stupidity was this (as the same author proceeds) to grant the accusation to be true which they brought against his father, and not rather to have excused and defended so excellent a prince, from whom they could not but acknowledge they had received exceeding great benefits?

My father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.] This is still worse, to accuse his father of such severity (which the people did not), that he treated the Israelites like beasts: for a *whip is for a horse*, as Solomon observes, Prov. xxvi. 3. And who could endure to hear him say, that he would treat them far more severely, and tear their very flesh in pieces? For that is meant by *scorpions*, whips with rowels in them (as we speak), which Abarbinel calls *iron thorns*. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 32.) Ralbag simply calls them thorns tied to a whip, which grievously pricked and tore the flesh. (See Carpzovius upon Schickard's Jus Regium, cap. 2. Theor. 7. p. 143.) What people could bear this with patience, or endure to come under the yoke of such a furious prince?

Ver. 12. *So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come again the third day.*] In which time wiser thoughts, one would have expected, should have taken place: but Solomon had observed, that "there is no counsel, nor understanding, nor wisdom, against the Lord," (Prov. xxi. 30.) whose doing this was, as it follows, ver. 15.

Ver. 13. *And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they gave him.*] He answered them like a tyrant, not like a king.

Ver. 14. *And spake to them after the counsel of the young men.*] Which was most suitable to a prince of a high and violent spirit.

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Saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.] He thought, it is likely, to have frighted them into obedience by this blustering language, which justly made him odious.

Ver. 15. *Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people of Israel.*] Who desired to be eased of their burdens.

For the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.] God infatuated his counsels to bring about his own design. Otherwise, he could not have been so blinded, as not to see how basely he reflected upon his father; and how unlikely it was that the people would submit to such a power as he intended to exercise over them. But, as Livy excellently speaks, "fatis urgentibus rempublicam, omnia salutaria monita spernuntur." And here one cannot but observe the vast difference there is between the sacred and profane historians. The intention of the former is to possess men's minds with a sense of Divine Providence, which secretly rules in all public, as well as private affairs. Machiavel himself, though far from being religious, was sensible of an overruling power interposing in all things, which few historians acknowledge so as they ought: but rather write, as if they would not have their reader think of any thing but the wisdom, strength, and policy, of those that manage affairs, without any consideration of the care God takes of them. Of this Hermannus Conringius thinks Polybius himself to have been guilty, whatsoever excuses Casaubon makes for him. (De Civili Prudentia, cap. 14.)

Ver. 16. *So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David?*] They renounce all interest in him, and in his family.

Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.] So they call David in a contemptuous and scornful manner. Wherein they have left us an exact picture of an ungrateful world, as Victorinus Strigelius here speaks. For no eloquence is able to express the great merits of David to the children of Israel.

To your tents, O Israel. Now see to thy own house, David. So Israel departed to their tents.] They left Rehoboam, and bade him look to his own affairs; for they would have nothing to do with him. Thus other kingdoms have been overturned by the folly of heady young men: as an old poet observes in Tully's book de Senectute, cap. 6. where he quotes these verses out of Nævius in a play of his, in which one asks,

"Cedo, qui vestram Rempublicam tantam amisistis tam cito."

Tell me, I beseech thee, how you came to lose such a famous commonwealth so quickly?

Unto which he brings in another returning this answer,

"Proventabant oratores novi, stulti adolescentuli."

There arose up new orators, a company of foolish youths.

Upon which Cato makes this remark; *viz.*

"Temeritas est florentis ætatis, prudentia senescentis."

Rashness is the property of youth, prudence belongs to old age.

Ver. 17. *But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.*] As several of the Simeonites also did; who were very nearly situated to Judah.

Ver. 18. *Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute.*] This was a new piece of imprudence, to send one to treat with them, when they were so highly exasperated; and to send him (with promises, perhaps, of easing them, when it was too late) who had the principal care of those tributes, of which they complained. For people hate those that are the instruments of their oppression, or any way employed in it.

And all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died.] There was a general uproar against him; in which they committed this barbarity against the law of all nations; which prohibits any violence to be done to a king's ambassador. But in their rage, the king feared (it appears by the next words) they would have no respect to himself.

Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.] This seems to be a further imprudence; for he should have maintained his ground and kept footing (as we speak) in the country of Israel; from whence it might not have been easy for them to expel him: *but fear is as bad an adviser as fury.* This is the first time that we read of a king riding in a chariot; for we never read that either Saul, or David, or Solomon, rode in them: but after the division of the kingdom, there is frequent mention of the use of them both by the kings of Judah and Israel.

Ver. 19. *So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.*] Would no longer be governed by any of David's race; who had been their deliverer from their powerful enemies. The remembrance of which might have made them more patient; and not so forward to revolt from a family to which they had been so much obliged. But old kindnesses are laid asleep, and people are strangely forgetful of benefits, as Pindar speaks, in Isthmia, ode 7.

Ἀλλὰ παλαιὰ γὰρ εὖδει
Χάρις, ἀμνάμονες δὲ βροτοί.

This defection from the family of David is justly called a *rebellion,* as Salianus notes in his Annals; for though God willed this defection as a punishment of sin, yet they did wickedly who were the authors of it. And though the family of Solomon deserved such a punishment, yet the people had no just reason to forsake their legal prince. For they had no order from God for it: and Rehoboam's answer to them did not deserve such a resentment; much less so sudden and inconsiderate. Nor did the prophetical prediction warrant it: which might have been fulfilled some other way, than by such a violent throwing off his government.

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again.*] The great men had seen him, and needed not to be informed of his return; (ver. 3.) but now the news was spread over all the country.

That they sent, and called him to the congregation.] From his tent, unto which he was gone, as other people were, (ver. 16.)

And made him king over all Israel.] Without any condition, that we can find, though it is likely he promised to ease them of all their burdens.

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There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only.] Which comprehends Benjamin also, being one with it, as was observed before, (xi. 31, 32.) And it was by the singular providence of God, that they were not also tempted to desert such a haughty prince as Rehoboam was.

Ver. 21. *And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.*] This was a very potent tribe, especially assisted by Benjamin, and wanted not affection to the house of David, which they had expressed upon all occasions; and were ready now, with a very numerous army, to fall upon the Israelites, before their new king was settled in his throne, and bring them back to their rightful king.

Ver. 22. *But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying.*] A person, known to be a prophet, was sent to them from God with a message, before they marched to the country of Israel.

Ver. 23. *Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah.*] God himself owns him for no more than king of Judah.

And to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying.] Unto those mentioned ver. 17.

Ver. 24. *Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up to fight against your brethren the children of Israel: turn every man to his house; for this thing is from me.*] Who was resolved to maintain what he had done. It was the intention and design of God to make Jeroboam king; but he did not stay for his appointment, but usurped the kingdom by the help of certain vain fellows, who raised a sedition against Rehoboam. (See 2 Chron. xiii. 5—7.) And besides, God did not promise to set his posterity upon his throne (as he did to David and Solomon), unless he kept his commandments, which he did not: and therefore, though he saith *the thing was from him*, yet the setting his son upon the throne after him, and the succeeding kings, was not *from him;* but in Hosea he saith, (viii. 4.) *They have set up kings, but not by me: they have set up princes, and I knew it not; i. e.* did not approve it.

They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart, according to the word of the Lord.] Now Rehoboam was cool, and began to be wise, in not resisting the counsel of God, who had taken the kingdom from him; but submitting to his decree, and bearing it patiently. The people, at least, were of this mind, and persuaded him not to engage in a war, wherein God would appear against him. According to the counsel of Menander mentioned by Strigelius, Μὴ στρατεύου, μηδὲ προσάγου τῷ πράγματι χειμῶνας ἑτέρους, τοὺς δὲ ἀναγκαίους φέρε. *Fight not against God; neither do any thing to bring upon thyself new storms and tempests: but bear those that are necessary, and cannot be avoided.*

Ver. 25. *Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein.*] For there it is likely they chose him king; and therefore he enlarged and beautified it (which is meant by *built*), to be his royal seat.

And he went out from thence, and built Penuel.] But this did not satisfy him, he removed from thence to another city, which he also built; and so became a builder as well as Solomon, with whose buildings he is thought to have found fault.

Ver. 26. *And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David.*] Though God had told him he would build him a sure house, (xi. 37, 38.) if he kept his commandments, yet he did not trust to his promise; but after he had been some time possessed of the kingdom, began to fear a revolt of the people, if he permitted them to worship God according to the law; and so contrived to make an alteration in religion.

Ver. 27. *If the people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.*] All the people of Israel being bound at the three great feasts to go up to Jerusalem to worship; as also, upon other solemn occasions, devout persons going thither to offer gifts and sacrifices; he was afraid they would be so taken with the splendour and magnificence of the temple, and of the royal city, and recal to memory the famous acts of David and Solomon, who were buried there; and the king would find such means to oblige them, and the priests and Levites so solicit them to unite themselves again to Judah (who appeared to have the better cause, having the temple in possession where God dwelt), that they would be drawn not only to forsake him, but to kill him. For besides all this, their belief of one only God was the principal cause of union among them: and next to that was their worshipping God at one only place. Therefore, instead of consulting God, and committing himself to him, who could and would have preserved him in the kingdom he had given him, notwithstanding all these dangers; he took counsel, as it here follows, of such as were governed only by reasons of state, and devised how to establish himself by wicked inventions.

The Talmudists, after their manner, add another reason why he took the following resolution. For, saith R. Nachman, (in the Gemara of the Sanhedrin, cap. 11. n. 46.) the custom being that none should sit in the court of the temple, but only the king of the house of David, he thought with himself, that if the people saw Rehoboam sit, and him stand, they would conclude the former to be king, and Jeroboam but his servant. Another reason is alleged by Kimchi: when the year of release came, Jeroboam said within himself, it is written, (Deut. xxxi. 10, 11.) "At the end of every seventh year thou shalt read this law in the ears of all Israel," &c. Now if I attempt to read it, the people will say, The king who is in *the place which God hath chosen* (i. e. *Jerusalem*) must read first, and so I must read it after him, which will be a disgrace to me; and if I read it not at all it will be worse, for I shall be thought profane. But these, and such-like, are frivolous reasons, for his resolution to draw the people from the worship of God according to the law, at his own house at Jerusalem.

Ver. 28. *Whereupon the king took counsel.*] Of some secular politicians, who, if they could but preserve the civil government, cared not what became of religion. The Jews in the place abovementioned, in the Sanhedrin, tell the story in this manner; That he summoned a council, consisting partly of pious, partly of wicked men; whom he asked whether they would subscribe to all that he or-

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dered. They answered, Yes. Then he said, he would be constituted their king: to which they consenting, he asked if they would obey him. To which there being a ready compliance, he added, Even though I command you to serve idols? at which the pious men startled, and were full of indignation; but their wicked neighbours whispered to them, saying, Do you think Jeroboam will honour idols? he saith this only to try your obedience. And so even Ahijah himself was drawn in, by this fraud, to subscribe to what he proposed, that they would be obedient in all things without exception.

And made two calves of gold.] One egg, as Bochartus speaks, is not more like to another, than these calves were to that which Aaron made. Only, as the Jews say in Sanhedrin, *till Jeroboam's time the Israelites sucked but one calf; but from that time they sucked two.* They were of the same matter with Aaron's, and made for the same reason: his, because Moses was absent; and these, because the holy city (where the temple, the altar, the priests of God were) they could not come to with safety. And as Aaron, so Jeroboam learnt this calf-worship in Egypt, where he lived for some years. The LXX. translate these words, δύο δαμάλεις χρυσᾶς, *two she-calves;* and so doth Josephus: and the prophet Hosea also speaks of them in the feminine gender, (x. 5.) by way of contempt and despisal, as Bochartus thinks. It is not improbable (as some learned men have conjectured), that he made two calves, in imitation of the Egyptians, with whom he had conversed, who had a couple of oxen which they worshipped; Apis at Memphis, the metropolis of the upper Egypt; and Mnevis at Hierapolis, which was the chief city of the lower.

And said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem.] Or, as some expound the Hebrew words, *You have gone long enough to Jerusalem.*

Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.] The very same words that Aaron had spoken, Exod. xxxii. 4. and they had the same meaning. For he would have them think, that there was no need of going up to Jerusalem, three times a year, with labour and charge; when the true God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, dwelt among them there no less than at Jerusalem. For God is every where in his essence (it is likely he told them), and cannot be included in any place; and if they required any special symbols of his presence, behold, here they were in those calves which he set up. As if every man had power to devise, out of his own head, a symbol of God's presence. (See Vossius, de Orig. et Progr. Idolol. lib. i. cap. 3.)

Ver. 29. *And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.*] The former of which was in the south, the latter in the north of the country of Israel; and as Beth-el was in every body's opinion a sacred place (having been consecrated by Jacob, when God appeared to him there more than once), so Dan had been famous for the teraphim of Micah: unto which there had been great resort, a long time, (Judg. xviii. 30.) For such reasons as these, it is likely, he waved his royal city, which was Shechem; and chose these two places for the residence of the Divine Majesty: for so he pretended that these calves represented God; whom he did not forsake, but worshipped him in these symbols of his presence.

Ver. 30. *And this became a sin.*] Led them into foul idolatry: for that was the sin which Jeroboam is so often accused of: and the settling a calf in Dan was a high aggravation of their sin; there being no pretence for two calves; nor for placing one there, where God had never been extraordinarily present.

For the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.] Which place being in the extreme part of the country, yet the people were so zealous in their idolatry, that they travelled to offer sacrifice there; so that they who thought it grievous to go to worship God at Jerusalem, did not think much to go a great deal further to worship an idol. This seems to me the simplest meaning; which others take to be, that they who dwelt in Beth-el were so zealous, that they would go as far as Dan to worship the other calf.

Ver. 31. *And he made a house of high places.*] That is, saith Abarbinel, he made a house or temple at Dan; wherein there was not one altar only, as there was at Jerusalem, but a great many high places.

And made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.] The Hebrew words *miketzoth haam* should not be interpreted *the lowest of the people;* but, as the same Abarbinel expounds it, *out of all the people;* he made any body a priest, though he was not of the sons of Levi. And Bochartus hath justified this exposition, by a great many examples of the use of these words in other places. To this Jeroboam was forced, because the Levites would not serve his impiety, (2 Chron. xi. 14.) and therefore he expelled them all, and seized on their cities and lands. Whereby, as he eased the people of paying their tithes, there being none to demand them; so he gratified them by making priests out of every tribe and family; even *in the extremest part of the country,* as the Hebrew words signify. Thus as he transferred the kingdom from the house of David, so he transferred the priesthood from the family of Aaron, and let it loose, that any body might be admitted to that honourable employment. Which was a very popular thing, and ingratiated him, no doubt, with the Israelites. And Cornel. Bertram thinks, that as he had priests, so he had Levites also of the same stamp; that is, some to officiate under the priests, as they did. The former he called *cohenim,* as they were called in Judah; the other he called *cemarim,* who ministered as the Levites did; but in black, not in white garments, and thence had their name. (De Republ. Judaica, cap. 16.)

Ver. 32. *And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah.*] That is, the feast of tabernacles; which by the law was to be celebrated on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. This he altered, and, as Abarbinel thinks, might possibly give this reason for his impious presumption; that this feast being instituted by God after the gathering of their fruits, which were sooner ripe about Jerusalem than in the northern parts of the country; he pretended the eighth month would be a better time for it than the seventh; because then they would be every where gathered. But his chief intention in this change, was to alienate the people from the rites observed at Jerusalem.

And he offered upon the altar.] This was a high presumption, to invade the priesthood himself, and offer sacrifices to his gods. A crime which none of the kings of

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Judah were guilty of, but only Uzziah; who was smitten with a leprosy, for meddling with the priests' office, 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

(So he did in Beth-el), sacrificing unto the calves that he had made.] What he had done in Dan, he did also in Beth-el; for hitherto hath been related only what he did in the remotest place.

And he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.] There he also built a house, or temple; and set up many altars in it, where these priests officiated as they did in other *high places.*

Ver. 33. *So he offered upon the altar he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month.*] There he began this new festival, and consecrated it himself.

In the month which he had devised of his own heart.] Out of his own will and pleasure (as the Targum translates it), against the express ordinance of God.

And ordained a feast unto the children of Israel.] To be observed, I suppose, every year in Beth-el, as the feast of tabernacles was at Jerusalem. And it is likely it lasted as many days; unless he effected to make alterations in every thing, and ordained more, or fewer days, as he thought good.

And he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.] He presumed to perform the highest part of the priest's office, which was to burn incense. Which he had not done in Dan, as Abarbinel thinks, but only in Beth-el; which was in some regard the metropolis of his kingdom, and head of the tribe of Ephraim; to which place the prophet, mentioned in the next chapter, came, and not to Dan. He observes also that the Scripture saith thrice he offered upon the altar, speaking of different times and places. First it is said, ver. 30. that he offered upon the altar; that is, at Dan, where all Israel went to worship. Secondly, he offered again in Beth-el, in the beginning of this verse. And then it is said here in conclusion, that he ascended the altar in Beth-el, not to offer sacrifice, but to burn incense, which he had not done in Dan. And when he burnt incense on the feast-day he had instituted, the man of God came from Judah, and prophesied against the altar, as it follows in the next chapter.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, that there came a man of God out of Judah.*] That is, a prophet; for none are called men of God, but prophets. And so this man is called below; (ver. 18.) whence Kimchi concludes David was a prophet, because he is called a man of God. And this prophet is thought by the Jews to be Iddo; whose vision against Jeroboam is mentioned 2 Chron. ix. 29. But this is an evident mistake; for Iddo was alive in the days of Ahijah the son of Rehoboam, (2 Chron. xiii. 22.) whereas this prophet here spoken of, was killed immediately after this prophecy. Therefore they were not the same; unless we suppose that what is here related fell out in the latter end of Jeroboam's reign.

Tertullian in his book De Jejunio, cap. 16. calls him Sameas; where Rigaltius observes that Josephus calls him Jadon, and Epiphanius Joam.

By the word of the Lord unto Beth-el.] By a particular command of God.

And Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.] Upon that feast-day which he had instituted. See the last verse of the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 2. *And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord.*] Declared it, and the worship there performed, to be idolatrous; which he spake by authority from God.

And said, O altar, altar!] Some think he mentioned the altar twice, to signify that he prophesied against that in Dan, as well as against this in Beth-el.

Thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name.] The prophets saw things future, as if they were present. And though this was not to come to pass till above three hundred and sixty years after this time, yet this man of God foretells it, as if it were to be done ere long. And the prediction is the more wonderful, because he tells out of what family he should spring, and what should be his name.

And upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall he burn upon thee.] The meaning is not that he should burn the priests alive; but the execution of this prophecy explains it: that he should slay the priests of the high places, and then burn their bones, as he did the bones of those that had been buried, and thereby defile this altar. (2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16. 20.)

Ver. 3. *And he gave a sign the same day.*] To confirm this prophecy.

Saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken.] A proof that he spake from God, and not from himself.

Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.] This could not be done, but by the power of God; who hereby demonstrated he had sent this prophet to speak these words; which were presently fulfilled.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, when Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el.*] In the presence of the king himself, when he was about the solemn service of his gods.

That he put forth his hand from the altar.] Where he stood, (ver. 1.)

Saying, Lay hold on him.] As he himself would have done, had he been near him.

And his hand which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.] The muscles and sinews shrunk, so that it was stiff and rigid, and he perfectly lost the use of it. Which prodigy was a new token, that the prophet's words would be fulfilled.

Ver. 5. *And the altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.*] Which so amazed all the people, that we do not find any body went about to lay hold on him; but Jeroboam himself was, for the present, astonished at the miraculous power of God.

Ver. 6. *And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Entreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me.*] A marvellous change! He that just now threatened, humbly supplicates him that smote him.

That my hand may be restored me again.] He was convinced that healing must come from the same hand that gave the wound; and that it was in vain to seek to his gods.

And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.]

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He did not intend his destruction, but his reformation; and therefore granted his request. Whereby a new miracle was wrought for his conversion.

Ver. 7. *And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.*] A strange insensibility of God's great mercy to him, which did not lead him to repentance, when it moved him to so much gratitude as to desire to reward him that was the instrument of his cure. His hand was restored, but not a good mind.

Ver. 8. *And the man of God said to the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place.*] For he had a charge from God (as it follows) not to communicate with them, who were apostates from their religion.

Ver. 9. *For so it was charged me by the Lord, saying.*] The same Divine authority, which sent him thither to do what they had heard and seen, gave him this following charge.

Eat not bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.] The reason is plain, why he should not eat or drink with them; because that was to have familiar society with idolaters. But why he should not return the same way that he came, is not so evident. Some think it was to represent, that even the way to Beth-el was abominable; and therefore not to be frequented: or, to shew how much we ought to abhor that which leads to evil. But it seems to be a proverbial speech; signifying that he should be constant and steadfast in executing the charge committed to him. For he that doth any thing without success is said to return by the way that he went, (Isa. xxxvii. 29. 34.) And therefore, not to return by the way that he went, is to do his business effectually.

Ver. 10. *And so he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.*] To shew (as many think) how God detests the way to idolatry; and would have it to be forgotten.

Ver. 11. *And there was an old prophet.*] One who had many years been a prophet before this apostacy; whose name the Jews say was Micah: who was a worshipper of the true God, though he dwelt among this idolatrous people. A great many take him to have been a false prophet: but Theodoret proves that he was a true, though guilty of telling a lie to the man of God. (See Hermannus Witsius's Miscellanea, tom. i. p. 142, &c.)

In Beth-el.] He was originally of Samaria, as we learn from 2 Kings xxiii. 18. But removed hither, it is likely, since this revolution, that he might see what Jeroboam designed.

And his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el.] In the Hebrew it is, *his son came and told him*, &c. that is, one of his sons came first, and told all the foregoing passages; and afterward came all the rest of them, and confirmed what he had related.

The words that he had spoken to the king, them they also told their father.] By this it appears they were present when Jeroboam stood at the altar, and therefore joined in that idolatrous worship; though their father did not, and yet was so timorous that he durst not reprove it.

Ver. 12. *And their father said unto them, Which way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went that came from Judah.*] They had the curiosity to observe what way such a remarkable person went to his own country; imagining, perhaps, their father would have a mind to discourse with him.

Ver. 13. *And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass, and he rode thereon.*] In the way they directed him.

Ver. 14. *And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak.*] Weary, I suppose, with a long journey; and faint for want of victuals.

And he said, Art thou the man of God that came from Judah? And he said, I am.

Ver. 15. *Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.*] He had a mind to have a further trial of the truth of what the man of God had said; and so, in a crafty deceitful manner, enticed him back; contrary to his commission.

Ver. 16. *And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place.*] It seems he was forbidden so much as to go into any of their houses; lest he should be tempted to eat with them.

Ver. 17. *For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.*] For which reason he refused to accept of the king's invitation.

Ver. 18. *And he said unto him, I am a prophet as thou art.*] He pretended, as Abarbinel thinks, that God had revealed the very same to him concerning the altar in Beth-el, that he had threatened.

And an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back.] And he further pretended that he found him here by the direction of an angel. For he did not tell him that he learned from his sons what had passed; but pretended he had it by prophecy; and that an angel, in the name of God, commanded him to bring him back to his house, and refresh himself there.

To thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water.] He persuaded him, I suppose, that the meaning of God's charge, *thou shalt not eat bread, nor drink water in this place*, was to be understood of sinners and idolaters, with whom he might not communicate: but he being a prophet, was not to be comprehended in that command. And therefore the angel said, Bring him back *to thine house:* not to the habitation of any idolater, but to his dwelling-house, which was undefiled. Thus Abarbinel.

But he lied unto him.] All this was a fiction, which God suffered for the trial of the good man; whether he would believe him, or a man he did not know.

Ver. 19. *So he went back with him, and did eat bread and water in his house.*] He thought it possible that God might, in pity to him, revoke his prohibition; because he was hungry and weary. But he ought to have believed the revelation he had himself, of which he was certain; and not trusted to what another pretended was revealed to him; which he could not be sure was true. And it is said emphatically, ver. 22. *The Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread*, &c. If God had, in compassion to him, thought fit to recal that word, he would have done it to himself; and as plainly allowed him to refresh himself, as before he had forbidden it. So Abarbinel well observes, "Nothing that a prophet receives from God is to be altered, unless that prophet hath another word from God revoking the former." As Abraham had;

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to whom God saith, (Gen. xxii. 2.) "Take thy son, &c. and offer him for a burnt-offering," &c. But when he was going to do it, he heard that command repealed, (ver. 12.) "Lay not thy hand upon the lad," &c. He would not receive a contrary command from the mouth of any prophet, but from the mouth of God alone; from whom he received the first command.

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, that as they sat at the table, the word of the Lord came to the prophet that brought him back.*] God would not vouchsafe to speak to him, who had disobeyed his voice; but rather to the other, though in his name he had feigned an untruth.

Ver. 21. *And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying.*] He seems to be in a great agony; from the consideration of what he had done, and of what the prophet from Judah was to suffer.

Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee.] To disobey God's mouth, was to disobey the word spoken by his mouth.

Ver. 22. *But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in this place of which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come into the sepulchre of thy fathers.*] This was all his punishment; that he should shortly die, and not be buried among the Jews.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, for the prophet whom he had brought back.*] It is remarkable, that no punishment is here threatened to the old prophet for telling him a lie. Because, as Abarbinel thinks, he meant no harm to the other prophet; but fancied that his saying, he might not eat or drink with them, was only to excuse himself from going with Jeroboam to his house. And besides, it might have turned to the great advantage of the prophet who came from Judah, if he had steadfastly persisted in his resolution, and not given credit to what the old prophet said against it.

Ver. 24. *And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him.*] Not far from Beth-el there was a wood; out of which the two she-bears came, that tare two-and-forty children in pieces, (2 Kings ii. 24.) Out of which wood, it is probable, this lion came, and slew this prophet.

And his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass.] This was to admonish all the prophets to observe God's commands strictly; and to shew Jeroboam what he might expect, since God spared not a lesser offender. But, as God shewed his severity, in taking away this prophet's life, which was his punishment; so he remarkably shewed his approbation of the prophet; in that the lion stood quietly by his carcass, and did not devour it; nor do any hurt to the ass on which he rode. As if he was merely sent by a Divine appointment, to execute what God had threatened; but could not move one step beyond that commission. For when the prophet had suffered what God intended, he takes even his dead body into his protection; and would not let it be violated, as is observed below, ver. 28.

Ver. 25. *And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.*] As a wonderful thing; that the lion should neither fall upon his prey, nor hurt them who passed by; but suffered them to go on quietly.

Ver. 26. *And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, that was disobedient to the word of the Lord.*] Disobedience in great cases hath been thus punished by men in authority. For the Athenians put their ambassadors to death, whom they had sent into Arcadia, though they had performed their business very well, to their content, ἐπεὶ ἑτέραν ὁδὸν ἦλθον, καὶ οὐ τὴν προστεταγμένην, *because they came another way, and not that which they were prescribed.* Which is the very case before us, (Ælian. lib. vi. Var. Hist. cap. 5.)

Therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, who hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him.] The lion did not rend his body in pieces, but only gave him one wound, which killed him. In the Hebrew the word is, *he broke him,* that is, his bones, and so slew him speedily.

Ver. 27. *And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him.*] Hearing the lion stood as quiet as a lamb, and neither meddled with the carcass, nor hurt any that passed by, he did not fear to take up the body of the prophet that came from Judah; believing the lion had order to do no other mischief, but kill him.

Ver. 28. *And he went, and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass.*] Here is a cluster of miracles; that the lion, contrary to his nature, did not eat the carcass, nor kill the ass, nor meddle with the travellers that passed by, nor with the old prophet and his ass: and that the ass stood so quietly, and was not frighted at the sight of a lion, and betake itself to flight; and more than this, the lion stood by the carcass a long time, until this strange news was carried into the city; as a faithful keeper of the prophet's body, that no other wild beasts should meddle with it. Which made the miracle more illustrious; and plainly shewed all this did not happen by chance.

Ver. 29. *And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came into the city to mourn, and to bury him.*] To make a solemn funeral for him.

Ver. 30. *And he laid his carcass in his own grave.*] Which was the greatest honour he could do him.

And they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother!] He and his sons made the usual lamentation over him; of which this was the form, we find, in aftertimes, (Jer. xxii. 18.)

Ver. 31. *And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake unto his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones.*] This he ordered, not merely out of affection to the prophet, but to secure himself from the judgment that he had threatened, ver. 2.

Ver. 32. *For the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.*] This Abarbinel looks upon as an argument that this man was a prophet of the Lord;

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that he foretold the same thing that the man of God, who came from Judah, did. And, as he thinks, something more; *viz.* the destruction of all the high places by Josiah, which is not before mentioned.

Ver. 33. *After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way.*] By all these wonderful works (for the singular number is put for the plural) Jeroboam was not at all changed; but continued in his idolatry.

But made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places.] He did not reform in any one thing; but still went on in making any body priests. (See xii. 31.)

Whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places.] Without any respect to his tribe, or family; or, indeed, to his condition.

Ver. 34. *And this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and destroy it from the face of the earth.*] Brought dreadful punishments upon his family (for so *sin* sometimes signifies the *punishment* of sin), and these not vulgar punishments, but utter extirpation.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *AT that time.*] Some time after those woes were denounced against him; but the phrase doth not denote any precise time.

Abijah the son of Jeroboam was sick.] Being stricken by the hand of God with some disease.

Ver. 2. *And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself.*] Put on such apparel as the common people wear.

That thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam.] He would have her go on this errand, because he was sure she would report things truly to him: but yet would not have her known to be his wife, because he would have the prophet speak more freely and indifferently: or, perhaps, he was afraid he should threaten too heavily, if he knew who she was.

And get thee to Shiloh; behold, there is the prophet Ahijah, which told me I should be king over this people.] This looks like great stupidity, that he should think to deceive a prophet, who could tell him future events: and therefore much more discover things present.

Ver. 3. *And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.*] They that went to inquire of a prophet used to make him some present, as a token of their respect to him. (See 1 Sam. ix. 7.) And by such oblations the prophets supported themselves. This present which she made him was of such things as might make him think her to be a countrywoman, rather than a courtier.

Ver. 4. *And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah: but Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age.*] In the Hebrew, his eyes *stood for his hoariness.* He seems to have had a film, or a cataract, grown over his eyes.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her; for it shall be, when she cometh to thee, that she shall feign herself to be another woman.*] He was as fully instructed how to treat her, as if he had seen and known her.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam, why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.*] He discovered her before she appeared, that she might give the greater credit to his words.

Ver. 7. *Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel.*] Raised him from a private person to be the king of the ten tribes.

Ver. 8. *And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee; and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes.*] Though David committed some great sins, yet he was upright in his religion, and never started aside in the least unto other gods. In which piety, God expected Jeroboam should have continued, as he admonished him, when he first sent Ahijah to him, (xi. 38.)

Ver. 9. *But hast done evil above all that were before thee.*] King Saul was not so bad; nor Solomon: who, though he was drawn aside himself, yet did not study to make his people idolaters.

For thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images.] Or, *even molten images;* that is, the golden calves. Which he did not think to be gods, but only representations of God: and yet God looked upon this worship which was paid to him before these images, as the worship of other gods: which are called *devils* in 2 Chron. xi. 1 .

To provoke me to anger.] That was the effect of this idolatrous worship.

And hast cast me behind thy back.] Neglected me and my service. For those things we cast behind our backs which are nothing worth; and for which we have no regard or concern what becomes of them.

Ver. 10. *Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam.*] Severely punish it.

And will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall.] That is, not leave a man of his family alive, as Ralbag interprets it. (See 1 Sam. xxv. 22.)

And him that is shut up and left in Israel.] That is, married or unmarried, as De Dieu expounds these words upon Deut. xxxii. 36. all sorts of men, of whatsoever state or condition they be. Others refer this to treasures shut up in secret places, and to flocks left in the field; or, to men taken captive, or that have escaped. As much as to say, There shall be an universal destruction. And thus Bochartus glosses (comprehending all these), "I will cut off every male, whether he be a captive, or a free man; whether he live in the city, or in the country; be married or single." (See his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 66.)

And I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam.] All his posterity.

As a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.] Which servants remove so carefully, that they suffer not the least speck to remain.

Ver. 11. *Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.*] That is, none of them shall be buried.

For the Lord hath spoken it.] This is God's irrevocable decree.

Ver. 12. *Arise thou therefore, get thee unto thy own house;*

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and when thy feet enter the city, the child shall die.] This was a sign that all the rest of his threatenings should be fulfilled.

Ver. 13. *And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave.*] All the rest were to be buried in the bowels of dogs, and of fowls of the air, (ver. 11.)

Because in him is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.] He was the only person of that family that disliked the worship of the calves, and perhaps intended to remove them when he had power; and suffer the people to go up to Jerusalem to worship, trusting God would preserve him in his kingdom. Some of the Jews say, that he broke down a hedge which his father had made, to keep people from going to Jerusalem, at the three great feasts.

Ver. 14. *Moreover, the Lord shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam.*] This king was Baasha, (xv. 27, 28.)

That day.] As soon as he was made king, (ver. 29.)

But what? even now.] What did I say (*that day*)? even just now. It is as sure as if it were now done. The Chaldee takes it otherwise; He shall destroy the house of Jeroboam; both that which liveth now at this day, and that which shall be born in time to come. But Kimchi puts no stop at this word *vemah* (*and what*), but continues it with what follows, in this manner, *What is this which shall now happen, to that which shall come hereafter?* that is, the present calamities shall be nothing to the future. Which agrees well enough with what follows, concerning the continual troubles that should be in Israel; and at last their captivity.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord shall smite Israel.*] For their consenting to that idolatrous worship which Jeroboam set up.

As a reed is shaken in the water.] That is, they shall be in perpetual commotions by civil wars: having no quiet, but frequently changing their kings. Thus Bochartus excellently expounds it, in an epistle to our bishop Morley, p. 106, &c. The reason of this expression was, that several of their kings were afterward killed, and new families started up; and between so many kings of so many families and tribes, their minds fluctuated and wavered; and they knew not where to fix themselves, and rest in quiet: therefore their condition is thus described in 2 Chron. xv. 5. "There was no peace to him that went in, or to him that came out," &c.

And he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers.] Which he began to do first by Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, (2 Kings xv. 29.) and then finished it by Shalmaneser, (2 Kings xvii. 5, 6, &c.)

And shall scatter them beyond the river.] That is, Euphrates: they being carried (as the forenamed places tell us) into the country of the Medes.

Because they have made their groves.] In which they placed the images of their gods. For they were not contented with the calves, but fell to grosser idolatry; which was commonly practised in groves. (See Judg. iii. 7.)

Provoking the Lord to anger.] For nothing was so detestable to him as this sin.

Ver. 16. *And he shall give Israel up.*] Into the hands of the heathen.

Because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.] Perverted the whole nation: who by his authority and example were led into idolatry.

Ver. 17. *And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah.*] A city in the tribe of Manasseh: which had been famous in ancient times, (Josh. xii. 24.) and became the royal seat, and continued so for some time, (xv. 33.) being found more convenient, I suppose, than Shechem, where Jeroboam first settled.

And when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died.] It seems the king's house was near the gate of the city: for it is said, ver. 12. that as soon as she entered into the city, the child should die. And so it did, when she came to the threshold of the door of the palace.

Ver. 18. *And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.*] Whereby he confirmed all the rest of his threatenings against the house of Jeroboam and the people of Israel.

Ver. 19. *And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned.*] How he behaved himself in war, and in peace.

Behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.] Not in that book in the Bible called Chronicles; but in such a book as that wherein the acts of Solomon were recorded, day by day, xi. 41. (See there.)

Ver. 20. *And the days that Jeroboam reigned were two-and-twenty years: and he slept with his fathers; and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.*] His sleeping with his fathers seems to be a phrase signifying only that he died, as all before him did: not that he was buried with them, (as it is said of Rehoboam, ver. 31.) for they were private men, and he a king; who, no doubt, was magnificently interred by his son.

Ver. 21. *And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign.*] And therefore was born a year before Solomon came to the crown: for he reigned but forty years, xi. 42.

And he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there.] A great honour to him, of which he was not worthy; and therefore God shortened his days, and did not let him reign so long as Jeroboam.

And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.] It is much that David should suffer Solomon to marry one of this country; unless she was proselyted, as the daughter of Pharaoh is supposed to have been. He himself, indeed, had married the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; but the son he had by her proved so wicked, that it might have been a caution to him not to marry his son, especially him he intended for the heir of his crown, to a stranger. Who, if she was proselyted, yet many think she did not so change her religion, but that she instilled ill principles into her son, and corrupted him. Nay, was one of those women that enticed Solomon to idolatry; for women of Ammon are reckoned among his strange wives.

Ver. 22. *And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed.*] By joining other gods together with him. Which is an amazing thing, that, at the beginning of his reign, Rehoboam should do well for three years, (2 Chron. xi. 17.) and then forsook the law of God, (2 Chron. xii. 1.)

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and fell off from his worship, into such gross idolatry, as exceeded that of Jeroboam's.

Above all that their fathers had done.] Above all that had been practised in the time of the judges.

Ver. 23. *For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.*] They multiplied altars on every high hill; and set up images; and built temples for them: which I take to be meant by *groves*. For they could not be under every green tree; nor could they be said to be *built*, but to be planted; therefore it is reasonable to interpret them temples, or places of Divine worship. As among the heathens, Strabo testifies (Geograph. lib. ix.) that the poets called their temples by the name of groves (ἄλση καλοῦσιν τὰ ἱερὰ πάντα), though they had no trees about them; because the custom was to have trees planted about their sacred places. In which the Israelites set up altars; directly contrary to the law: which intended to preserve unity in religion, by allowing one altar only.

Ver. 24. *And there were also Sodomites in the land.*] This kind of wickedness often attended idolatry, (xv. 12. 2 Kings xxiii. 7. Rom. i. 21. 28.) For among the heathens the most filthy things were practised in these shady dark places (their *groves*) by the worshippers of Venus, Bacchus, and Priapus. And such there were, it appears by the place now quoted, (2 Kings xxiii. 7.) among the Israelites: who, out of devotion to some false god or other, prostituted their bodies, contrary to nature, to be abused in honour of those gods, directly against the law, (Deut. xxiii. 17.) For when Josiah purged the temple, he is said to cast out the *Sodomites:* where by *Kedeschim* our Selden understands the priests of Astarte. (Syntag. ii. de Diis Syris, cap. 2.)

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass, that, in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem.*] Ῥοβοάμος δ' αὐτῷ παρέδωκε ἀμαχητὶ τὴν πόλιν. *And Rehoboam* (as Josephus writes) *delivered up the city to him, without striking a stroke.* For he had a vast army (as we read, 2 Chron. xii. 2.) wherewith he conquered Asia, as Herodotus tells us, who calls him Sesostris. For Josephus acknowledgeth he relates the same expedition that the Scripture doth, but under a different name. It may seem something strange, that Shishak being so nearly allied to Rehoboam should come up against him, and take his royal city: but as kingdoms are never married, so Jeroboam, it is likely, who had lived long in Egypt, stirred him up to invade him, and thereby established himself in his new kingdom: for we read not a word of any cities in Israel that he took, but only the fenced cities of Judah; (2 Chron. xii. 4.) Jeroboam and his country remaining undisturbed. Besides, it must be remembered he was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter, but of an Ammonitess: and therefore there was no kindred between Rehoboam and Shishak.

Ver. 26. *And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all.*] These riches which David and Solomon had treasured up, tempted Shishak, it is probable, to this expedition against Jerusalem: for he did not intend to keep this city, but only to spoil it.

And he took away the shields of gold which Solomon had made.] Which were in the house of the forest of Lebanon, (see x. 16, 17.) which it seems he also plundered. This was a speedy vengeance for their sins; that so soon after Solomon's death, the splendour wherein he left Jerusalem should be extinguished. For Rehoboam served God three years; was corrupted in the fourth; and in the fifth was punished.

Ver. 27. *And king Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields, and committed them into the hands of the chief of the guard.*] In the Hebrew the word for *guard* is *runner:* so called because they went before the king and behind him.

Which kept the door of the king's house.] These shields were not of much value; and so were committed to men in a mean office: whereas the golden ones were kept, as I said, in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Ver. 28. *And it was so, when the king went into the house of the Lord, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard-chamber.*] He did not quite forsake God, but still continued to worship in the temple: and, perhaps, he now left the high places (after he had been thus chastised by the king of Egypt), and frequented the house of God better. Shields were carried before him thither for pomp's sake, that he might not be contemned by his people; and that there might be no occasion for sedition, if they were disposed to it, when they saw him so well guarded.

Ver. 29. *Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] He refers those that desired a larger account of him to the public Annals, as he had done when he concludes the history of Jeroboam, ver. 19. (See there.)

Ver. 30. *And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.*] This doth not seem to agree with what we read xii. 22. where God commanded Rehoboam and his people not to go to fight with Israel: and they obeyed his voice. But this is easily satisfied, by observing that the Jews were commanded not to make war upon the Israelites; but they are not commanded not to defend themselves, if the Israelites made war upon them. And this was their case; the Israelites vexed them with continual incursions and depredations; though the house of David did not assault them, but only repelled their violence; or, perhaps, upon the borders, they were continually endeavouring to get ground one of another; though they never came to a set battle.

Ver. 31. *And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess.*] The repetition of this about his mother hath something remarkable in it, (see ver. 21.) though it is hard to know what it is. Abarbinel thinks, it is as much as to say, He did not repent at last; but as he lived, so he died, in the idolatry of his mother.

And Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *NOW, in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah.*] Which seems to disagree with what is said below (ver. 9.) concerning Asa, that he began to reign the twentieth year of Jeroboam, and Abijam reigned three years. But it is usual, both in Scripture and in other authors, to reckon part of a year for a whole year. So Abijam began to reign in some part

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of Jeroboam's eighteenth year, and continued his reign the whole nineteenth, and died in the twentieth: and so was reckoned to have reigned three years, as it here follows.

Ver. 2. *Three years reigned he in Jerusalem.*] This was a very short time, as Abarbinel observes; but it was because he walked in the way of his father; which provoked God to cut him off.

And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.] The same author fancies she was the daughter of Absalom, (as he is called 2 Chron. xi. 21.) who rebelled against his father David; and so was a bad daughter of a bad father. She is called by another name, 2 Chron. xiii. 2. viz. *Michaiah the daughter of Uriel.* But he thinks that is the name of the family, and this her proper name. Others think this is a mere fancy, and with great reason; for Abishalom is a different name from Absalom, as David's son is always called. And they think he had two names, as his daughter also had. But Pellicanus seems to me to have given the plainest account of this, that Maachah was his grandmother, and Micaiah his mother.

Ver. 3. *And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him.*] See xiv. 22—24.

And his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father.] They ought all to have remembered David, and trod in his steps; who was the founder of the royal family; and never turned aside to the worship of other gods, as this man did; though together with them he worshipped the Lord God of Israel, who is therefore called *the Lord his God.*

Ver. 4. *Nevertheless, for David's sake, the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him.*] He continued the kingdom in the posterity of David: which is the meaning of giving him a *lamp.* (See xi. 36.)

And to establish Jerusalem.] Whereby Jerusalem was established as the place of God's worship.

Ver. 5. *Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.*] He was not without other sins; but none so enormous as this: and therefore not remembered, as this about Uriah is very often, to his dishonour.

Ver. 6. *And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.*] This was said before, (xiv. 30.) and therefore may seem to come in here impertinently: because he is not speaking of Rehoboam, but of his son Abijam: who was a valiant young man in the days of his father, and always fought his battles with Jeroboam. Which being related before in the history of Rehoboam, is here repeated, as Abarbinel thinks, to shew that Abijam was the cause of these wars. And these words, *all his days,* he thinks, relate to Abijam, who continued the war between his father and Jeroboam with great success: as we read 2 Chron. xiii. 17. Bochartus thinks a plainer account may be given of this, by supposing that Rehoboam signifies this son of his; children and fathers being one and the same in a moral account. Thus Abraham is said to have purchased the sepulchre of the sons of Emor; which was indeed purchased by Jacob: and the Israelites say to Rehoboam, (xii. 16.) "What portion have we in David?" That is, in Rehoboam the grandchild of David? In like manner, he thinks, it may be said, *there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam;* that is, between Abijam the son of Rehoboam and Jeroboam: whom Abijam grievously afflicted. (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 43.) But this doth not seem to be the true account; because the war between Abijam and Jeroboam is distinctly mentioned in the next verse. Therefore the meaning of these words is, that though God was pleased, for David's sake, who walked uprightly before him, to continue a *lamp,* that is, a successor to him in Jerusalem; yet these successors were vexed with continual wars (as appeared both in the reign of Rehoboam and of Abijam), and did not enjoy their kingdom peaceably.

Ver. 7. *Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] See xi. 41. Ezra saith they were recorded in the book of the prophet Iddo, 2 Chron. xiii. 22. from whence he took what he thought fit.

And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.] He continued the war, which had been between his father and Jeroboam, and managed it very gloriously, as Ezra shews in the book of the Chronicles.

Ver. 8. *And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.*

Ver. 9. *In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.*] In some part of that year. (See ver. 2.)

Ver. 10. *And one-and-forty years reigned he in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.*] This was the name of his grandmother, who is called his mother, as Reuel is called the father of Jethro's daughters, Exod. ii. 18. when he was their grandfather. Which example Kimchi here alleges to explain this. And thus Abarbinel: The sense is not, that Maachah brought forth Asa (for she was his father's mother), but she brought him up and gave him his education: which made his piety the more remarkable, that he was not tainted with her principles of religion as his father was. But why his mother should not be mentioned, but his grandmother, which was not at all needful (because it was evident, by what was said before, that Maachah was the mother of Abijam his father), is unaccountable. And therefore others think that this was the name of his mother; which was the same, as her father's also was, with that of Abijam's.

Ver. 11. *And Asa did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, as did David his father.*] He made him his pattern: worshipping the Lord alone, and taking away all idols, as it here follows.

Ver. 12. *And he took away the Sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his father had made.*] Of which see xiv. 23, 24. But still some secretly remained; and therefore when it is said he *removed all idols,* the meaning is, all that he could discover, for some lurked privately, (xxii. 46.)

Ver. 13. *And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen.*] He took away her guards, all the ensigns of royal dignity, and reduced her to the condition of a private person. But the word *being* is not in the Hebrew; which others translate, *he removed her from the queen:* that is, from his wife; that she might not be infected with her idolatry. He put her therefore out of the court, where she gave a bad example.

Because she had made an idol in a grove.] The word we

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translate *idol*, is *Miphlezeth*, which imports something of terror and horror; either because it was of a frightful aspect, or brought dreadful judgments upon its worshippers. St. Jerome understands by it Priapus, or Baal-Peor, to whom the women were much devoted. Theodoret takes it for Astarte, or Venus: and, indeed, in the northern countries, Priapus and Venus were painted together; as Johan. Gensius observes in his book De Victimis Humanis, par. i. cap. 9. Whatsoever it was, it was placed in a grove; in which shady places all the works of darkness, even sodomy itself, were practised.

Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron.] He cut it down, and having burnt it, stamped it to a powder, and then threw it into the brook Kidron; as Moses did with the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 20. (See 2 Chron. xv. 16.)

Ver. 14. *But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.*] He did take away all the high places wherein they sacrificed to strange gods, (2 Chron. xiv. 3.) but not those wherein God alone was worshipped: for his authority was not great enough to do this; the people having so universally and so long taken this licence, that none durst attempt to abolish this inveterate custom till the days of Hezekiah: who, seeing the calamities that were coming upon his country, endeavoured to prevent them by a thorough reformation. But though Asa did not venture to do this, yet his heart was sincerely affected to the right worship of God; and he suffered sacrifices to be offered to none else.

Ver. 15. *And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the Lord, silver, and gold, and vessels.*] According to the piety of ancient times, his father had vowed some part of the spoils he took in the war with Jeroboam unto the Lord; but had not time to make good his vow, or upon some account or other neglected it. Asa's son therefore made his vow good; and also himself brought in what he had devoted unto holy uses, (for so the words are in the Hebrew, *he brought in the holy things of his father*, &c.) having gotten great spoil in his war with the Ethiopians, (2 Chron. xiv. 13, 14.)

Ver. 16. *And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.*] There having been no mention hitherto made of Baasha, this may seem not to stand in its proper place. But Abarbinel thinks it is here inserted, that as this Divine writer had shewn what his virtues were, so he might now mention his faults. The chief of which was occasioned by this war: which moved him to send to Ben-hadad for help, when he should have relied upon God; as it is related largely, 2 Chron. xvi. 7, &c.

Ver. 17. *And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah.*] After Asa's great victory over the Ethiopians, a great many of the Israelites fell off to him from Baasha: who thereupon resolved to make war upon Judah, and thereby prevent a further defection of his subjects.

And built Ramah.] A city in the tribe of Benjamin: which either belonged to the kingdom of Israel, or he had taken from Judah and fortified it; for that is meant by *building* it, as appears by what follows.

That he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.] That he might hinder all communication between his people and the people of Judah. For this place lay in the confines of both kingdoms; and in such a strait, that, a fortification being made there, none could pass to and fro without a licence from Baasha.

Ver. 18. *Then Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hands of his servants; and king Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying.*] This was held lawful, in case of extreme danger, to employ sacred things for the defence of one's country. But here was no such necessity in this case; for God had appeared so wonderfully for Asa, against a more powerful enemy than Baasha, that he ought to have confided in him for help; as the prophet Hanani told him, 2 Chron. xvi. 7, &c.

Ver. 19. *There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father.*] In the latter end of Solomon's reign the Syrians were enemies to him, (xi. 24, 25.) But when he was dead, and the kingdom was divided, both Judah and Israel made peace with the Syrians: having enough to do, to settle themselves in their own dominions.

Behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.] This was a wicked piece of policy, to tempt him with money to break his word, which perhaps he had sworn to observe.

Ver. 20. *So Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had.*] Always in a readiness, for some expedition, or for the defence of his country.

Against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.] By this it appears, that he fell upon the northern part of the kingdom of Israel, which was nearest to Damascus; whilst Baasha was busy at Ramah, which was in the more southern part of his dominion.

Ver. 21. *And it came to pass, that when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah.*] By this means Asa compassed his ends; it not being safe for Baasha to continue the work he was about, for fear Ben-hadad should make larger conquests than he had already done.

And dwelt in Tirzah.] Which was become the royal city, (see xiv. 17.) where Baasha settled himself; though he intended, I suppose, when he had finished Ramah, to have dwelt there some part of the year; that by his presence the passages might have been the better secured.

Ver. 22. *Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah (none was exempted).*] He summoned all the people of the country; who were not disabled by age, or sickness, or some other way.

And they took away the stones, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded, and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.] They were inhabited before, but he enlarged, and perhaps fortified them. Which he judged better than to perfect the fortification of Ramah; which would have been a perpetual bone of contention (as we speak) between Judah and Israel.

Ver. 23. *And the rest of the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] See xi. 41.

Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet.] He had the gout, as the Gemara of the Sanhedrin

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explains it, (cap. 6. n. 7.) which made him less active than he had been before this disease seized him.

Ver. 24. *And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers, in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.*

Ver. 25. *And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.*] Part of two years, as appears from ver. 28. 33.

Ver. 26. *And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.*] By the worship of the golden calves.

Ver. 27. *And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar.*] That is, of a family in the tribe of Issachar.

Conspired against him: and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines (for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon).] It was a city in the tribe of Dan, (Josh. xix. 44.) and given to the Levites, (xxi. 23.) who quitted it, as they did the rest of their cities, when Jeroboam would not suffer them to execute their office, (2 Chron. xi. 14.) and the Philistines it is likely seized upon it, being adjoining to their country. But Nadab now endeavoured to recover it out of their hands, as of right belonging to him.

Ver. 28. *Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.*] What was the pretence for this conspiracy we are not told; but it is likely he had many joined with him in it; otherwise it had not been easy to slay him, when he was in the midst of his army before Gibbethon.

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the Lord, which he spake by Ahijah the Shilonite.*] His intention was not to fulfil this prophecy, (mentioned xiv. 10.) but to secure himself in his usurped throne, by cutting off all that had any title to it. But by this means God fulfilled his own intentions; and that as speedily as Ahijah the prophet had foretold, (xiv. 14.)

Ver. 30. *Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel to sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger.*] Which caused great miseries in Israel; especially in the beginning of that kingdom, when they reigned by force, not by succession. Whereas in Judah the son succeeded the father, by right of blood, according to the promise made to David.

Ver. 31. *Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] His acts could not be many; yet more were recorded in the public Annals than are here mentioned, (xi. 41.)

Ver. 32. *And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.*] We read the very same words before (ver. 16.) in the history of Asa; which are now repeated in the history of Baasha, to shew the reason why Asa was his enemy, which he would not have been (but his friend) had he feared God after his cutting off the whole house of Jeroboam. But he would make no covenant with him, notwithstanding he had fulfilled the word of God, because he walked in the sins of Jeroboam. Thus Abarbinel.

Ver. 33. *And in the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years.*

Ver. 34. *And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.*] Which makes it evident, that he did not cut off Jeroboam's family because they were idolaters, but because he aspired to the throne; which, when he possessed, he endeavoured to establish himself in it by the same wicked policy which Jeroboam used. For he reformed nothing in religion; but continued to worship the calves which Jeroboam had set up, to keep the people from going to worship at Jerusalem.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *THEN the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying.*] This is a prophet that lived till the end of Jehoshaphat's reign. (See 2 Chron. xix. 1. xx. 34.) And his father Hanani was a prophet before him, (2 Chron. xvi. 7.) Nor was there wanting a succession of prophets during the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, as Abarbinel hath observed through every reign, their names being set down in Holy Scripture: he hath shewn in a catalogue he hath made of the kings, and the prophets in their time; too long to be here transcribed.

Ver. 2. *Forasmuch as I have exalted thee out of the dust.*] It seems he was of a mean family in the tribe of Issachar. Perhaps, but a common soldier, or some small officer in the army which laid siege to Gibbethon; but being bold and daring, formed a conspiracy against Nadab.

And made thee prince of my people Israel.] God's providence interposed, that nothing should hinder the success of his design against Nadab; because he intended to make use of him to punish the house of Jeroboam.

And thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger by their sins.] Continued them in their idolatry, against which he ought to have shewn the greatest zeal, because it provoked God's anger against the family of Jeroboam.

Ver. 3. *Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.*] So that neither any of his own children, nor the children of any of his relations should remain; but his name be quite put out.

Ver. 4. *Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.*] The very same threatening that was pronounced against Jeroboam and his posterity by Ahijah, (xiv. 11.)

Ver. 5. *Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

Ver. 6. *So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.*] He was not slain, as Nadab was; but died, as Jeroboam did; and his son suffered like his, (ver. 9, 10.)

Ver. 7. *And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the Lord against Baasha, and against his house.*] This command of God being given to Jehu, (ver. 1.) he executed it, and delivered this message to Baasha some time before he died. Which is said to be done *by the hand of Jehu*, because he was the minister of God in this business.

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Even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like to Jeroboam; and because he killed him.] That is, killed Nadab, who was Jeroboam's son: or rather (as Abarbinel judiciously observes) this relates to the whole house of Jeroboam beforementioned; which Baasha destroyed, not because they were idolaters, and that he might fulfil the word of the Lord (as perhaps he pretended), but to satisfy his own ambition, being guilty of the very same crime that Jeroboam was: and therefore was no better than a murderer in the slaughter he made of his family; and accordingly is threatened to be punished for that very act, which was committed, not in obedience to God, but to serve himself.

Ver. 8. *And in the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel.*] This seems to contradict what Ezra saith in 2 Chron. xvi. 1. that Baasha built Ramah in the thirty-sixth year of Asa. Of which I shall give an account in my notes on that place. For the present it may suffice to say, that Ezra doth not speak of the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, but of the thirty-sixth year after the division of the kingdom. For it could be, at the most, but the twenty-sixth year of Asa's reign when Baasha died.

In Tirzah, two years.] Not complete; but one entire year, and part of another: as appears from ver. 10. 15.

Ver. 9. *And his servant Zimri (captain of half of his chariots).*] A considerable commander in his army, who had a great interest in the soldiery.

Conspired against him as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah.] He seems to have been a debauched young man, who stayed at home following his pleasures, whilst his army was besieging Gibbethon, (ver. 15.) Which gave Zimri, who it is likely was captain of his guard, the better opportunity to kill him.

Ver. 10. *And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.*] Here was a speedy execution of the vengeance threatened against him by Jehu, that God would make his house like the house of Jeroboam, (ver. 3.) For as Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned but two years, (xv. 25.) so Elah the son of Baasha reigned no more: and then, as Nadab was killed with the sword, so was Elah. Thus, as Abarbinel notes, there was a wonderful likeness between Jeroboam and Baasha, in their lives, and in their deaths; in their sons, and in their family.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha: he left not one that pisseth against the wall.*] That is, not a man. (See xiv. 10.)

Neither of his kinsfolk, nor of his friends.] He not only destroyed all that were descended from Baasha, as Baasha had done the family of Jeroboam; but he extended the destruction, and increased it, as Abarbinel speaks; for he killed all that were of kin to Baasha, with all his friends, which Baasha did not: this seems to be contained in the threatening of Jehu, (ver. 3.)

Ver. 12. *Thus Zimri destroyed all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet.*] See ver. 1, 2. 7.

Ver. 13. *For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son.*] This shews that Elah walked in his father's ways; though it be not before mentioned.

By which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities.] So the golden calves are called, being (as Forsterus well translates the word) "Commentitia numina," *gods of their own devising.* (See 1 Sam. xii. 21.)

Ver. 14. *Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] Here is no mention of *his might;* (as there is of his father's, ver. 5.) for he was, as I said, a man of pleasure.

Ver. 15. *In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah: and the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines.*] Which had been besieged many years ago, when Baasha slew Nadad, (xv. 27.) But was then relieved, or afterward retaken by the Philistines, while the Israelites were in a distracted condition; but now again invested.

Ver. 16. *And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king.*] Had success in his conspiracy, and made himself king.

Wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.] Just as the Roman army, in aftertimes, made their chief commander emperor.

Ver. 17. *And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him.*] All the army that were at the siege.

And besieged Tirzah.] Where Zimri, a more dangerous enemy, was.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken.*] Which he was not able to defend against a powerful army; from whom he suspected no opposition; but hoped they would have let him reign as quietly as they did Baasha.

That he went into the palace of the king's house.] Into the strongest part of the house.

And burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died.] He was afraid, I suppose, of suffering some shameful punishment, if he had been taken alive; and therefore chose to die desperately in this manner. So Sardanapulus ended his life.

Ver. 19. *For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.*] Though he lived but a very short time after he usurped the crown, yet he gave sufficient demonstration of his resolution to continue the idolatry of Jeroboam; and therefore was abandoned by God.

Ver. 20. *Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and the treason which he wrought, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] It is likely, other acts that he did before he conspired against Elah were recorded in that book; together with the manner how he wrought his treason.

Ver. 21. *Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts.*] For when it is said, (ver. 16.) *all Israel* made Omri king in the camp; the meaning is, only the whole army, and they that attended them.

Half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king.] For they did not like to have a king imposed upon them by the soldiery; and Tibni had as good a title as the other, being also a valiant man; who succeeded

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Zimri, perhaps, in his command, as captain of half his chariots.

And half followed Omri.] As already advanced to the royal dignity; and a greater man than Tibni; being captain of the whole host.

Ver. 22. *And the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath.*] For Omri had the advantage of having the army on his side.

So Tibni died.] In this civil war (into which they fell by God's just judgment upon them) many of the people, in all likelihood, died together with him.

And Omri reigned.] Without competitor. The Jews in Seder Olam Rabba, whom Rasi and others follow, say it contributed much to his advancement, that Asa king of Judah married his son Jehoshaphat to Omri's daughter. For which they have no other ground, but that it is said, 2 Chron. xviii. 1. he joined in affinity with Ahab.

Ver. 23. *In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years.*] These twelve years of his reign are to be computed not from the thirty-first of Asa's reign; for it is evident he began to reign in the twenty-seventh year of Asa, (ver. 15.) and his son began to reign in the thirty-eighth year of Asa, (ver. 29.) Therefore the twelve years are to be computed from the beginning of Omri's reign: which was, as I said, the twenty-seventh of Asa's. From which time (as Abarbinel observes) the contest continued between Omri and Tibni, unto the thirty-first year of king Asa. In the end of which Tibni died; and then Omri reigned over all Israel, whereas he reigned but over half the people before. And Tibni being extinct, all the foregoing years are accounted to Omri; *viz.* from the beginning of Asa's seven-and-twentieth year, when Zimri died, to the end of this eight-and-thirtieth year, which make twelve years.

Six years reigned he in Tirzah.] Half of his time he made this his royal seat; which was, as some think, all the time his contention with Tibni lasted, and some time after.

Ver. 24. *And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built upon the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill Samaria.*] The king's house in Tirzah being burnt, as we read ver. 18. he built a royal palace in this city, which he also built upon this hill; and called it after the name of him who was the owner of it before he bought it, *viz.* Shemer, from whom it had the Hebrew name of Shomeron. Which was ever after made the royal seat of the kings of Israel.

Ver. 25. *But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him.*] For he not only walked in the way of Jeroboam, but, it is likely, began to introduce other idolatries, which his son Ahab established among them. Or, he compelled the people to worship the calves; and by severe laws restrained the people from going up to Jerusalem: which, as some think, are meant by *the statutes of Omri*, (Micah vi. 16.)

Ver. 26. *For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities.*] Though he had seen Elah, and all the whole house of Baasha destroyed by his predecessor for their idolatry, and Zimri himself perished in the same sin, (ver. 13. 19.) yet he persisted in their iniquity, and brought down the wrath of God upon him, and upon his family, as the foregoing kings had done.

Ver. 27. *Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might which he shewed, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] It seems he was a valiant man, which Elah was not; concerning whose *might* there is no mention, as I noted upon ver. 14.

Ver. 28. *So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria.*] Which now began, as I said, to be the royal city of the kingdom of Israel, as Jerusalem was of Judah.

And Ahab his son reigned in his stead.] Who was so eminent upon several accounts, that we have a long account of him in the following part of this book.

Ver. 29. *And in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.*] In this space of time Asa saw six kings of Israel buried; whilst Judah flourished under one and the same king: which no doubt was a great advantage to them.

Ver. 30. *And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.*] Was more idolatrous than his father Omri: for he brought in the worship of Baal (as it follows in the next verse), that is, of the sun, and of all the host of heaven.

Ver. 31. *And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing to him to walk in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.*] He was not satisfied with the worship which Jeroboam had invented, though highly displeasing to God. For so the words are in the Hebrew, *was it a light thing?* As much as to say, It was a most heinous crime; and yet Ahab resolved to be more wicked. For Jeroboam did not quite forsake the Lord God of Israel, but worshipped him by a representation of his own invention: and this more out of policy than any love to this kind of worship. But Ahab, out of pure love to strange gods, forsook the Lord, without any such reason for it as Jeroboam had; the people being now sufficiently estranged from Jerusalem.

That he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Eth-baal.] Called in profane writers Ithobalus.

King of the Zidonians.] Who had been old idolaters.

And served Baal, and worshipped him.] That god, whom the Chaldeans and Babylonians called Bel, the Phœnicians (of whom the Zidonians were a part) called Baal: which in Hebrew signifies *lord*. Which anciently was the name of the true God, as Mr. Selden observes; but when the world grew wicked, was given to the sun by the Phœnicians: who, as Philo-Byblius tells us, reputed the sun to be μόνον οὐρανοῦ θεόν, *the only god of heaven*. And at last this name was given to other stars, and to their dead kings, whose memory was dear to them. And various rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices were devised in their honour, as that great man observes, (Syntag. de Diis Syris, ii. cap. 1.) who understands these words of the Phœnician Belus or Baal, who was the very same with the European Jupiter: and Zidon being situated on the sea, their Baal was called by the Greeks the Sea Jupiter. So Hesychius, Θαλάσσιος Ζεὺς ἐν Σιδόνι τιμᾶται, *the Sea Jupiter is worshipped at Sidon*. But our Mr. Mede is very confident, that the Baal whose worship Jezebel brought with her from Zidon was a deified king of the Phœnicians: as Baal was the first king of Babel who was deified after his death. Whence all the souls of men who were canonized after death were

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called Baalim. (See book i. discourse xlii. and his Apostacy of the later Times, par. i. chap. 3.) Whence it came, that there were not more Jupiters among the Europeans, than there were Baals among the Syrians. And hence so many mountains, and springs, and woods, and cities, were called by the name of Baal, when Joshua conquered Canaan; as Baal-Meon, Bamoth-Baal, Baal-Gad, Baal-Thamar, Baal-Zephon, and many more. In which places, no doubt, Baalim were worshipped, and from thence they had their names.

Ver. 32. *And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.*] He built a temple for this god in the royal city, and set up an altar, where he sacrificed to him. Which was more directly to worship other gods than Jeroboam did: who pretended the worship he performed to the calves was to the true God, whom he honoured in them.

Ver. 33. *And Ahab made a grove.*] Which was another piece of idolatry; which God commanded to be abolished, (Deut. vii. 5.)

And Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.] In this grove, it is likely, all manner of impurities were practised: for Jezebel was a filthy woman.

Ver. 34. *In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite.*] A man that lived in the very seat of idolatry; and, it is likely, was deeply infected with it.

Build Jericho.] A place which, being under a *cherem*, was never to be rebuilt; because it was devoted to God, as the first-fruits of the conquests of Canaan. Which this man either did not know (because ignorant of the law, which now was little read), or was so impious as not to regard the words of Joshua, believing no other god but Baal.

He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.] But he found to his cost, that the sentence which Joshua pronounced against the rebuilder of this city proved true; for his eldest son died when he laid the first stone of it: and so all the rest of his children, one after another, as the building advanced; till at last his youngest son died when it was finished. A most remarkable instance of the certainty of Divine threatenings; and that God never forgets what he hath said, but continues always the same. This sentence being pronounced more than four hundred and forty years ago, and now fulfilled exactly in all its circumstances: which might have been a warning to the whole nation, not to despise the long-suffering and patience of God, who, though he had not yet carried them out of their good land, according to the word of Ahijah, (xiv. 15.) would certainly do it, if they continued in their impenitence.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *AND Elijah the Tishbite.*] The care of God over this people (as I noted before) was so great, that in every king's reign, from the first to the last, there was one or more prophets to instruct, admonish, and correct them. And now in the reign of Ahab (when there was the greatest need of it), God raised up an extraordinary prophet far exceeding all others, whom Abarbinel calls the *prince of the prophets*, next unto Moses. Whose original being not known (for here is no mention of his father or mother), some of the Jews have fancied him to have been an angel sent from heaven to reduce them to the true religion. So Abarbinel relates, upon the book of Judges, as Joh. Frischmuthus observes, in a dissertation about Elijah. Whose name, which in the Hebrew is *Elijahu*, carries something Divine in it; being compounded, as Ægid. Camartus imagines, of three of the names of God, *viz.* Eli, and Jah, and Hu. There is no doubt the two first are the names of God, but there is reason to question the last, though a great man of our own, Edm. Castellus, in his Polyglot Lexicon, doth put Hu among the Divine names; and so do the cabalists. He was indeed a very eminent messenger of God, sent to call the Israelites to repentance; from whence our learned Dr. Lightfoot thinks he had the name of Tishbite: from the Hebrew word *shub*, which signifies to *return;* for he was sent to be the converter of the nation. (See him upon St. Luke, i. 17.) Other conjectures there are about this name, which Frischmuth hath collected; and Dionysius Petavius hath delivered his opinion about it upon Epiphanius, (Hæres. lv. n. 3.) who saith Elijah was ἐξ ἱερέων of the priests, and grandson to Zadok. But Kimchi seems to have given the plainest account of this name of Thishbite from Thesbe, a town or region where he was born: just as Ahijah is called Shilonite, from Shilo, where he was born, or dwelt.

Who was of the inhabitants of Gilead.] It is not certain that he was a native of this country; but only that he came and settled among the Gileadites, being born, as some think, in the tribe of Benjamin, though most are rather of opinion in the tribe of Gad.

Said unto Ahab, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.] To make his words the more regarded, he swore solemnly by the eternal God, whose minister he was (for that is meant by *standing before him*), and to whom he had prayed, that there should be no moisture from the clouds for three years and a half ensuing, unless it was by his prayers. Thus St. James teaches us to expound these words, *these years*, (James v. 17.) And Abarbinel makes out the connexion of this chapter with the foregoing in this manner:—Elijah admonished Ahab to lay to heart the punishment of Hiel the Beth-elite, saying, Fear the Lord lest he be angry with thee, as he was with Hiel, for breaking his command. But Ahab despised his admonition, and said, That was a chance; for you say we are all idolaters, and yet the threatening in the law of Moses (Deut. xi. 16, 17.) is not come upon us. Whereupon Elijah, in a great anger, said, *As the Lord liveth there shall be no dew*, &c. Which story is told with more circumstances in the Talmud.

Ver. 2. *And the word of the Lord came to him, saying.*] The king being incensed at this threatening, God took care to secure Elijah from his fury, by the following direction.

Ver. 3. *Get thee hence.*] For he saw that Ahab intended to lay hold of him.

And turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.] This brook Bochartus takes to be the same with Kana, mentioned by Joshua,

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xvi. 5. xvii. 9. So called from the plenty of reeds (for *Kana* signifies a *reed*), in which the prophet lay hid while he stayed in this place.

Ver. 4. *And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook: and I will command the ravens to feed thee there.*] This seems so strange, that some will have the word *orebim* not to signify *ravens*, but *merchants:* because they find the word *orebe* in Ezek. xxvii. 17. signifying merchants that traded in the market of Tyre. But, as Bochartus hath observed, they are never called simply *orebim.* Nor is their opinion better, who think Arabians to be here meant: for there were none thereabout; and Elias's lurking-place would soon have been discovered to Ahab, if merchants, or any other people that travelled that way, had been acquainted with it. We must therefore acknowledge a miraculous care which God took of Elijah, as all the ancients do, none excepted. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 13.) Nor did such things seem incredible to the heathen, who tell us as strange stories. For example, that Jupiter was fed in his cradle by bees: and Janus, the son of Apollo and Evadne, with honey by dragons: and Midas, when an infant, had corn put into his mouth, as he lay asleep, by ants: Æsculapius nourished by a goat; and a great many more mentioned by that excellent person Huetius, in his Quæstiones Alnetanæ, lib. ii. cap. 12. n. 17.

Ver. 5. *So he went, and did according to the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.*

Ver. 6. *And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.*] God amply provided for his servant; sending him not only bread, but flesh also, that he might make a good meal: and this twice a day, at dinner and supper. This provision some of the Jews fancy (in Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 11. n. 76.) the ravens brought from Ahab's house; others fancy, from Jehoshaphat's; as if he was fed with royal dainties. But Bochartus thinks it is better to say, that they had this provision from some of the seven thousand persons who had never bowed to Baal. But it is best of all to confess we cannot tell whence they had it; God, perhaps, making meat ready prepared on purpose for him. They who object that these were unclean creatures, who polluted the meat which they touched, should consider, that all this was done by an extraordinary dispensation. And St. Chrysostom fancies, there was this moral instruction in it; that Elijah should learn to be more mild and gentle towards the deluded Israelites, by these birds, who were cruel to their young, but kind to him. And indeed it is very wonderful, as Victorinus Strigelius here glosses, that the ravens, who do not feed their own young ones, should constantly feed the prophet. For such is the ἀστοργία of these creatures, as naturalists report, that they forsake their young before they be fledged: whom God feeds by worms, which are produced by the dung, and out of the carcasses that have been brought into their nests, until they be able to fly, and provide for themselves. I think he hath this out of St. Ambrose, lib. x. epist. 82. The Psalmist is thought to allude to it, Psal. cxlvii. 9. And God himself in Job xxxviii. 41.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain.*] In the Hebrew it is, *at the end of days*, that is, of a year; as that phrase, I have shewn, is often used.

Ver. 8. *And the word of the Lord came to him, saying,*

Ver. 9. *Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there.*] It was a place between Tyre and Zidon, but belonged to the territory of the latter; and so was not in the land of Israel, but inhabited by gentiles.

Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.] He had appointed and disposed her, just as he did the ravens, ver. 4. For she had no command from God for it; (it appears from ver. 12.) and this was an extraordinary providence, that a poor widow and a gentile should support him; though, in all likelihood, she was not a stranger to the true religion, but a pious woman of another nation.

Ver. 10. *So he arose, and went to Zarephath: and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering sticks.*] Which shews she was but in a poor condition.

And he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.] For he knew, by a Divine inspiration, this was the woman that was to sustain him.

Ver. 11. *And as she was going to fetch it.*] This shews she was a good woman; being ready to succour a stranger.

He called unto her and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand.] Which was very natural to desire, having asked for water: but he said it to move her to acquaint him with what follows.

Ver. 12. *And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth.*] By this it appears she knew the Lord God of Israel; and that Elijah was a prophet; or, at least, one of his worshippers.

I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and I am gathering two sticks.] By *two sticks* is meant a few: as *two* frequently signifies, (Isa. xvii. 6. Jer. iii. 14.)

That I may go and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.] The famine, it seems, was sore in that country, as well as in Israel. For they of Zidon had their provision from the Israelites; and besides, it is likely, had no rain: but were punished as their neighbours were; being all alike idolaters.

Ver. 13. *And Elijah said unto her, Fear not.*] Be not afraid of being famished.

Go and do as thou hast said: but make me a little cake thereof first, and bring it unto me, and after that make for thee and for thy son.] A very hard command: whereby he tried her faith and obedience.

Ver. 14. *For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain on the earth.*] This was a miracle, which they that were not Christians did not think incredible: as Huetius shews in the same book, and the chapter abovementioned, ver. 4.

Ver. 15. *And she went, and did according to the saying of Elijah.*] By which it is evident that she trusted in the Lord God of Israel.

And she, and he, and her house did eat many days.] Some by *many days* understand a full year: as it is in the margin. But it rather signifies *two years:* for one year was

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past before he came from the brook Cherith, (see ver. 7.) And therefore they lived upon this meal and oil two years more, till the end of the famine.

Ver. 16. *And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.*] But what they took out for their daily use, was immediately supplied by the power of God.

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass, after these things.*] After this demonstration of the power and goodness of God.

That the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.] He expired and died.

Ver. 18. *And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God?*] Some take the meaning to be, *wherein have I offended thee?* but the following words seem to imply, that in a great agony of spirit she asked him, wherefore he came to her house, if this were his intention?

Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?] This she thought was hard, to requite his entertainment at her house with such a punishment for her sins. For then sins are said to be *called to remembrance* before God, when he punishes them.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto her, Give me thy son.*] He reached out his hands, and bade her put him into his arms.

And he took him out of her bosom.] It seems he was but a little child: who the Jews think afterward proved a prophet; *viz.* Jonah.

And carried him up into a loft where he abode.] The LXX. translate it ὑπερῷον, *an upper room:* which he had to himself for his study, meditation, and prayer; as Elisha afterward had in another place, (2 Kings iv. 10.)

And laid him upon his own bed.] By this it appears it was a private room, where he lodged.

Ver. 20. *And he cried unto the Lord.*] Prayed most earnestly.

And said, O my God, hast thou brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?] He humbly expostulated with God; representing what an addition it was to his other afflictions, that this widow should suffer, who had been so kind to him; and suffer in her son, the great comfort of her life; and that while he was in her house.

Ver. 21. *And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come again into him.*] He lay prostrate in prayer before God, and stretched out himself upon the child, as if he would inspire him with a new life. And this he did three times; believing God would be moved by his importunity, to do what he desired.

Ver. 22. *And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.*] Hereby it appeared not only that this was done by God, to whom Elijah prayed; but that he did it for Elijah's sake.

Ver. 23. *And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.*] There was no need, one would think, to bid her observe and lay to heart the great power and mercy of God, in restoring her son to life. But the best of us must be awakened to our duty.

Ver. 24. *And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know thou art a man of God.*] She believed it before; (ver. 18.) but when she saw he did not cure her child when he lay sick, but suffered him to die, she began to doubt of it. But her faith revived, together with her son, and was mightily confirmed.

And that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.] She believed all that he delivered as the mind of God; and gave up herself entirely to his instructions. The benefit of which she enjoyed, till God sent Elijah to meet Ahab; resolving to send rain upon the earth, as it follows in the next chapter.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, after many days.*] See upon ver. 15. of the foregoing chapter. Grotius expounds it, *after six months,* upon St. Luke iv. 25.

That the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying.] Our Saviour saith, and so doth St. James, that the drought continued three years and six months, (Luke iv. 25. James v. 17.) which doth not disagree with these words, which are thus to be explained. At the beginning of the drought, it is likely, Ahab imputed the want of rain to natural causes, and so did not seek to slay Elijah: but after six months neither the former nor the latter rain falling in their season, he began to be enraged at him as the cause of the drought: which forced Elijah, at God's command, to save his life by flight. And from that time the three years here mentioned are to be computed; before the word of the Lord came to him: he being one year at the brook Cherith, and two years at Sarepta; in the end of which year God took pity upon the country, having fulfilled the words of Elijah, (xvii. 1.) I see no ground for Abarbinel's observation, that the famine continued three years, to shew that it was a punishment inflicted for the sins of three families: Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and his son Nadab; Baasha, and his son Elah; Omri, and his son Ahab. The observation of Grotius is far better upon St. Luke iv. 25. (See there.)

Go, and shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.] He would not destroy the earth because it was inhabited by wicked men (as Abarbinel speaks), and yet would have them know that Elijah's prayers procured mercy for them.

Ver. 2. *And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab: and there was a sore famine in Samaria.*] Which made it the more dangerous for him to appear in Ahab's presence; lest being so sorely afflicted, he should, in his rage, cause him to be killed before he could deliver his message to him.

Ver. 3. *And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house.*] Some, both Jews and Christians, think this was Obadiah the prophet; for which I can find no ground but what is said in 2 Chron. xvii. 7. that Obadiah was one of the princes whom Jehoshaphat sent to instruct the people. And Ezra, from the next words, infers he was not a prophet.

(Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly.] Was a truly religious man, and worshipped the Lord alone with great affection to his service; which one would have expected should have made Ahab discard him, if not persecute him.

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But, I suppose, he was so very useful a servant to him, in the management of the affairs of his family (which he ordered with singular prudence and fidelity), that he connived at his not worshipping Baal, nor the calves; especially since he did not (we may well think) go up to Jerusalem to worship; with which defect God was pleased to dispense, as Ahab did with his religion.

Ver. 4. *For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord.*] There were schools of the prophets, it is likely, still remaining in Israel unto her time; but she endeavoured to destroy them, and those who were bred up in them; that there might be none to instruct the people in the true religion. For such, I suppose, are here meant; not those that were endued with the extraordinary gift of prophecy: for Elijah saith, ver. 22. that he only was left a prophet of the Lord; though that may signify no more, but that he knew of nobody beside.

That Obadiah took a hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave.] Which was an act of great piety and zeal, whereby he hazarded his own life.

And fed them with bread and water).] Sent them meat and drink privately every day.

Ver. 5. *And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into all the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks; peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.*] Many were dead for want of grass, which he hoped they might find growing in such moist places, enough to preserve the rest.

Ver. 6. *And they divided the land between them, to pass through it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.*] Ahab would make this search himself, lest it should not be done faithfully by others, who might be persuaded by prayers and entreaties, or the presents of those who had any grass, not to discover it. Only he trusted Obadiah.

Ver. 7. *And as Obadiah went in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou my lord Elijah?*] He shewed by the profound reverence he made to him, how much he honoured him.

Ver. 8. *And he answered, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.*] The prophet also approved the honour Obadiah did his master, whom he owned for his *lord*, though he was a very wicked man. (See ver. 10.) For kings, by their office, are sacred persons: and therefore are to be had in great veneration (though bad men) even by the high-priest, and by the prophets, who did not approach them, as the Jews observe, without due reverence. And it is a famous saying of R. Jedaiah, "Do not dwell in a city, where no reverence or fear is paid to the king."

Ver. 9. *And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?*] For that he concluded would be the effect of such a message delivered by him to Ahab, as he shews in the following discourse.

Ver. 10. *As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee.*] That is, to all the countries thereabout, with whom he was in league. For it is a very foolish conceit of some of the Jews (which the best of them disown), that Ahab was as great an emperor as Nebuchadnezzar, or Ahasuerus, who ruled over all nations.

And when they said, He is not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.] These words incline me to think, that he sought him only throughout all his own dominions; through every tribe, which is called a *nation*; and every government, which is called a *kingdom*. For how could he take an oath of any but his own subjects? It may be said, indeed, that there might be such compacts between him and the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, and other neighbouring nations, that they should harbour none of his rebellious subjects: and that if he required it, they should swear they knew of none in their country. But such a treaty is so unusual, that I see no reason to suppose it.

Ver. 11. *And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.*

Ver. 12. *And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not.*] Snatch thee away from hence, as sometimes the prophets were suddenly transported by an invisible power to places far distant from that where they were at present, (2 Kings ii. 16. Ezek. iii. 12. 14. Acts viii. 39, 40.) And, in all likelihood, there had been instances of it before this time; which made Obadiah fear it might fall out so in this case.

And so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me.] Because he did not seize and secure Elijah when he was in his power; but let him escape.

But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.] Therefore he hoped the prophet would take care to preserve him, because he was not like the rest of the court.

Ver. 13. *Was it not told my lord what I did, when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid a hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?*] Sometimes a virtuous man may speak the truth of himself; though it be in his own praise.

Ver. 14. *And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.*] When it would expose him to manifest danger of losing his life.

Ver. 15. *And Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts liveth.*] He who commands all creatures in heaven and earth.

Before whom I stand.] Whom I serve, as one of his ministers.

I will surely shew myself unto him to-day.] He feared not to shew himself to Ahab; for a greater king than he, the Lord of all things, he knew would preserve him.

Ver. 16. *So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.*] The solemn oath of Elijah made Obadiah readily obey him; and assured him Ahab should not be disappointed, but certainly find him.

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*] He troubles a country, who confounds all things in it, and puts them out of order. In such a condition Israel now was, by a grievous famine; which made them not know which way to turn themselves. And this he ascribed to Elijah.

Ver. 18. *And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord.*] They trouble a nation who break the laws of God; not they that defend them.

And thou hast followed Baalim.] There were more Baals than one worshipped by the heathen, as I observed before: and it is very probable, that Ahab worshipped all the host of heaven, as well as the sun. (See xvi. 30, 31.)

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Ver. 19. *Now therefore send, and gather all Israel unto Mount Carmel.*] That he might prove, in the face of all the people, that it was not he who troubled them.

And the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred.] By the *prophets of the groves* (as we translate it), Mr. Selden understands the prophets of Astarte, the great goddess of the Zidonians; which he proves by comparing many places of Scripture together, (L. de Diis Syris, Syntag. ii. cap. 3.) Maimonides hath a peculiar notion, that the prophets of Baal, and of the *groves*, were such as had drunk in the opinion of the ancient Zabii; who made images to receive the influences of the stars; golden ones for the sun, and silver ones for the moon, &c. which gave to men the gift of prophecy, and shewed what was good for them. The same they said of trees; which were some under the influence of one star, some under the influence of another; and were planted in their names, and worshipped after several manners, and infused special virtues into the trees, and made men prophets. This he avers he found expressly in their books. (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 29.)

Who eat at Jezebel's table.] So high an esteem they had of these prophets, that she kept a table on purpose for them, to do them honour with the people.

Ver. 20. *So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel.*] I suppose the Israelites sent the great men of their several tribes to represent them; and the prophets readily assembled at the king's command; who did not distrust their power, and was promised rain, I suppose, by Elijah, if he did as he desired.

Ver. 21. *And Elijah came to all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions?*] Like lame men, who tread not firmly, but dubiously; not knowing which to choose, the Lord or Baal; and therefore joining both together.

If the Lord be God, follow him: if Baal be God, follow him.] As much as to say, There cannot be more gods than one. That is the first article of your faith; "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," (Deut. vi. 4.) If the Lord be he, then stick to him: if Baal, then reject the other. This is most rational: for both of them cannot be God.

And the people answered him not a word.] Either not knowing what to resolve, or being ashamed.

Ver. 22. *Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men.*] He was the only prophet that appeared in behalf of the Lord, and yet feared not to contest with a great multitude who came to defend Baal.

Ver. 23. *Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under.*] He propounded a plain way to decide this controversy, and settle the people's minds in their belief. To whom he first propounded it, that they might approve of it, if they thought it a sure way to discover the truth.

Ver. 24. *And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.*] That is, he that sendeth fire to consume the sacrifice, which is presented to him.

And the people answered and said, It is well spoken.] They looked upon this as a reasonable proposition; because they knew that sacrifices had been approved by God, in this manner; and they were very desirous to make the experiment, and be satisfied, by this means, who was the true God. Thus Moses's sacrifice was approved, (Lev. ix. 24.) and Gideon's, (Judg. vi. 21.) and David's, (1 Chron. xxi. 20.) and Solomon's, when he consecrated the temples, (2 Chron. vii. 1. 3.) By this means, in all these cases, God had shewn that he accepted the sacrifices, and that the persons who offered them were his servants.

Ver. 25. *And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal.*] Having the people's approbation, he turned to Baal's prophets, and desired them to agree to this trial.

Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first.] No doubt they produced both the bullocks, as he propounded at the first; (ver. 22.) and if there was any advantage in choosing one, and dressing it before the other, he desired they might have it.

For ye are many.] And he being a single person, was willing to give them the precedence.

And call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.] It may be translated, call on the name *of your god, viz.* Baal. Or else, it may relate to their Baalim, which were many, as they themselves were: and desire them all to try their power, by putting no fire under the sacrifice; but expecting it to come down from heaven.

Ver. 26. *And they took the bullock which was given them.*] The choice of which was left to them.

And dressed it.] Flayed it, and cut it in pieces, and laid it upon the wood. Which they durst not refuse to do, because the people thought it a reasonable motion which Elijah made; and they had utterly lost their credit with the people, if they had not accepted it. And perhaps they did not distrust the power of Baal; which Ralbag thinks was Mars, a fiery planet; but rather the sun, which far exceeds all the other heavenly bodies in heat. Which they thought might possibly exert its power, upon this great occasion, and burn up their sacrifice. At least they might hope that Elijah might not be able to bring fire down from heaven, because he sacrificed in a high place, not at the temple: which was contrary to the law of God, who therefore would not hear him; and then they should stand upon equal ground with him, though they obtained no fire to consume their sacrifice.

And called upon the name of Baal from morning even until noon.] When the sun was in its greatest strength.

Saying, O Baal, hear us! But there was no voice, nor any that answered.] Not the least flash of fire.

And they leaped upon the altar which was made.] Or, they danced about it, after the manner of the ancient Salii. Or, as Bochartus interprets it, "Quasi furore prophetico extra se rapti, incompositis motibus huc illuc ferebantur;" *They ran about hither and thither, as men in an ecstacy with a prophetical fury, which put them into uncouth and disorderly motions.* For it appears they acted like prophets from ver. 29. who sometimes acted as men beside themselves. (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 50.) Abarbinel thinks this leaping or dancing was a rite used in the worship of the sun: which puts all things in motion.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass at noon.*] When the morning sacrifice was ended.

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That Elijah mocked them.] He did not think it unlawful, or unseemly to jeer them, and their god; that he might awaken them out of their stupidity, and expose them to all the by-standers as corrupters of religion, and deceivers of the people.

And said, Cry aloud; for he is a god.] He bade them raise their voices; for they believed he was a god, but might be something deaf, or a great way off from them, and so could not hear what they said, unless they cried louder.

Either he is talking.] Busy about dispatches: either in sending ambassadors, or giving audience.

Or he is pursuing.] Some notion (as the Hebrews understand it); being in a deep study, or deliberating about some weighty business. It is commonly understood, He is hunting, or pursuing enemies.

Or he is in a journey.] Not at home; but travelling to some other place; whither they must send after him.

Or peradventure he sleepeth.] As they used to do in those hot countries after dinner.

And must be awaked.] With loud noises.

Ver. 28. *And they cried aloud, and cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.*] They did more than Elijah bade them: hoping to move him with their own blood, in which, perhaps, they thought he more delighted, than in the blood of beasts, or in their cries. For many nations offered human sacrifices to their gods: and their priests, when they were possessed with a sacred fury, were wont to slash themselves till their blood gushed out. Thus among the Romans the priests did in the worship of Bellona: in which "Sacerdotes non alieno, sed suo cruore sacrificant," &c. *The priests sacrificed not with another's blood, but with their own.* (See Lactantius, in his Divin. Institut. lib. i. cap. 21.) For cutting their shoulders, and running their drawn swords through both hands, they run about like mad men. And so Apuleius saith, they that carried about the Syrian goddess, after many other things, took out their knives or swords and cut themselves. (See lib. viii. Metamorph. p. 172, 173. and Pricæus and Rigaltius upon that place.) But our Mr. Mede hath a peculiar notion, which is, that Baalim being the deified souls of dead men, therefore the prophets of Baal cut themselves in his worship; because this was a funeral rite or ceremony, (Lev. xix. 28. xxi. 5. Deut. xiv. 1.) and therefore retained in the service of such gods, in token that they were but deified men. (See upon xvi. 31.)

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass, when mid-day was past, and they prophesied to the time of the offering the evening sacrifice.*] When all was done, they fell into a fury, and raved, as if they were possessed with an invisible power; singing hymns and praises to Baal. For that is sometimes meant by *prophesying;* (1 Chron. xxv. 2, 3.) or, it may be simply meant, they still continued praying to Baal; (ver. 26.) for that was part of a prophet's office.

That there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.] No more tokens of regard to their praises than to their prayers; nor any, the least intimation, that Baal was a god, that minded what they said or did.

Ver. 30. *And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And they came near unto him.*] They had stood hitherto by the prophets of Baal, to attend them in their sacrifice. Now Elijah calls them to him, that they might be witnesses of what he could do.

And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.] I suppose Carmel had been one of the most eminent high places in the whole kingdom: where the people, as they had been long accustomed, offered sacrifices to God in ancient times. But the worshippers of Baal had broken down the altar, and set up one of their own. For there were two sorts of high places, I have before noted, some for the worship of the true God, which continued in Judah, even under religious princes: others for the worship of idols; which good kings took away when they let the other remain. On the contrary, Ahab broke down the altars of God in the high places, and allowed none but those for Baal.

Ver. 31. *And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob.*] That he might shew he worshipped the God of the patriarchs, and no other: and that all the people, though divided in civil government, ought to be united in the same religion, and have but one altar for them; being the sons of one man, who was very dear to God, as it here follows.

Unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name.] He purged his family from all idolatry; and then God appeared to him, and talked with him, and called him by a new name; importing the power he had with God, (Gen. xxxv. 2—4. 10. 13. 15.)

Ver. 32. *And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord.*] Which he might do, being a prophet; for such persons were free from the lesser laws, that they might preserve the greater.

And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.] That is, a large trench; for *two measures* are thought to be the third part of an ephah.

Ver. 33. *And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood.*] To be a whole burnt-offering.

And said, Fill four barrels with water.] Which they might have out of the brook at the foot of the mount, (ver. 40.) or out of the sea, which was not far off.

And pour it on the burnt-sacrifice, and on the wood.] From hence some gather the altar was hollow, into which this water run.

Ver. 34. *And he said, Do it the second time: and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time: and they did it the third time.*] That is, they did it till all was full of water, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 35. *And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.*] This seems to prove the altar was hollow, and that there was a trench also round about it: both which were as full of water as they could hold, to make the miracle more conspicuous and convincing. For what more contrary than fire and water?

Ver. 36. *And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice.*] When the people of God were offering their solemn prayers to God at the temple in Jerusalem. This is a noted time for great things that were then done. (See upon Lev. ix. 24.)

That Elijah the prophet came near.] To the altar.

And said, Lord God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.] He desires him to demonstrate at once by this miracle, that he was the only true God, and that Elijah was

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his prophet, and that he had done nothing (in bringing, for instance, a long famine upon them) but by his command. Such miracles were proper, either where a new religion was to be set up, or the old one restored, after a general depravation.

Ver. 37. *Hear me, O Lord, hear me.*] He was the more earnest and fervent in his prayer, as Abarbinel thinks, because he had undertaken to make this experiment of God's power, without any particular command from God of his own accord; nothing doubting but he would appear to vindicate his own honour; though he offered sacrifice in a high place, which was against the law.

That this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back again] God turns men's hearts, though they be not turned; because he not only doth that which evidently tends to convert them, and is sufficient to do it; but for the present also so affects them that they are converted: though they will not take care to continue in that pious bent, but start back again from him.

Ver. 38. *And the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*] It is called the *fire of the Lord*, because it was sent from him out of heaven to testify that he was the only God (as the people could not but acknowledge), and it was of such unusual force, that it consumed not only the flesh of the bullock, and the wood, but the very stones, and the dust, and all the water that had been poured out there in great quantity.

Ver. 39. *And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces.*] Worshipping the Lord of heaven and earth.

And said, The Lord is God; the Lord he is God.] This repeated acknowledgment shews how deeply they were affected at present, with the demonstration God had given, that he only was to be worshipped. Which extorted this public confession from them: but they soon forgat their own convictions, and continued in their idolatry.

Ver. 40. *And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let none of them escape.*] The prophets of the groves, I suppose, were not there: Jezebel, on whom they attended, (ver. 19.) not suffering them to appear. It is likely they were Zidonians, which she brought along with her from her own country, when Ahab married her, and were peculiarly under her command.

And they took them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.] As perverters of the law, and teachers of idolatry; upon whom the people, in that fit of zeal wherein they now were, readily executed the sentence Elijah pronounced against them. And Ahab could make no opposition; being himself also, it is likely, astonished at the stupendous miracle.

Ver. 41. *And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink.*] They had fasted and prayed all the day till the even sacrifice was over, that they might have rain; or, that God would decide the controversy in question.

For there is a sound of abundance of rain.] He bade him be solicitous no longer; for plenty of rain was coming.

Ver. 42. *And Ahab went up to eat and drink.*] From the river that was at the bottom of the mount, he went up to a place on the side of it, where a tent was pitched for him, that he might refresh himself, now that the sacrifice was finished; and by Elijah's prayer he obtained rain, which he assured him he heard coming. By these two verses it is apparent, that Ahab himself was present to see how this contest between his prophets and Elijah, that is, between Baal and God, would end. And in all probability was as much convinced as the people, that the Lord was the only God.

And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel.] The prophet went a great deal higher, where he could see the Mediterranean Sea; and would neither eat nor drink, till he actually saw the rain gathering.

And he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.] He fell upon his knees, and bowed his head to the very ground; so that it touched his knees: in token of great humility, and most earnest desire, that God would remember his people, and send them rain.

Ver. 43. *And he said to his servant.*] Who, some of the Jews say, was the widow of Sarepta's son. But he was too young to wait upon him.

Go up now, and look towards the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.] It is not easy to give an account of these phrases, so often here used, *he went up*. First Ahab went up, and then Elijah, and now he sends his servant, and at last he bade his servant (ver. 44.) go up to Ahab. It is most likely there were several risings in this mountain, some higher than other. Elijah went to the top of them; but there was another higher, to which he bade his servant go up. Or Elijah, perhaps, was near the top; and he sent his servant to the very top of all: and then bade him go down from thence, and go up to that part of the mount, where Ahab was eating and drinking.

Ver. 44. *And it came to pass, that, at the seventh time, there arose a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, and say to Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.*] For he saw such abundance of rain coming, as would cause floods, and render the way, for the present, unpassable, if he did not make haste home.

Ver. 45. *And it came to pass, in the meanwhile, that the heavens were thick with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.*] While the servant went to Ahab, and his chariot was making ready, that little cloud spread itself, and in a great thickness covered the face of the sky.

And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.] He did not go to Samaria; for Jezreel, I suppose, was nearer: and there he had a palace, (xxi. 1.)

Ver. 46. *And the hand of the Lord was upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab.*] They wore loose and long garments in this country; and therefore girded them up when they had occasion to run, that they might not hinder them. And God now gave Elijah more than human strength, so that (though he was an old man, xix. 4.) he was made able to run as fast as Ahab's chariot drove, like one of his footmen. In which he shewed his readiness to do the king all the honour imaginable, and that he was far from being his enemy, but only desired he would become a worshipper of the true God, which was, he could not but see, the Lord God of Israel.

Unto the entrance of Jezreel.] He thought it not prudent, it is likely, to venture into the city, lest Jezebel should seize him, but stopped at the gate of the city, or of the palace, and retired to some private place.

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CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1. *AND Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done.*] How he had called for fire from heaven, and had made rain to fall upon the earth.

And withal, that he had slain all the prophets with the sword.] That is, all the prophets of Baal, for they only are mentioned, xviii. 22. 25. and the prophets of the groves (who are said to be four hundred, xviii. 19.) were still in being, as appears from xxii. 6.

Ver. 2. *Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let God do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.*] This shews the great folly of rage; which gave him notice of his danger, and admonished him to avoid it: or, perhaps she thought him as courageous as she was furious; and that he would not flee; and then she knew her power would be greater than his.

Ver. 3. *And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belonged to Judah.*] Whither her power did not reach; being in another kingdom.

And he left his servant there.] Because he intended to go into the wilderness, where he resolved to spend the rest of his days, and die; and he would not have the youth put to the same straits, in which he was like to be. We read of no command from God to fly; nor doth he forbid it; but left him to his own prudence. Which made him think it in vain to hope for Ahab's protection; who he saw would continue an idolater, and by his example make the people revolt to the worship of Baal. Though some are of opinion it was a fault in Elijah to run away, and not to depend upon God to preserve him, in his pious endeavours to keep the people in the true religion; who had so solemnly acknowledged the Lord to be God.

Ver. 4. *And he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness.*] This wilderness was that wherein the Israelites wandered forty years; and he now travelled as many days.

And came and sat down under a juniper-tree.] Which some look upon as a sign he did not value life; because the shade of this tree (under which he not only sat, but lay down and slept) is thought to be very noxious, as Virgil observes.

And he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough: now, O Lord, take away my life.] He thought he could do God no further service; and therefore desired to be discharged from his office by death; for all that he could say or do proved ineffectual.

For I am not better than my fathers.] Unto whose age, it is likely, he had lived.

Ver. 5. *And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.*] Perhaps he was faint with his day's journey, for want of food at the end of it.

Ver. 6. *And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals.*] It should be translated, *upon hot stones*, as Bochartus shews in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 33.

And a cruse of water at his head: and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.] Being weary, and wanting rest.

Ver. 7. *And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, saying, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.*] Without extraordinary strength; he being an old man, and much tired with one day's journey.

Ver. 8. *And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the mount of God.*] It was a journey of not above four or five days, if so much; but he went about by private ways, that he might not be discovered; and, perhaps, rested sometimes, and lay hid, if there was any danger of his being seen. The Jews have made a comparison between him and Moses, in twenty-four particulars. But Abarbinel shews they were very different, and Moses had the superiority, especially in this thing here mentioned. For he is of opinion that Elijah ate and drank every day, when he could meet with food, as he might in several places of the wilderness. But ordinary food would not have enabled him to travel so long as he did: but it was by the power of that celestial food which the angel brought him, that he held out, it giving him vigour beyond all that he could receive from any other nourishment. But in this Moses went beyond him, that he had no food at all; being supported by a miraculous power, forty days and forty nights, without any sustenance of meat and drink.

Ver. 9. *And he came thither into a cave, and lodged there: and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and said to him, What doest thou here, Elijah?*] As much as to say, I have no business for thee here. This is not a place wherein to do me service. Which was a secret reproof for flying so far away: Judea, Samaria, or Damascus, being fitter places for him to be employed in.

Ver. 10. *And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts.*] He professed that he had not wanted zeal for the Lord's service; but been moved with great indignation against idolatry.

For the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, and thrown down thine altars.] He calls the altars that had been erected in high places by the ancient patriarchs, or other pious people in following times, God's altars: because they sacrificed upon them to him alone, and not to idols.

And slain thy prophets with the sword.] So Jezebel had done, xviii. 4.

And I, even I only, am left.] There were many prophets besides him: but none of them appeared publicly in defence of religion, but he alone.

And they seek my life, to take it away.] These words answer the question, *What doest thou here?* He fled thither to save his life.

Ver. 11. *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord.*] Where the Schechinah, I suppose, appeared unto him, after some preparations for it.

And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks.] He heard a sign of the Divine presence coming, before he went out of the cave. For his angelical ministers, which attended his majesty, passed by the mouth of the cave in a mighty terrible wind; which had those dreadful effects here mentioned.

Before the Lord.] These words shew, that, in exact speaking, it was not the Lord that passed by when this wind blew, but his ushers, as I may call them, who went *before the Lord:* so it here follows.

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But the Lord was not in the wind.] The Schechinah did not yet appear.

And after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake.] The Divine Presence still did not manifest itself.

Ver. 12. *And after the earthquake a fire.*] Lightning and thunder, just as there was at the giving of the law, which Elijah endeavoured to restore.

But the Lord was not in the fire.] Still he heard nothing from God; who by these things prepared him to receive his majesty with the greatest humility and composure of spirit.

And after the fire a small still voice.] At the last the Lord himself came, as he perceived by the whispering of a voice; which bade him listen and attend to what the Lord should say unto him. There are many pious meditations, which this appearance of the Divine Majesty hath suggested to interpreters. Particularly Strigelius looks upon it as representing the Divine Nature to be inclined not to terrify and destroy, but placidly to invite and preserve. God easily lays aside his anger (as Nazianzen speaks in his oration upon his father), and delights to exercise mercy. For he is compelled to anger by us, *πρὸς δὲ τοῦτο τὴν ὁρμὴν ἔχει, but to mercy he is very prone,* as we may speak, and by his own nature bent unto it, &c. To the same purpose Ralbag discourses among the Jews. Others look upon all this as a figure of the gospel dispensation, which came not in such a terrible manner as the law did, with storms, thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes, (Exod. xix. 16. Heb. xii. 18, &c.) but with great lenity and sweetness, God speaking to us by his Son, in the most mild and gentle manner. And herein also some think he intended to shew Elijah that he had all the elements ready armed at his command, if he pleased to make use of them, to destroy idolaters: but by that *still voice* he declared the Divine patience and tenderness, which he would have him to imitate, by bridling his anger, to which he was by nature very prone.

Ver. 13. *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave.*] He first covered his face, in token of great reverence to God, not being able to look upon the Divine Glory which now appeared; and then went out of the cave, (as God had commanded him, ver. 11.) and stood in the entrance of it, to listen to what God would say to him.

And, behold, there came a voice to him.] From the Schechinah, or Divine Glory.

And said, What doest thou here, Elijah?] The same words are repeated which he had heard before, ver. 9. Only there they were spoken by the angel, but here by the Lord himself.

Ver. 14. *And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*] He makes the same answer that he had done before, ver. 10. He was so full of anger (as Ralbag thinks) that he did not apply his mind as he ought to understand the vision, and therefore only repeats his former words. But God informs him in the following verse, that he would take care to chastise the Israelites in due time for their apostacy from him; and for that end bade him go and anoint Hazael, &c.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord said unto him, Go, return thy way to the wilderness of Damascus.*] He bids him return the way he came to Horeb; till he came to the way that led to the wilderness of Damascus, and go thither.

And when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king of Syria.] As much as to say (as the forenamed author expounds it), Since thou art so angry with the Israelites for their impiety, go and anoint one to be king of Syria, who shall be a scourge to them. But this was not done presently, nor did he himself anoint Jehu; but ordered that it should be done by his successor Elisha; though it may be doubted whether any of them were anointed, except Jehu. For the word *anoint* may be no more than appoint him king, as kings were constituted in Israel by unction. Hence, by a metaphor, it is accommodated to the preferment of men to all dignities: as in Psal. cv. 15. "Touch not mine *anointed;*" and Cyrus is called the Lord's anointed, Isa. xlv. 1.

Ver. 16. *And Jehu the son of Nimshi.*] He was grandson of Nimshi, (as appears from 2 Kings ix. 2.) who are frequently called *sons* in the holy books.

Anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat, of Abel-meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.] This last was the chiefest command (to anoint, that is appoint, Elisha to be his successor), for the other two were to be performed by him, not by Elijah; who ordered Elisha to do it in convenient time; and first he appointed Jehu king, and afterward Hazael.

Ver. 17. *And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu, shall Elisha slay.*] This is not to be understood, as if the sword of Hazael should do execution before the sword of Jehu, and the sword of Jehu before that of Elisha: but it only signifies, as Abarbinel observes, that God in his providence had appointed three persons to punish the Israelites, according to their deserts. Thus he intended Hazael should destroy them in battle; which he mentions first, because it is a general calamity. But Jezebel, and the children of Ahab, and the priests of Baal, not going out to fight, and consequently not falling in battle, God ordered Jehu should cut them off in that manner as he did, with all the worshippers of Baal. But he did not inflict evil upon all the people of Israel, because he was to be their king. And though he slew idolaters, he did not meddle with little children, whose disposition he did not know: but they were reserved to be punished by Elisha, who foresaw they would prove idolaters. Thus he, with too much subtilty: but in general he saith well, that the Scripture doth not mention these things according to the time wherein they fell out; but according to the decree of God, who appointed every one to execute that which was proper for him to do.

Ver. 18. *Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel.*] This seems to be a correction of Elijah's mistake, who imagined that he alone was the only true worshipper of God that remained in Israel. Though Abarbinel will have it relate to what goes immediately before, that all the Israelites should not be destroyed: for he had a great number (*seven thousand* being put indefinitely for many thousand) of pious people in Israel, who had never worshipped Baal; and should not therefore be hurt either by Hazael, or otherways.

All the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that hath not kissed him.] Every one knows that

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bowing the knee was an act of worship; and so was kissing the idol: which was done two ways: either by applying their mouth immediately to the image (as Cicero against Verres relates of the image of Hercules), or kissing their hand before the image, and then stretching it out, and, as it were, throwing the kiss to it. Concerning which rite of adoration Salmasius hath given a large account in his annotations upon Flav. Vopiscus, in the life of the emperor Probus; where he observes such kisses were called *labrata oscula;* and from hence the phrases *oscula jacere*, and *basia jactare*, and *manu venerari*, and *manu salutare:* which he shews out of many authors are used for this way of adoration: the same he notes in his Plin. Exercit. p. 936. where Pliny saith, "in adorando dextram ad osculum referimus, totum corpus circumagimus;" *when we worship, we kiss our hand, and turn about our whole body.*

Ver. 19. *So he departed thence.*] From Mount Horeb.

And found Elisha the son of Shaphat.] In his journey towards Damascus.

Who was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth.] His servants managed the rest, and he himself drove the last. This shews him to have been a great man; who, according to the manner of those ancient times, looked after his business himself; and was taken from the plough to be a prophet, as the Romans took some from thence to be dictators and consuls. For nothing was in greater esteem than agriculture among the ancient Greeks and Romans, as well as among the Hebrews. In Homer, we see kings and princes living upon the fruits of their lands and their flocks, and labouring with their own hands. Hesiod hath made a poem on purpose to recommend the country life and labour to his brother. It would be too tedious to shew how the Carthaginians and Persians, and indeed all other ancient nations, did not think that to do nothing was to live nobly; but they studied how to cultivate their lands, and employed themselves, as well as their servants, in that business. Whence such persons, who were of the best quality, were called αὐτουργοὶ, *men that did their work themselves*, and did not commit the care of it to others, but ploughed with their own hands. So Quinctius Cincinnatus is said by Dionys. Halicarn. lib. x. to have returned from his consulship, to lead, τὸν αὐτουργὸν βίον, *a rustic life, as he did before it.* As the learned Jac. Perizonius observes upon Ælian's Var. Histor. lib. i. cap. 31. As for the rest, the Greeks ascribe this invention of yoking oxen together to plough withal either to Ceres, and Triptolemus, or Bacchus (or some other great person); though Moses, who was before them all, was well acquainted with it; (Deut. xv. 9.) and Job before him, (Job i. 3. xlii. 12.)

Abarbinel thinks these twelve yoke of oxen with which Elisha was ploughing, denoted that he should be leader of the twelve tribes of Israel.

And Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.] He put upon him the prophetical habit; which was his inauguration. Or, as some understood it, this was a token that he must become his servant, and attend upon him; and consequently succeed in his office. For servants were wont to carry their masters' shoes after them, and their garments. And accordingly he waited upon him, as appears from two phrases, in the last verse: first, he *went after him;* and secondly, he *ministered unto him.*

Ver. 20. *And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah.*] To desire him to stay a little.

And said, Let me kiss my father and my mother.] Take his leave of them.

And then I will follow thee.] For he understood that to be the meaning of his throwing his mantle upon him.

And he said unto him, Go back again.] Return to thy oxen; and do as thou desirest.

For what have I done unto thee?] He asks him whether he thought he had done any thing to hinder him? And so this was said to try whether he understood his meaning, and was inclinable to attend him. But Abarbinel thinks these words signify, that he had conferred a great dignity upon him; which required him to dispatch his business immediately; and taking leave of his father and mother, to come after him without any delay; since he had done such a great thing to him. Which illustrates the words of our Saviour, Matt. xix. 21.

Ver. 21. *And he returned back from him.*] Went home, and then came to those that were ploughing.

And took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat.] He made a feast for his servants, neighbours, and friends, before he parted with them; in token of the joy he conceived at his new calling. Which shews he was not a poor peasant, such as our ploughmen are; but a man of condition, who was able to make a great expense upon occasion.

And he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.] Glad to leave his estate, his friends, and all that he had; glad to serve God in a lower station first, before he executed the office of a prophet.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *AND Ben-hadad king of Syria.*] Ben-hadad is as much as the *son of Hadad.* Which Hadad was of the seed-royal in Edom, and escaped into Egypt when David slew all the males in Edom; (xi. 16, 17.) but infested Solomon in his latter days, and endeavoured to recover his kingdom; in which he not succeeding, it is probable he established himself in Syria.

Gathered all his host together.] The father of this king had taken several cities from the Israelites, (ver. 34. xv. 20.) and perhaps had made them tributaries to the Syrians; which tribute Ahab refusing to pay, he made war upon him.

And there were thirty and two kings with him.] Such petty princes as those in the land of Canaan before the conquest of it by Joshua; who were under the protection of the king of Syria, and bound to serve him in his wars. But he had better have been without them, and employed his own natural subjects only, who had done his business more successfully, (ver. 24.) because it was their own.

And horses and chariots.] It is not said what number; which is an argument it was not very great.

And he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.] He did not actually besiege it; for his army was routed before he could do it. Therefore the sense is, *he went up to besiege Samaria*, and assault it. Which is like that speech, Gen. xxviii. 10. *Jacob went out from*

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Beer-sheba and went to Haran. Which Rasi interprets, *He went out to go to Haran.* For it presently follows, that God appeared to him in the way.

Ver. 2. *And sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad.*] He speaks in a haughty style; just like the messengers of the Assyrian monarch to Hezekiah, *Thus saith the great king, the king of Syria.*

Ver. 3. *Thy silver and thy gold are mine; thy wives and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.*] This message is explained by the king of Israel's answer.

Ver. 4. *And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.*] He was content to be his vassal, and to hold all that he enjoyed of him; for so he understood his demands. But Ben-hadad intended more: or, from his submissive answer, took occasion to enlarge his demands; requiring the property of all he had, which he resolved (as appears from his second message, in the next verses) to take into his own possession.

Ver. 5. *And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver unto me thy silver, and thy gold, thy wives, and thy children;*

Ver. 6. *Yet I will send my servants unto thee to-morrow about this time, and they shall search thy house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.*] He tells him the meaning of his first demand, that he should deliver all he had into his hands. Unto which, if he now consented, it should not suffice; but he would send some of his officers to take all, and to ransack every corner of his palace, and carry away from him and from his courtiers (who are meant, I suppose, by his *servants*) whatsoever was valuable: or, perhaps, by *servants* he means all his subjects.

Ver. 7. *Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said.*] Summoned a general council of all the great men to advise what to do.

Mark, I pray, and see how this man seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, for my silver and my gold, and I denied them not.] But now nothing will content him but my utter ruin, and enslaving of our country. In this Ahab shewed some sparks of virtue remaining in him; in that while Ben-hadad desired only what he had in his own disposal, that is, all his private goods, he agreed to it: but when all the people, and the public good were concerned, he would do nothing without their consent.

Ver. 8. *And all the elders, and all the people, said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent.*] They promising unanimously, I suppose, to stand by him, and defend him against so insolent an enemy.

Ver. 9. *Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the king.*] Of whom he speaks in as humble a manner as he did at first, (ver. 4.)

All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do.] For his people would not yield to it.

And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.] Delivered this answer to Ben-hadad, that Ahab stuck to his first concession, according as he understood his demands, but would not consent to more.

Ver. 10. *And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.*] He wishes he may perish, if he did not bring such an army against the king of Israel, that if every soldier in it should take a handful of his country, nothing of it would be left remaining. Others explain it thus; I will not leave a bit of Samaria standing. But the other is most natural; and this is included in it.

Ver. 11. *And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.*] A speech like that, "Do not sing a triumph before the victory."

Ver. 12. *And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message (as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions), that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array: and they set themselves in array against the city.*] Whilst the treaty lasted between him and Ahab he was remiss: but now he commands his army to be put in order, and that they should invest Samaria, and plant their batteries against it.

Ver. 13. *And, behold, there came a prophet to Ahab king of Israel, saying.*] One of those that had been hid; but was now commanded by God to appear and carry a message to Ahab. Which the prophet thought he might do safely, when he brought him such good news, as that which follows.

Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day.] Hereby God shewed, that, as he hated idolatry, of which Ahab was notoriously guilty, so he hated also insolent proud boasters, who imagine they have no superior; and that they can carry all things as they please, by their own power.

And thou shalt know that I am the Lord.] Have a new demonstration that he was the Lord of all things. For Ahab had no such message brought by any of Baal's prophets; which was sufficient to convince him, that the Lord, who could foretell and do such wonderful things, was the only God.

Ver. 14. *And Ahab said, By whom?*] He gave some credit to his word; and only asks by whom this deliverance should be wrought: for he knew he had not forces enough to encounter and overthrow such powerful enemies.

And he said, Thus saith the Lord, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces.] The *princes of the provinces* were the governors of the several provinces, into which the kingdom was divided. And their *young men* seem to signify their servants, or their pages (as we speak), that waited on them. As much as to say, Not by old experienced soldiers, but by youths; who, perhaps, had never seen a fight, but had always lived at court.

And he said, Who shall order the battle?] Or, who shall begin the fight (as some understand these words), they or we? Shall we make a sally, or expect till they assault us?

And he answered, Thou.] He bids the king begin, and lead them on. Which was commanded, to encourage the young men, and to try whether Ahab would thus far trust God or not.

Ver. 15. *Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.*] All that he could get

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together: for these surely were not all the men of war in Israel.

Ver. 16. *And they went out.*] Of Samaria.

At noon.] When they knew the Syrians were at dinner, taking a repast; if not debauching themselves, as their king was.

And Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty-two kings that helped him.] Being perfectly secure that the Israelites durst not appear to disturb him.

Ver. 17. *And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first.*] And Ahab, no doubt, at the head of them.

And Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, There are men come out of Samaria.] The meaning is, that upon their first coming out, Ben-hadad hearing a bustle, sent to know what was the matter: and they told him a small party was come out of Samaria.

Ver. 18. *And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.*] It was against the law of nations to apprehend those that came to treat of peace: but he, in his insolent pride, bade his people not trouble themselves to examine what they came for, but to take them alive; which he thought they might easily do, being so few.

Ver. 19. *So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.*] The young men only appeared at first; but the rest of the army came out a little after.

Ver. 20. *And they slew every one his man.*] Who came to apprehend them.

And the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them.] At which the Syrians were so amazed, by the suddenness of the attempt, that they fled: imagining them to be stronger and better prepared for war than they were.

And Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the horsemen.] He was possessed with the same fear; and did not endeavour to make his men rally again, but fled away together with them.

Ver. 21. *And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.*] He went out, by the prophet's order, at the head of the young men, when they first issued out of the city. But now he went out further than he had done at the beginning, and overtook the chariots and horsemen; among whom he made a great slaughter.

Ver. 22. *And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest.*] He bade him make what preparations he was able, and take care that nothing was wanting to oppose the designs of the Syrians against him; who would certainly return, and renew the fight the next year.

For at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.] At the time when kings used to go out to war. Of which see 2 Sam. xi. 1.

Ver. 23. *And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we.*] They did not know the God of the universe, but only worshipped particular gods; who they thought ruled over particular countries, and distributed several parts of those countries among them; (some being gods of the woods, others of the rivers, &c.) and they imagined the God of the Hebrews to be ὀρειβάτης, as Pan was called by the heathen. For they had heard, perhaps, that their law was given from heaven upon a mountain, and there God appeared to them: and the country of Israel also was very hilly: where, upon one eminent hill, God's temple was built, and he was worshipped. And it was known, that the Israelites delighted to sacrifice in *high places:* insomuch, that when they could not come at them, they sacrificed on the house-tops, (Jer. xx. 13.)

But let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.] For, besides that the Syrian gods, they thought, had more power in a flat plain country, wherein they delighted; there also they should have more service of their horses and chariots, which could not fight so well upon mountains.

Ver. 24. *And do this thing; Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms.*] He had made the thirty-two kings, who were his tributaries, chief commanders in his former army: which his counsellors represented to him as a great error; and therefore advised him to displace them, and put his own captains in their stead, who would fight better. For they fought for their country, which the other did not: and besides, the kings, it is likely, were too delicate to be warriors; and were not so obedient to discipline as his captains would be.

Ver. 25. *And number thee an army like the army thou hast lost, horse for horse, chariot for chariot; and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.*] For his army they knew would be superior; and they should have the advantage of the ground.

Ver. 26. *And it came to pass, that, at the return of the year, Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.*] This was a city in the tribe of Asher: which, it is probable, was one of those that Benhadad's father had taken from the king of Israel, (ver. 34.) Not far from which was the plain of Galilee, where he intended to fight.

Ver. 27. *And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them.*] That is, as many as could be got together were numbered, and put in order to give them battle.

And the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.] The Hebrew word *chasiph* is no where found but in this place; which Kimchi and others translate *a little flock.* But there is no need to add the word *little:* for the flocks of goats are always small; never so great as those of sheep. For they love to ramble, and are scattered up and down, as Bochartus observes, who translates these words, *two flocks of young kids;* denoting their contemptible number, and that they were weak, feeble, and timorous, like those fugacious creatures, as he speaks, Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 51.

Ver. 28. *And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys: therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*] This man of God, the Jews say, was the prophet Micaiah.

Ver. 29. *And they pitched one over against the other seven days; and so it was, that on the seventh day the battle was joined.*] It may seem strange that they should look upon

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one another so long, and watch for advantages, without coming to any action: for the Syrians had so much advantage in their numbers, that one would think they should have immediately encompassed the Israelites, and destroyed them all. But, perhaps, the Israelites were pitched upon a rising ground, and the Syrians durst not attack them till they came down into the plain.

And the children of Israel slew of the Syrians a hundred thousand footmen in one day.] In all probability they surprised them, by a sudden unexpected assault: and God dismayed them, and struck such a terror into them, that they could make no resistance.

Ver. 30. *And the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left.*] The wall of the city, under which they lay, to be ready to defend it, fell down; either by the Israelites' batteries, or by an earthquake; and killed or maimed a great number of them that fled thither for safety.

And Ben-hadad fled into the city, into an inner chamber.] In the Hebrew the words are, *into a chamber within a chamber;* that is, into a very secret place, where he thought he should not be easily found.

Ver. 31. *And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful kings.*] Better natured than other kings unto those who were in distress; they retaining still something of the temper of that good king David; who was full of humanity and tenderness, unto which true religion disposes men above all other things.

Let us, I pray thee.] One of his principal courtiers spake this in the name of the rest.

Put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.] This it seems was the posture in those times, wherein supplicants presented themselves, when they petitioned for mercy; as among the Greeks and Romans they came in a mournful manner, with a branch of olive in their hands. The sackcloth upon their loins was a token of great sorrow for what they had done; and halters about their necks, a token of their subjection to what punishment he pleased to inflict.

Ver. 32. *So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes upon their heads, and came unto the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live.*] He now as humbly petitions Ahab, as Ahab a little while ago had petitioned him, (ver. 4.) and he begs of him life. Such are the strange turns of human affairs, which the ancient historians among the heathens have observed, as admonishments to men not to bear themselves high in a prosperous condition, nor trust to their present fortune (as they called it), not knowing, "quid serus vesper vehat," *what might fall out before the day was done.*

And he said, Is he yet alive? he is my brother.] He rejoiced to hear that he did not perish in the battle; and not only pardoned him at the first word, and gave him his life; but expressed as great affection to him, as if he had been his brother. This was folly, not mercifulness or good-nature. It had been enough not to have tormented him; but to let him not only live, but own him for a brother, was stupid inconsideration. For a man that lately treated him so disdainfully could never make a true friend.

Ver. 33. *Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad.*] They were wise persons whom he employed in this embassy; who watched attentively whether any kind word would drop from his mouth, on which they might lay hold, and make their advantage of it, before he could retract it. And they catched at the word *brother*, and said, Thy brother Ben-hadad lives, and implores this favour, that he may live.

And he said, Go ye, bring him.] This was strange rashness, to make such haste, as not to advise with his privy-council what to do in such a case.

Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot.] It seems that Ahab was still in the field.

Ver. 34. *And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities which my father took from thy father I will restore.*] The word Ben-hadad not being in the Hebrew, Osiander and some others think that Ahab, who was so kind as to take him up into his chariot, made this speech to him when he came there, that he would not only give him his life, but his kingdom also, which he had now power to take from him; and be so far from diminishing his power, that he would restore all that had been taken from him by his father. Which senseless kindness was the thing that provoked God to pronounce that heavy doom upon him, ver. 42. But the next words do not well agree with this: therefore I take these to be Ben-hadad's words to Ahab, whereby he endeavoured to smooth him up and sweeten him, by offering to become his subject (as the next words signify), and making restitution of all that had been taken from his predecessor.

And thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria.] Some think by *streets* he means *market-places*, where commodities were sold, the toll of which should belong to Ahab. Others think he means *courts of judgment*, where he should maintain a jurisdiction over Ben-hadad's subjects: others, that we now call a *piazza*, of which Ahab should receive the rents. But commonly interpreters think he means *fortifications*, whereby he might bridle the chief city of the kingdom of Syria; that they might not make new irruptions into the land of Israel: *citadels*, as we now speak, to keep them in awe, and to be a check to them, if they attempted any thing destructive to the Israelites. Yet, after all, Gotf. Vallandus hath said a great deal to prove that the Hebrew word signifies *palaces*, which he being allowed to build, was a great token of subjection. We do not read of any such things that were built by the Syrian kings in Samaria: nor of any cities they took from the Israelites; unless those taken from Baasha, (xv. 20.) who was not Ahab's father.

Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.] Wherein he discovered his great weakness: for his covenant was soon broken, as we read in the last chapter of this book.

Ver. 35. *And a certain man of the sons of the prophets.*] This the Jews will still have to be Micaiah: which is not likely, for he is called *a prophet of the Lord*, not one of the *sons of the prophets.*

Said unto his neighbour in the word of the Lord, Smite me, I pray thee.] He bade him give him such a blow as might wound him, (ver. 37.)

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And the man refused to smite him.] Because it looked like inhumanity to strike an innocent person, who had done him no wrong.

Ver. 36. *Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee.*] This may seem too severe a punishment, till these two things be considered. First, that the prophet commanded him to smite him, and that *by the word of the Lord.* Not of his own will, and from his proper private motion; but God required it. As if he had said (so Theodoret glosses on it), οὐκ ἐγώ σοι, &c. *It is not I that require this of thee, but the Spirit that is within me.* And accordingly the punishment was inflicted, because he *obeyed not the voice of the Lord.* And secondly, the prophet commanded this in God's name, not to an ordinary man, but *El Reehu:* which should not be translated, *to his neighbour,* but, as St. Jerome, *to his companion.* And so the Targum, and other ancient interpreters, *to his fellow;* that is, a prophet bred in the same school with himself: who well understood the weight of these words, I command thee in *the name of the Lord.*

And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him.] The Jews say in the title Sanhedrin, and other places, that some prophets were put to death by the hand of man, and others by the hand of God. They that prophesied what they were not told by God, or they that prophesied in the name of idols, were to be put to death by the judges: but they who concealed their prophecy, or rejected a prophecy, their death was by the hand of God.

Ver. 37. *Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him.*] The intention of this was, that he might find the freer access to Ahab, as a soldier well deserving; and that he might the better feign his story: for in such a matter the king was not to be dealt withal in downright words.

Ver. 38. *And the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face.*] As a man in a very mournful condition. The Hebrews understand it, that he covered his face with a veil, or a handkerchief, or bound it about with a fillet (for one cannot tell how *ashes* should cover it), in token that he was wounded. So that the king could not know who he was. (See Bochart's Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 8.)

Ver. 39. *And as the king passed by, he cried to the king; and said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle.*] He pretended that he had adventured his life in the late fight; being engaged in the hottest service.

And, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then thy life shall be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver.] He pretended, I suppose, that his captain having a prisoner of great quality, charged him with him; telling him that he should be answerable for him with his life, if he let him escape; or redeem his life with a greater sum of money than he was able to pay.

Ver. 40. *And as thy servant was busy here and there.*] Endeavouring, in the fight, to do the best service he was able every where.

He was gone.] In the Hebrew, *he could not be found.*

And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.] Thou hast pronounced thy own sentence; according to your agreement, so shalt thou suffer. He had forgot how he had dismissed a greater person willingly, else he could not have been so hard-hearted as to condemn one that had offended unwillingly. But he soon made him think of it.

Ver. 41. *And he hasted, and took away the ashes from his face.*] Threw away his disguise immediately; by pulling off the cloth wherein his face was wrapped.

And the king of Israel discovered him that he was of the prophets.] Some of the by-standers perhaps knew him, when they saw his bare face: or, by the very motion of his eyes before he spake (which he did immediately), he sufficiently discovered what he was.

Ver. 42. *And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let a man go out of thy hand whom I appointed to utter destruction.*] For the battle was the Lord's; and the victory being obtained purely by the Divine power, and the singular favour of God, Ahab ought not to have resolved how to dispose of Ben-hadad without God's leave; but have consulted him (who had put him into his hands) what he would have done with him: for he was God's prisoner; who was to have his part of the spoil, which he would please to choose.

Therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.] The former part of this decree of God was fulfilled three years after, when Ahab was killed in a battle against the Syrians, (xxii. 1—4, &c.) But the latter part was deferred until the reign of Hazael, who fulfilled it by the wars he had with the Israelites, (2 Kings x. 32, 33.)

Ver. 43. *And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.*] This heavy sentence turned all their joy for the late victory into mourning: Ahab being much troubled for what he had done, and for what he was like to suffer.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel.*] After all those wonderful things which God had done, in giving such victories to Ahab, he coveted the vineyard of a neighbour of his. Which is peculiarly noted, as Abarbinel thinks, to have followed the foregoing history, to set forth the extreme great wickedness of Ahab: who spared Ben-hadad, as Saul did Agag king of the Amalekites, and killed Naboth, that he might get his vineyards. This was a high aggravation of his crime, that he basely murdered a just Israelite, and let an impious enemy escape.

Hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.] Not far from it, if not adjoining to it: being planted on the same rising ground, whereon the palace stood; for vines throve best in mountainous places.

Ver. 2. *And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs.*] For a flower-garden, as some understand it.

Because it is near my house, and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give the worth of it in money.] This was a fair proposal; but the law was against it.

Ver. 3. *And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.*]

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As it is natural to all men to value and love the ancient possessions that have been in their family; so the law of Moses prohibited the alienation of lands from one tribe to another, unless a man was reduced to poverty; in which case he might sell it till the jubilee; but then it was to return to him. (See Lev. xxv. 15. 25. 28.) Now, as Naboth was in no need, so he considered that if he should, out of respect to the king, and merely to do him a pleasure, part with his vineyard, he should never get it out of his hands at the jubilee; being made part of the ground belonging to the royal palace. This makes it probable that Naboth was one of the seven thousand, who observed the law strictly.

Ver. 4. *And Ahab came to his house heavy and displeased.*] Just as he had done, after the prophet had pronounced the severe sentence against him, (xx. 43.)

Because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken unto him; for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers.] Made him a peremptory denial; which he could not bear.

And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.] He was so vexed to be denied by a subject, that he fell into such a passion, as made him sick, and took away his stomach, and made company unacceptable to him. In short, he was very melancholy.

Ver. 5. *And Jezebel his wife came to him, and said, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?*] She soon found his mind was more out of order than his body; and therefore desired to know what had disturbed him.

Ver. 6. *And he said, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.*] He doth not acquaint her with his reason, but reports his answer, as if he gave him a surly refusal. Which was far otherwise; Naboth representing it as a religious duty, (ver. 3.) founded upon the law of God, not to part with the inheritance of his fathers, which was allotted to them by Joshua, never to be alienated. For in truth they that possessed them were only usufructuaries (*i. e.* enjoyed the profits of them), God himself being the true proprietor, (Lev. xxv. 23.) who charged their land with no other payments but tenths and first-fruits to his ministers: after which he gave them an entire possession of it, to remain in their several families for ever, without any alteration, which none could make but himself.

Ver. 7. *And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?*] Is this like a king, to torment thyself in this manner? as Ralbag glosses. Or, Doth it become a king to beg and pray, and not rather command? Thou knowest not thine own power, but actest like a minor, who hath no authority. Or, as Abarbinel understands it, Canst thou expect things should go well in thy kingdom, if thou hast neither will nor power to do any thing in such a small matter as this?

Arise, and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry: and I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.] She would not have him trouble himself, but leave her to accomplish his desires.

Ver. 8. *So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal.*] These seals were wont to be worn upon one of the fingers of their hand, (Jer. xxii. 24.) and never to be taken off night nor day, but when they used them. Which shews she was an audacious woman, that durst steal this from Ahab's finger (for it doth not appear he knew of these letters), and write what she pleased in his name; that is, use his kingly authority to what purposes she thought good.

And sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city dwelling with Naboth.] The Israelites, it seems, after their separation from Judah, kept up the civil polity which was ordained by Moses (though they forsook his religion), having elders and judges in their several cities, as they had here at Jezreel: where they had not only elders, but also nobles; that is, captains of thousands, and hundreds, as Bon. Bertram observes, cap. 12. de Repub. Judaica.

Ver. 9. *And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast.*] As if there had been some grievous crime committed, or some great calamity had befallen them; which all the people were to bewail, and purge themselves from that sin, lest they also should become guilty. And, consequently, they were to see the crime punished very severely: for such days of fasting were spent in punishing offences, and doing justice, and praying to God for pardon. Some ask, where it was kept? And Vitringa thinks it might possibly be in the very streets of the city: where Ezra kept his fast, (Nehem. viii. 1—3.)

And set Naboth up on high among the people.] In this religious assembly of the people. For he being a person of an illustrious house (as Josephus reports), was ordered to be set in an honourable place: that so it might not be thought they condemned him out of hatred, but with grief and respect to his person, being constrained merely by the evidence given against him. Yet, others will have it, that the reason he was set in an eminent place, was only because all people accused and arraigned were wont so to appear before the judges; that all the people might see them, and hear what was alleged against them, and the proofs of it, and their defence.

Ver. 10. *And set two men of Belial.*] Men of no conscience, that would swear any thing for money.

Before him, to bear witness against him, saying.] Such was the Roman custom also (which was most rational), that the accused should *have the accusers face to face:* as Festus saith, Acts xxv. 16. But some think that she need not have put herself to this trouble of proceeding in such a formal manner against Naboth in a court of justice; for by the *jus regium* mentioned 1 Sam. viii. 14. she might have taken his vineyard from him by Ahab's absolute power. But that is a great mistake; for Samuel only meant that their kings would take the fruits of their vineyards upon occasion for their use, but not the possession of the vineyards themselves; for so all the land might have become the king's: and that *jus regium* Josephus calls a mere tyranny.

Thou didst blaspheme God and the king.] The Hebrews so much abhorred this crime of blasphemy, that they would not express it by its proper name, but said *bless*, instead of *curse;* as here and in the book of Job. Now it was death by the law of Moses to blaspheme God, (Lev. xxiv. 16.) and by custom it was death to blaspheme the king, which is forbidden in those words, Exod. xx. 28. And perhaps they might stretch that law hither, which forbade any man,

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upon pain of death, to curse his father or his mother; (Exod. xxi. 17.) for the prince is the father of his country. But, to make all sure, they accused Naboth of both, of treason against God and against the king; that so the people might be the better satisfied to see him stoned. But there is this difference to be observed between these two: that if a man had only blasphemed God, he was to be tried by the great court at Jerusalem (as the Hebrew doctors tell us), and his goods came to his heirs: but when any man was executed for treason against the king, his estate went to the exchequer, being forfeited to him against whom the offence was committed. And therefore it was that they accused Naboth of this crime, on purpose that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab enjoy his vineyard. And they accused him of blasphemy against God for other reasons: that justice might be done the sooner upon him; or, as the Talmudists speak, to increase their indignation. (See Selden, de Successionibus, cap. 25. fol. 87, 88.)

And then carry him out.] Not merely out of the assembly, but out of the city, (ver. 13.) For in the wilderness, and before the conquest of Canaan, they executed punishments without the camp, (Lev. xxiv. 23. Josh. vii. 24.) and afterward without the gate of the city: whereby they intended to testify, that they would take the evil out of the midst of them, and not suffer wickedness to remain among them. So it is explained, ver. 13. (See Grotius, Matt. xxvii. 32.)

And stone him, that he may die.] For this was the punishment of blasphemy: as we see by their attempt to stone our Saviour, and their killing St. Stephen in this manner.

Concerning this punishment, see Sanhedrin, cap. 6.

Ver. 11. *And the men of the city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants of his city.*] The principal inhabitants.

Did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as she had written in the letters which she had sent unto them.] Perhaps she sent private messengers to tell them by word of mouth what she expected from them, and how she would reward them; as well as public letters to authorise what they did. And princes never want instruments to execute their pleasure. But it is much there should be none among the judges, and great men, that abhorred such villany: which argues the great corruption of their manners by idolatry.

Ver. 12. *They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.*

Ver. 13 *And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him.*] As the witnesses used to do in courts of judgment; testifying to his face the truth of the accusation brought against him.

And the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king.] This signifies no more but that they had the impudence publicly to testify a falsity. Though Bertram, in the book beforementioned, (cap. 12.) from these words, *in the presence of the people*, argues, "Potestatem populi;" *the power of the people in this kingdom:* because these suborned witnesses gave their testimony before them. So that it was a mixed government, like ours, consisting of the power of the king, of the nobles, and of the people. If this be true, it argues all the people of that place to be very wicked; in that none of them excepted against the testimony of such persons, which ought not (as Maimonides observes) to have been admitted.

Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.] And his sons with him, as many gather from 2 Kings ix. 26. they being condemned as accessories to his crime.

Ver. 14. *Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.*] They knew that the order came from her; and therefore let her know they had obeyed it.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.*] But by what title did he take possession? The Hebrews, I observed before, think it was by the right of confiscation; which was practised in all such crimes against the king. (See upon 2 Sam. ix. 7. and Grotius, upon Josh. i. 18. and upon this place.) Though others think he took possession for want of heirs; his children being condemned with him.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.*] He could not but know how Naboth died; and therefore, by this, consented to that wickedness, which was committed also by his authority, (ver. 8.)

Ver. 17. *And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying.*] Some lesser prophets were employed in the late messages sent unto him, (xx. 13. 28. 35.) But upon this great occasion God sends Elijah, whom he dreaded, not merely to reprove him, but to condemn him to a punishment suitable to the crime he had committed.

Ver. 18. *Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria.*] That is, who reigns in Samaria, (ver. 1.)

Behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.] That he might be sure not to lose his labour, he tells him where he might find him.

Ver. 19. *And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?*] He expresses in brief the barbarity of this fact: as if he had said, Was it not enough that thou hast taken away his life, but thou must seize on his estate, and go thyself in person to take possession of it?

And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.] He declares the cause of this judgment upon him, but doth not assign the place; for the dogs licked Ahab's blood in Samaria, (xxii. 38.) Therefore these words should be translated, *as the dogs licked*, or, *in like manner* as they licked Naboth's blood, so shall they lick thine: mark what I say, *even thine.*

Ver. 20. *And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O my enemy?*] As much as to say, Wilt thou never suffer me to be quiet? How darest thou to appear in my presence again, with such terrible threatenings?

And he answered, I have found thee. Because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.] They that sell themselves are wholly under the power of their masters: so was Ahab under the power of sin; a perfect slave to his sinful lusts and passions, which hurried him into the foulest crimes.

Ver. 21. *Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that piss-*

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eth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel.] See upon xiv. 10.

Ver. 22. *And I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.*] These two families were utterly extirpated, (see xv. 29. xvi. 11, 12, &c.) as he prophesied Ahab's should be.

Ver. 23. *And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.*] In the territory where Naboth was judged, and unjustly condemned.

Ver. 24. *Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat: and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.*] See xiv. 11.

Ver. 25. *But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord.*] Made himself a perfect bond-slave to all manner of wickedness.

Whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.] Which did not excuse him, yet something mitigated his punishment: for she died more miserably than he.

Ver. 26. *And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites.*] There was no abomination which the people of Canaan committed (who are here called the Amorites, according to the ancient language, Gen. xv. 16.) which he did not imitate.

Whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.] As he intended to cast out the whole family of Ahab: who, by God's judgments upon the Amorites, might have taken warning not to tread in their steps.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard these words, that he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.*] All these were expressions of very great sorrow and heaviness; which were usual in mourning. And the last words the Chaldee paraphrast translates, *he went barefoot.* But it is rejected by the greatest part of interpreters, who take it as we do, for such a slow pace as signified he was reduced to great weakness and feebleness of body, by fasting and grief; or that he had no heart to go about any business. The Jews tell us in Pirke Eliezer, cap. 43. that he sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, who came and gave him a certain number of stripes every day; and that three times in a day. But without this fabulous addition, here is enough to signify that he was extremely cast down, and very much troubled; I cannot say for his sin, but for the heavy punishment God had laid upon him. It is likely, indeed, for the present he might have some sense of his sins; but it did not last to bring him to true repentance; that is, to make him forsake them. For we read not so much as of any restitution of the vineyard; much less of his forsaking idols.

Ver. 28. *And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,*

Ver. 29. *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me.*] Which neither Jeroboam nor Baasha had done, but obstinately went on, without the least token of sorrow, when the same doom was passed on them.

I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.] Such a power there is in hearty repentance and reformation of life to obtain a pardon, that God remitted part of Ahab's punishment, at least deferred it, upon this imperfect repentance. Which argued some degree of belief of what the prophet said: and accordingly it was his son's blood, not his, which was licked up by the dogs in that portion of ground where Naboth's was, (2 Kings ix. 25, 26.)

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *AND they continued three years.*] Not complete, but part of three years. (See 2 Chron. xviii. 2.)

Without war between Syria and Israel.] Though God was very angry with Israel, and intended to plague them by the Syrians; yet his anger being deferred for some time upon Ahab's humiliation, Elijah did not cause Hazael to be anointed king of Syria, who was to be the executioner of God's wrath, because it was prolonged for the reason now named. Thus Abarbinel.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass that, in the third year, Jehoshaphat king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.*] For there was an affinity made between him and Ahab, (2 Chron. xviii. 1.) Jehoshaphat's son having married Ahab's daughter, (2 Kings viii. 18.)

Ver. 3. *(And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth-Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria)?*] Some think Ben-hadad had not made good his covenant to restore all the cities the Syrians had taken from Israel, (xx. 34.) whereof this, it is likely, was one.

Ver. 4. *And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-Gilead?*] He acted now like a prudent man; who, before he resolved upon a war, desired to know whether he might depend upon Jehoshaphat for his assistance in it: for his forces, in comparison with the Syrians, were very small, (xx. 27.)

And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.] He professes himself entirely at his service; as if they were but one person and people.

Ver. 5. *And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day.*] But he desired first, that the prophets who were in Israel might be forthwith consulted, whether God approved of their design, and would give them success in it. So good men were wont to do, (Judg. i. 1. 1 Sam. xxiii. 2.)

Ver. 6. *Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men.*] Some think these were the prophets of the groves, who were not slain with the prophets of Baal, because they are just the same number, (xviii. 19.) But perhaps there were schools of the prophets kept up still in Israel, in imitation of those in Judah, wherein men were bred up, who pretended to have this gift. But it is plain they were false prophets; for Micaiah calls them Ahab's prophets. (See ver. 23.)

And said unto them, Shall I go up against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.] They speak, as if they were inspired by the Lord, and in his name promise good success; for they knew Jehoshaphat regarded not Baal, nor Astarte, but only the Lord.

Ver. 7. *And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?*] He

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doth not reject these as no prophets of the Lord, though he suspected them; and therefore desired to know, if there was any other that was accounted a prophet of the Lord, from whom he might receive further satisfaction. And indeed it is not likely that Ahab would adventure to send for such prophets as were professed servants of Baal, from whom Jehoshaphat, he knew, would receive no advice: but they professed themselves to be servants of the Lord; for whom Elijah's late miracle had wrought in Ahab some respect. And Dr. Jackson seems to me to have produced a good argument for this, from Jehoshaphat's continuing his resolution of accompanying Ahab to battle, notwithstanding all that Micaiah had said against it. Which he would never have done, had he believed that Micaiah alone belonged unto the Lord, and his adversaries unto Baal, (book ii. upon the Creed, chap. 18. parag. 2.)

Ver. 8. *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man (Micaiah the son of Imlah) by whom we may inquire of the Lord; but I hate him: for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.*] We ought to love those who speak the truth, not those who speak what pleaseth us.

Ver. 9. *And the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah.*] He would not deny Jehoshaphat's desire of hearing him, as well as others; lest he should fly off from his kind offer, (ver. 4.)

Ver. 10. *And the king of Israel, and the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having on their robes.*] Their royal apparel, and all the ensigns of majesty.

In a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria.] Where the people used to meet, and causes were heard by the courts of justice. (See upon 2 Sam. xix. 8.)

And all the prophets prophesied before them.] Continued to encourage them in their design.

Ver. 11. *And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron; and he said, Thus saith the Lord, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.*] Such was the manner, it seems, of prophets in ancient times, by external signs to represent future events: as Isaiah and Jeremiah continued to do in future ages, (Isa. xx. 2. Jer. xxvii. 2.)

Ver. 12. *And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-Gilead, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand.*] Every one of them accorded in the same sense; that he should certainly be victorious.

Ver. 13. *And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah, spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.*] So mightily did the opinion of *universality* sway with the superstitious people, that the messenger thought he could persuade Micaiah not to dissent from the rest, lest he should fall under the censure of singularity, peevishness, and privacy of spirit. And thus it is in the church at this day, as the same excellent doctor there observes.

Ver. 14. *And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.*] He seems as yet to have no revelation about the matter; but when the question was put to him, God taught him what to answer.

Ver. 15. *So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?*] The very same question that had been asked the rest of the prophets, (ver. 6.)

And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.] And he gave the very same answer in the same word that the other prophets had done; (ver. 12.) but spake them in such a manner, that Ahab plainly discerned he derided and mocked. It being as if he had said, To what purpose shall I contradict your prophets? For you have a mind to go, and do so; try the truth of their prediction.

Ver. 16. *And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord?*] He had not adjured him at all, but now he doth; and would do it again, and again, if he did not speak seriously, and tell him what God said to him; which Micaiah had not yet done. For he doth not use the common preface of prophets to the foregoing answer, *Thus saith the Lord:* because he did not speak in God's name, but in his own.

Ver. 17. *And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills.*] Routed, and flying from their enemies to the hills for safety.

As sheep that have not a shepherd.] In a most miserable condition, as sheep are without a shepherd to look after them: they being neither strong, nor cunning, nor nimble and swift of feet; but exposed to the injuries of all creatures, when they are left to themselves without a shepherd; which is very often repeated in the Scriptures, as if it were a proverbial speech among the Hebrews. (Numb. xxvii. 17. 2 Chron. xviii. 16. Zech. x. 2. xiii. 7. Matt. ix. 36.)

And the Lord said, These have no master.] They have lost their king and governor: who was represented by the *shepherd* beforementioned.

Let them return every man to his house in peace.] All go home, and think no more of war; having lost their ruler. This was an exact representation of what followed.

Ver. 18. *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?*] He had always been wont to bring threatening messages from God to him: and therefore was not (as the Jews imagine) the prophet who brought him that gracious message, when Ben-hadad treated him so insolently, (xx. 13.)

Ver. 19. *And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord.*] If thou dost not delight only in lies, hear what have further to say from the Lord.

I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host o heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.] This is a parabolical speech, as Abarbinel calls it, signifying that there was a greater King than Ahab, who would judge him according to his works. And in a vision he saw him sitting on a throne, for that purpose, and attended by the heavenly host, as Ahab was by his prophets: some on his *right hand*, by which many think he means the good angels; and some on his *left hand*, by which are meant the bad, who are the executioners of his judgments when he pleases.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?*] It is not to be thought there was any such consultation before the Divine Majesty, who should be employed to persuade him to undo himself: but these representations are contrived to

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bring down invisible things to the meanest capacities of men. Who were to know that the Lord resolved to let Ahab be deceived and perish at Ramoth-Gilead, rather than any other place: that he who let Ben-hadad escape, might be punished by Ben-hadad.

And one said on this manner, and another on that manner.] This is said, only to signify that God hath many ways of bringing men to ruin, when he declares it.

Ver. 21. *And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him.*] This is not to be understood literally; but that there are evil spirits who are very forward to entice men to their own destruction, and have power so to do, if the Lord do not hinder them.

Ver. 22. *And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith?*] God was not ignorant of what he could and would do: but this is said, to represent more familiarly to vulgar understandings, by what means Ahad was led into destruction.

And he said, I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.] Suggest to them that which will deceive him.

And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.] God permitted this lying spirit to follow his own inclinations, which he knew would have success, and prevail with Ahab to believe he should prosper in this war; wherein God intended he should be destroyed. For the prophets had observed how prosperous Ahab had been in former wars with the king of Syria: which made them forward to promise the same success in this also. And Ahab was as forward to believe it, as they were to assure it.

Ver. 23. *Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets.*] They were properly Ahab's prophets, not the Lord's; who only employed them to mislead him.

And the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.] The Lord had decreed he should perish in this war; and in order to it, stirred up the spirit of the prophets (as Abarbinel speaks) to prophesy according to their own inclination; and him to believe them, and rush into his own ruin.

Ver. 24. *And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near.*] He seems to be the chief of Ahab's prophets: the head, perhaps, of the whole college.

And smote Micaiah on the cheek.] By way of reproach and scorn, Jer. xx. 2. Mark xiv. 45. and other places.

And said, Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?] He was confident he had the Spirit, and could not imagine how it should depart from him, and enter into Micaiah, bidding him contradict all that he and his brethren had prophesied.

Ver. 25. *And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber.*] Into a secret place, (xx. 30.)

To hide thyself.] For fear he should be seized and punished as a false prophet, and the cause of Ahab's death.

Ver. 26. *And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son.*] It seems he was in custody, when he was sent for by the messenger to come to Ahab.

Ver. 27. *And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in prison.*] He ordered him, I suppose, to be kept a closer prisoner than before.

And feed him with the bread of affliction, and the water of affliction, till I come again in peace.] He would not have him starved, but fed with coarse bread and bad water; till he came home and brought victory along with him. And then perhaps he intended to put him to death.

Ver. 28. *And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.*] He desires all the people to mark, and be witnesses of what he said; and take this for a sign whether he was a true prophet or not.

Ver. 29. *So the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, went up to Ramoth-Gilead.*] Nothwithstanding the long declaration Micaiah had made of God's decree (which was altogether concerning Ahab), Jehoshaphat gave some credit to the other prophets, who spake in the name of the Lord, as well as he. (See upon ver. 7.)

Ver. 30. *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle.*] Like a private man.

But put thou on thy robes.] Appear like a king.

And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.] He knew they would aim most at him, as the author of this war; and therefore he would not be known; but gives Jehoshaphat the honour (as he pretended) of leading the army, and appearing as the chief commander of it. But this seems a very odd compliment, to pray him to expose himself to the danger which he shunned. Therefore others render it *Put on these robes* (which he then offered him); after my example, lay thy cloak, the garment of a chief commander, aside: and put on these robes. For he brought a double change of raiment into the field; that neither of them might be known by their clothes.

Ver. 31. *And the king of Syria commanded his thirty-two captains, who had rule over his chariots.*] Which were divided, it is likely, into so many distinct bodies.

Saying, Fight neither with small nor great.] With common soldier, or officer, belonging to Jehoshaphat.

Save only with the king of Israel.] Whom he looked upon (as I said) as the sole author of the war, into which he had drawn Jehoshaphat.

Ver. 32. *And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, Surely it is the king of Israel.*] Which shews, that whatsoever his robes were, he looked like more than a common man.

And they turned aside to fight with him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.] Unto the Lord for help, who delivered him, and moved them to depart from him, as we read in 2 Chron. xviii. 31.

Ver. 33. *And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel.*] By calling upon the Lord for help; or, perhaps, some of them knew him.

That they turned back from pursuing him.] Which was to be ascribed to the secret providence of God, as Ezra tells us in the place abovenamed; who resolved as wonderfully to preserve Jehoshaphat, as to destroy Ahab.

Ver. 34. *And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness.*] The Lord, no doubt, directing the arrow to that part, where it should penetrate into his vital parts. The LXX. *into his breast, through his lungs;* for it entered between his upper and lower armour.

Wherefore he said to the driver of his chariot, Turn thy

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hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.] He bade him drive to some place where he might look after his wound, which was very painful to him.

Ver. 35. *And the battle increased that day; and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even.*] There was a sharp fight after this: insomuch that the king, for fear his soldiers should run away, would return into the field, notwithstanding his wounds, and be supported in his chariot, to encourage his army, till the even parted them, and then he died.

And the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.] It could not be staunched by any means they could use, but ran out of his body into his chariot.

Ver. 36. *And there went a proclamation throughout the host, about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.*] I suppose Jehoshaphat ordered a retreat to be sounded; and the Syrians, it is likely, were content to be gone, having slain their capital enemy. By this proclamation, the prediction of Micaiah was exactly fulfilled, according to his vision, (ver. 17.)

Ver. 37. *So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.*

Ver. 38. *And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up the blood (and they washed his armour), according to the word of the Lord which he spake.*] The dogs licked up the blood, which was mixed with the water, wherewith his chariot and armour were washed: the LXX. add the word ὗες, as if *swine* as well as dogs had licked it up. But as there is no such word in the Hebrew, so neither is it in the Chaldee, Arabic, or Syriac; no, nor in the Latin translation. And it is very absurd; swine being not commonly kept in this country.

Ver. 39. *Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house that he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] It appears by this short history, that he had several noble qualities in him, and would have been a great man, if he had not been incurably addicted to idolatry. But it is not to be imagined that the house here mentioned was built of ivory; but only inlaid with it.

Ver. 40. *So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.*] See ver. 51.

Ver. 41. *And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.*

Ver. 42. *Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.*] The intention of the Divine writer of this book was, as Abarbinel observes, principally, and in the first place, to give us the history of the kings of the house of David, with which he begins, and then joins to it the history of the kings of Israel. Thus, having finished the history of Asa king of Judah, he recounts the affairs of Israel under Ahab; who being dead, he returns to the history of the kings of Judah, who were the chief objects of his history.

Ver. 43. *He walked in all the ways of his father Asa; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.*] This error was so deeply rooted, that the best of their kings, till Hezekiah's time (as I noted before), connived at it: and a great man of ours thinks the prophets accidentally gave countenance to it. Who had this power, that if they dispensed with any positive precept of the law, that precept was to cease for a time. Nor can any other reason be given of the toleration of high places, before the temple was built, and after that of Elijah's sacrificing upon Mount Carmel, and the forbearance of circumcision in the wilderness. (See Mr. Thorndike's Review of the Rites of the Church, p. 107.)

Ver. 44. *And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.*] He did not take advantage which Ahab's death gave him, to seize upon the kingdom of Israel, and take it from his son.

Ver. 45. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed, and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] See xi. 41.

Ver. 46. *And the remnant of the Sodomites, which remained in the days of Asa his father, took he out of the land.*] He made a narrower search after them than his father had done, who is said to have removed them; but some remained without his knowledge, (xv. 12.)

Ver. 47. *There was then no king in Edom: a deputy was king.*] The king of Judah deputed one to govern the Edomites; who was the viceroy (as we now speak) of the king of Judah. This continued from the days of David, who began this dominion over them, (2 Sam. viii. 14.) unto those of Jehoshaphat; whose son lost this authority, (2 Kings viii. 21.)

Ver. 48. *And Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold.*] These ships were not to go to Tharshish, but to Ophir. But they are called *ships of Tharshish*, from their form: for they were made after the mould of those ships which traded to that place. And all such ships, wheresoever they were built, were called *ships of Tharshish.* Thus Abarbinel. Which seems not to agree with 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37. (See there.)

But the ships were broken at Ezion-geber.] Before they sailed.

Ver. 49. *Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships: but Jehoshaphat would not.*] He had contracted an amity with this king, and engaged himself so far, as to let him join with him in this navy; (2 Chron. xx. 35, &c.) but being better instructed by his ill success, and by the reproof of a prophet, he would not continue this league with him.

Ver. 50. *And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.*

Ver. 51. *And Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.*] This seems not to agree with the account we have before that Jehoshaphat began his reign in the fourth year of Ahab, and Ahab reigned two-and-twenty years. Now if we take four from twenty and two, there remain eighteen; and so Ahaziah began to reign in that year, not the seventeenth of Jehoshaphat. But this is easily and truly solved: for the years which the kings of Israel reigned, are taken from the years of the kings of the house of David: so that if any one reigned in the latter end of the reign of a king of the house of David, and the beginning of the following year, he is said to have reigned two years. An instance of which is in the very next words of this verse.

And reigned two years over Israel.] Not complete, as ap-

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pears from 2 Kings iii. 1. but part of two years: for Ahaziah died before his second year was ended.

Ver. 52. *And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother.*] Who was still alive, to keep him in his idolatry.

And in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.] He was in nothing amended, by all that had befallen his father, and the family of Jeroboam.

Ver. 53. *For he served Baal, and worshipped him.*] Which worship had been introduced by his mother Jezebel: beyond the impiety of Jeroboam.

And provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.] Taking no warning by the hand of God against his father, which was very remarkable; nor believing the dreadful threatenings of Elijah against his mother, and their whole family.

THE

SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *THEN Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.*] They paid them no more tribute, but utterly disclaimed their authority over them; which they had owned ever since the days of David, (2 Sam. xiii. 2.) Whereas Edom (which, it seems, in the division of the kingdom, fell to Judah, as Moab did to Israel) continued still under the dominion of the king of Judah, (1 Kings xxii. 47.)

Ver. 2. *And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria.*] By this lattice, the Jews understand some net-work that was in the dining-room; which being decayed, and he leaning upon it, it fell down, and he together with it.

And was sick.] Was bruised, and, perhaps, fell into a fever.

And he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.] Many think this god was called Baal-Semin, the Lord of heaven; whom the Jews, by way of contempt, called Baal-zebub; *i. e.* the lord of a fly, as a god that was nothing worth; or rather, because his temple was full of flies: whereas the temple at Jerusalem, though so many sacrifices were offered there daily, never had a fly in it; as the Jews relate in Pirke Avoth. But it is not likely, the king of Israel would have called this god, for whom he had a great reverence, by a contemptible name; which signifies, therefore, no more than Μυιώδης μυίαγρος, ἀπόγυιος, among the Greeks; which were the titles of Jupiter and Hercules; because they were thought to free their countries from flies, with which the Ekronites were pestered, lying in a moist and hot soil, near to the ocean. Theodoret, Procopius, and others, think they worshipped this god in the image of a fly: but the latter of them doubts whether it was the name of a demon, or of an old woman canonized for a goddess. And after all, Mr. Selden thinks the reason of this name cannot be found. But the most probable conjecture is, that he was so called from the cure of a contagious disease. For Pliny tells us, that there being a great pestilence in Africa, which was brought among them by a multitude of flies, it was extinguished by the killing of them all after they had sacrificed to the god Achore. He should have said, the god worshipped at Ekron; from whence that word *Achore* plainly came, (lib. x. Nat. Hist. cap. 27.) And if this was the original of the name, it is no wonder that Ahaziah sent to inquire of him about his sickness, since he was thought so powerful as to cure the pestilence.

Ver. 3. *But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a god in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?*] There are two negatives in the Hebrew text which increase the sense, *Is it not because there is no God, none in Israel?* That is, Do you not plainly declare, that you think there is no God, none at all, in Israel? that he knows nothing, nor can do any thing? Which makes you send to Ekron, as if there was a more knowing and mighty, if not the only, God there.

Ver. 4. *And now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from the bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.*] Unto Mount Carmel, it is very probable: for he was presently after this sitting on the top of a hill, (ver. 9.)

Ver. 5. *And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said, Why are ye now come back?*] He knew by their speedy return, that they had not executed his command, and asked the reason.

Ver. 6. *And they said unto him, There came up a man to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn back unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Is it not because there is not a god in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from the bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.*] Elijah was a man of such a venerable presence, and spake to them with such authority, in the name of the Lord, that they were overawed thereby to obey him, rather than the king.

Ver. 7. *And he said unto them, What manner of man was he that came to meet you, and told you these words?*] He was not so angry at them for not obeying him, as desirous to know who he was that was so presumptuous as to stop their journey.

Ver. 8. *And they answered him, He was a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said,*

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It is Elijah the Tishbite.] Some think he is said to be *a hairy man*, because he had long hair on his head and his beard, like the Greek philosophers: but it is more probable, it was because he was clad with a hairy garment, which the prophets were wont to use, (Isa. xx. 2. Zech. xiii. 4. Matt. iii. 4.) And, indeed, the leathern girdle shews what kind of garment he wore. (See Dr. Hammond, upon the place last mentioned, annot. *d.*) This was the simplest and most ancient garment; and therefore the old heroes are said to have been clothed in the skins of lions, or tigers, or bears, &c. And, perhaps, by this rude habit the prophets expressed their great grief for the sad condition the Israelites were in, when they came to call them to repentance.

Ver. 9. *Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty: and he went up unto him.*] Not to the place where he was, but so near that he might hear him deliver his message.

(And, behold, he sat upon the top of a hill), and he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.] Sent him with an order, to command him to come down to him. But the prophet thought he did but mock him, when he called him *a man of God*, as appears by the punishment he inflicted on him. For it is as if he had said, Thou that callest thyself a man of God, come down, or I will fetch thee. He would not be at the pains to go to the top of the hill; but thought it sufficient to require him, in the king's name, to come down, and surrender himself into his hands.

Ver. 10. *And Elijah answered and said unto the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*] If I be a man of God, as thou sayest, but dost not think, then I am not bound to obey the king, but God (as Abarbinel glosses upon these words), nor am I subject to his power, but unto God's; who will make thee know that he judges in the earth. And immediately he and his men were consumed with lightning, according to Elijah's word. Who chose to destroy them by fire from heaven (as he goes on), because he had at Mount Carmel called for fire to consume the sacrifice. Which miracle they slighting, and coming now in a proud manner to carry him by force to Samaria (where he knew Jezebel would put him to death), he called for fire to consume them.

Ver. 11. *Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty: and he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.*] This man was more insolent than the former, charging the prophet to obey without delay, and not make him stay; or think to dally with him. And, by the following words, it appears, this was the voice of the whole company.

Ver. 12. *And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*] He knew that evil was determined against him by Ahaziah, and therefore defended himself, in this manner, from his cruelty; that he might be afraid to meddle with him, when he saw the Divine vengeance so terrible against those that came to apprehend him.

Ver. 13. *And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.*] He humbly entreated him, on his bended knees, to spare his life, and the lives of those that accompanied him, who did not come willingly, much less of their own accord: but were commanded by their lord and master to make known his pleasure to him.

Ver. 14. *And, behold, there came fire from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.*] He was sensible of the hand of God against those that came with such a command before, and acknowledges he was at Elijah's mercy; but hoped he would take compassion upon him, since he owned him really to be a man of God, and believed his power; as appeared by his falling down most reverently before him, and beseeching his pity, and calling those with him *his servants*.

Ver. 15. *And the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah, Go down with him; and be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.*] This is a great instance of the prophet's faith and obedience to God; who he trusted would protect him from the wrath of the king, and the malice of Jezebel. Of whom he had great reason to be afraid, having ordered the prophets of Baal to be slain, and now sent the king an unwelcome message, and done terrible execution upon two of his captains and their companies. The first of which made him fly the country, (1 Kings xix. 3.) Jezebel threatening his destruction; and had constrained him to conceal himself for a long time, and not come to Samaria: which was the reason, as Abarbinel observes, that we hear nothing of him in the war of Ben-hadad against Israel, (1 Kings xx.) nor in the war of Ahab against Ben-hadad, (chap. xxii.) But now, having a command from God for it, as he had in the case of Naboth, he boldly goes to the king, and confirms with his own mouth that ungrateful truth, which he had already told him by his messengers.

Ver. 16. *And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, (is it not because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word?) therefore thou shalt not come down from off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.*] There was more discourse passed between them, no doubt, than this: but this was the conclusion of all, that the sentence which God had pronounced against him was irreversible; and therefore he should not think of living much longer, but make use of the time remaining to repent of his sins.

Ver. 17. *So he died, according to the word of the Lord, which Elijah had spoken.*] It is likely he told him the very day when he should die.

And Jehoram reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son.] Therefore this brother of his succeeded him. Who began to govern in this second year of Jehoshaphat's son; but was king before, (iii. 1.) only very young, and, as some of the Jews think, under the care of Jehoshaphat. But Kimchi seems to have better reconciled this seeming difference, That Jehoshaphat declared his son Jehoram king while he lived, and he reigned with him seven years. The occasion of which is intimated in 2 Chron. xx. 3. "He gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the first-

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born," and gave gifts to the rest of his sons. Who being many, began to strive about the succession to the kingdom: which belonging to the first-born, Jehoshaphat, to quiet them all, declared Jehoram king together with himself, and he reigned with him seven years. When it is said therefore that Ahab's Jehoram reigned in the second year of Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram, the meaning is, the second year that he reigned with his father Jehoshaphat who was then living.

Ver. 18. *Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] They were but few, because he reigned a very short time; but yet, according to custom, they were recorded in a public register. Of which, see on 1 Kings xi. 41.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind.*] By a mighty sound of wind which the angels raised, who came to fetch him: of which translation he himself had some notice, by the spirit of prophecy.

That Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.] Unto this place he retired before his assumption to heaven, it having been (as Abarbinel discourses) a place of great holiness; where the Israelites made their first encampment, after they entered the land of Canaan; and where Joshua had set up twelve stones, taken out of Jordan, in memory of their miraculous passage over that river. Here also Joshua circumcised the Israelites, and kept the first passover, and set up the tabernacle, and the ark of the covenant, which remained here a long time.

Ver. 2. *And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Beth-el.*] Another place in ancient time very holy, God appearing here to Jacob more than once, (Gen. xxviii. 19. xxxv. 6. 9.) This Elijah said to try Elisha; for he did not intend to conceal his assumption into heaven, and to have no witnesses of it. His humility indeed was great, but it was not fit to obscure the glory of God, which herein miraculously appeared.

And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they two went down to Beth-el.] They were not wont anciently to swear by the name of God (out of the reverence they bare to him), but by some lesser thing which depended on it; as Joseph did by the life of Pharaoh; that is, as true as that Pharaoh lives. And Elisha puts both here together, *as sure as God liveth, and thou livest,* I will not leave thee. (See Grotius, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 13. n. 2.)

Ver. 3. *And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha.*] In these very corrupt times, and in that place where the golden calves were worshipped, God did not wholly forsake the Israelites; but continued the schools of the prophets among them. For by the *sons of the prophets* are meant the scholars of the prophets, whom they educated, and trained up in religion and piety; and God, by degrees, bestowed on some of them the spirit of prophecy. This was a great testimony of God's love to an apostate people; among whom he left prophets to recover them from their idolatry. For even in the chief place of impiety (which was Beth-el) they were not wanting. And it is still more remarkable, that prophets of greater excellency for their miracles were continued in Israel than were in Judah; because they needed them more, to turn their hard hearts from the worship of idols; and to support the pious persons that remained among them, and preserve them from deserting their religion. For it seems to me very probable, that these *sons of the prophets* were such ministers to the prophets, as the evangelists were to the apostles: whom the prophets sent to publish their prophecies and instructions to the people, where they could not go themselves. And perhaps they taught them the law of God, and explained it to them; of which there was great need in those idolatrous times.

And said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?] It was revealed to some of them by God, and they told it to the rest of the company of the prophets. Who allude to their manner of sitting in their school, when they say God would *take away Elijah from his head:* that is, deprive him of his instructions. For, it is well known, that the scholars sat below at their master's feet, and the master above over their head, when they taught them.

And he said, Yea, I know it; hold you your peace.] Say no more of it: I would not be disturbed with the thoughts of it. Or, let not my master know that I understand it.

Ver. 4. *And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee.*] He doth not lay his commands upon him, (as he did unto a former servant, 1 Kings xix. 3.) but only entreats him, and in a more tender manner than he did before, to accompany him no further.

For the Lord hath sent me to Jericho.] Another remarkable place, as Abarbinel observes, to which he went: that, as Moses, when he turned his face towards this place, (Deut. xxxiv. 1.) departed this life; so this should be the last place wherein Elijah would remain, before he left the world. A place also famous for many miracles done there.

And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.] He hoped for some great blessing from him, when he was carried up to heaven; and therefore continued firm in his resolution, to attend that wonderful change.

Ver. 5. *And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho, came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold you your peace.*] Here was another school, where the same holy Spirit revealed the mind of God to them; as it had done at Beth-el. And it is a probable opinion of Kimchi, who affirms there were the like schools in other cities of Israel.

Ver. 6. *And Elijah said unto him, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me unto Jordan.*] Another place, where God had wrought great wonders. Not far from which, as Kimchi notes, the great prophet Moses died; and therefore God intended to translate Elijah near to this place.

And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.] From Jericho to the river Jordan.

Ver. 7. *And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off.*] They were confident the time of his assumption drew near, and were very desirous, if it were possible, to see the manner of it: but were not ad-

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mitted to accompany him to the place, where he was taken up to heaven, as Elisha did; for they took this view at Jericho, (ver. 15.)

And they two stood by Jordan.] The rest being forbidden, I suppose, to go thither with him.

Ver. 8. *And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together.*] This mantle of his is mentioned five times in these books; thrice in this chapter, and twice in 1 Kings xix. 13. 19. In all which places it is called *adareth:* which is a word signifying a royal robe, as well as a prophetical, (Jonah iii. 6.) The LXX. in all the five places now mentioned, translate it μηλωτὴ, which properly signifies the prophetical mantle to be made of lamb-skin: being an upper garment thrown over the shoulders, and some think coming down to the heels.

And smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.] God made a dry path in the middle of the river, whose waters stood on each side of it.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken from thee. And Elisha said, Let, I pray thee, a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.*] They are much mistaken, who imagine he begged as much more of the Spirit as Elijah had; for that had been very arrogant. He only desired to have such a portion of it, as the first-born in a family had of his father's estate. That is, as much more of his spirit, as any of the rest of the sons of the prophets: for the portion of the first-born was double to that of the rest of the children. In short, he did not desire to excel his master, but his school-fellows. (See P. Fagius upon Deut. xxi. 17.)

Ver. 10. *And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing.*] Such gifts were rarely bestowed.

Nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.] Mark, this is a sign whether thou shalt have what thou desirest or not.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked.*] Of the happy state, it is likely, to which Elijah was going.

That, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.] Angels appeared before them, in the form of a bright chariot and horses, running towards them upon the ground; which coming between them, separated them one from the other. For Elijah mounted the chariot, and in a great gust of wind governed by angels, was transported into heaven. That is, saith Abarbinel, into the air: for he being a stranger to Christianity, could not conceive how an earthly body could live among the celestial inhabitants; and therefore, according to the gross imaginations of the Jews, imagines he is still upon the earth, in the garden of Eden. But these are ignorant conceits. The plain sense is, that his body being transformed in his passage towards heaven, he was carried up to live among the angels.

The heathens themselves did not disbelieve such things: as appears by the story of Æganympha, who was made immortal by Jupiter; and of Driope by the Hamadryades: and Bacchus assured Cadmus, that by the help of Mars he should live for ever in the isles of the blessed, whither they said Alcumene was snatched up by Mercury, at the command of Jupiter, &c. (See Dan. Huetius in his Alnetanæ Quæstiones, lib. ii. cap. 12. n. 30.)

Ver. 12. *And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father!*] So they called their masters and instructors.

The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.] And he alludes to what he beheld; and very fitly compared Elijah to chariot and horsemen, which the Israelites wanted in their armies; but he was instead of them by his counsels and prayers; whereby they might have obtained great victories, if they would have been obedient to his word.

And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.] To express his sorrow for so great a loss.

Ver. 13. *And he took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him.*] This dropped from him as he went up to heaven: in token of the spirit that should be given to Elisha, according to his promise.

And went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan.] Whose waters were come together again, after he and Elijah got over.

Ver. 14. *And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah?*] That is, let him shew his presence with me, and his power, as he did with Elijah. But we do not translate these last words exactly, two words being left out; *viz. aph-hu,* which the LXX. put into one, ἀφφώ, of which I know not the sense. And the Chaldee translates it, *receive my petition;* without any reason; those words carrying in them nothing of that signification. The best account of them is that which I meet with in a short dissertation by Joh. Frischmuthus, de Orig. et Prosapia Eliæ. where he observes, that Elisha having asked this question, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* answers himself in these words, "Aph-hu, etiam ille adhuc superest;" *yea, he is yet in being.* Thus Abarbinel expresses the sense: *Though Elijah be not here, yet his God is.* The servant is wanting, but not the Lord. The blessed God is still present, and will supply his place.

And when he also had smote the waters, they parted hither and thither; and Elisha went over.] Just as Elijah had done a little before, (ver. 8.)

Ver. 15. *And when the sons of the prophets, which were to view at Jericho, saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves down to the ground before him.*] In token of their reverence to him, as the father of the prophets.

Ver. 16. *And they said unto him, Behold now, there are with us fifty strong men.*] Fit to undertake such an expedition as they propose.

Let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master; lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley.] They had but an imperfect notice of what God intended, when they asked Elisha if he knew the Lord would take his master from him. For they imagined he might not be quite taken away; but only for a time: or, that if his spirit were taken into heaven, his body might possibly be thrown upon some of the neighbouring mountains or valleys.

And he said, Ye shall not send.] For he knew it would be to no purpose.

Ver. 17. *And when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, Send.*] He was afraid they should think he wanted

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love to his master; or, was so ambitious to enjoy his place and authority, that he was loath he should be found alive.

And they sought him three days, but found him not.] In that time they searched every place, where they thought it likely he might be cast.

Ver. 18. *And when they came again to him (for he tarried at Jericho), he said unto them, Did not I say unto you, Go not?*] By this he settled his authority, in that he foretold them their labour would be lost.

Ver. 19. *And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; but the water is naught, and the ground barren.*] Things did not thrive in that soil; but the people and the cattle miscarried, and the fruit fell off from the trees, as the margin translates it. Which curse, Abarbinel thinks, had been upon this place ever since the time of Joshua.

Ver. 20. *And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein: and they brought it to him.*] He would have a new cruse, that had never been used; and brought by them, together with the salt, that there might be no suspicion of fraud (as Abarbinel observes), nor the virtue ascribed to any thing that was in the cruse before, but merely to the power of God. The Jews also in Michilta say, that his putting salt into it, made this a miracle in a miracle: for it makes water less potable, and ground more barren.

Ver. 21. *And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.*] He wrought the miracle at Jordan, as the forenamed author observes, for his own sake; that he might make an experiment, whether the Divine influence which was upon Elijah was derived unto him. But this at Jericho he wrought for the sake of the sons of the prophets who dwelt there; that they might know the hand of the Lord was with him.

Ver. 22. *So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha, which he spake.*] By this the people of the city (who besought this favour from him, ver. 19.) saw that he was a man of God, to whom they owed obedience.

Ver. 23. *And he went up from thence to Beth-el.*] That he might visit the sons of the prophets who were in that city, and comfort them for the loss of Elijah; by letting them see the Spirit of God was upon him. It is very properly said he *went up* thither, because it stood upon a hill, and there was an ascent from Jericho thither; (Josh. viii. 3. 17.) though Elijah and he, going another way, are said to go down to Beth-el, (ver. 2.)

And as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city.] The word *naarim* signifies *grown youth*, as well as little children. For Isaac, when he was twenty-eight years old, is called *naar*, (Gen. xxii. 5. 12.) and Joseph, when he was thirty, (xli. 12.) and Rehoboam when he was forty, (2 Chron. xiii. 7.) And this is to be understood here of adult persons, who had a hatred to the prophet.

And mocked him.] By the instigation of their parents, or of Baal's priests (as they will have it, who take them for mere children), who stirred them up, and taught them to jeer at his bald pate, and so laughed at the ascension of Elijah.

And said unto him, Go up thou bald head, go up thou bald head.] Their repetition of these words expresses their earnestness and vehemence in their contempt of him. For, as hair was always accounted a singular ornament, so baldness was disgraceful. Insomuch that Cæsar, as Bochartus hath observed, could not bear with those who jeered him upon this account; and thought it the highest honour the senate did him, in decreeing he should always appear with a wreath of laurel upon his head.

When they call upon Elisha to *go up*, they flouted, as Abarbinel thinks, at the ascension of Elijah to heaven; the news of which had been brought thither, and reported by the prophets of that place. Which the idolaters laughed at, and bade Elisha go up to heaven also, that they might not be troubled with him. Thus I find also the author of the questions and answers, ad Orthodoxos, understands these words: which were spoken, πρὸς διασυρμὸν τῆς τοῦ Ἠλίου ἀναλήψεως, *to reproach the assumption of Elijah:* as if they had said, λαμβανέτω καί σε πνεῦμα, *Let the Spirit take thee also,* and cast thee upon some inaccessible mountain; that we may be rid of thee, as we are of him. (Respons. 80.)

Ver. 24. *And he turned back, and looked upon them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord.*] This contempt of him, not as a man merely, but as a prophet, provoked the anger of God; who moved Elisha to lay a curse upon them, and punish them, as Moses did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and St. Peter did Ananias and Sapphira.

And there came two she-bears out of the wood.] Who it is likely had been robbed of their whelps: which made them the more fierce and outrageous.

And tare forty and two children of them.] This was done by an extraordinary direction of God; who moved the bears at that moment to come out of the wood, when Elisha pronounced the curse; and to make such a great havoc among them, when two or three would have satisfied their hunger.

Ver. 25. *And he went from thence to Mount Carmel.*] Where it is probable he had many disciples: among whom he intended to be awhile retired.

And from thence he returned to Samaria.] To testify against their idolatry. And it is highly probable there was a college of prophets even in Samaria, as there was in Beth-el and Jericho, whom he went to encourage.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *NOW Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria, the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.*] Ahaziah his brother reigned two years, and began his reign in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat: (1 Kings xxii. 51.) that is, part of the seventeenth year, and part of the eighteenth, which was accounted for two years. In the latter end of which Jehoram his brother began to reign: when Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, had two years reigned with his father. (See i. 17.)

Ver. 2. *And he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord, but not like his father, and like his mother; for he put away the image of Baal which his father had made.*] He did not break it in pieces, as he would have done if he had heartily hated it, but only put it away out of the temple; being afraid, lest

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the judgments of God should fall upon him, as they had done upon his father. And the king of Moab being now in rebellion against him, Jehoshaphat perhaps refused to help him, whilst he was a worshipper of Baal. It is much that his mother, who had brought this worship with her from the Zidonians, should suffer him to remove this image; but she was a little daunted, perhaps, at the many disasters which had befallen their family, and was contented with worshipping Baal in private.

Ver. 3. *Nevertheless, he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.*] It was easier to remove the image of Baal than to put away the calves; for that was new, but the other had been of long standing; and the most likely course they could think of to maintain the division of the two kingdoms.

Ver. 4. *And Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-master.*] The riches not only of private men, but also of kings, in ancient time consisted much in sheep and cattle: which, I have observed before, they looked after themselves: and their sons kept their sheep, as Bochartus shews in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 44. And thus the greatest part of the world lived, during the space of near four thousand years. Which did not hinder them from being, at the same time, a brave and warlike people, as appears by the ancient Romans, who were thus bred; and subdued all Italy, and at last made themselves masters of the world. For this sort of life was the cause of their great strength, making their bodies robust, and hardened to labour, and accustomed to a severe discipline. There cannot be a greater instance of this than we have in Cato the Censor, who passed through all the great offices of the republic of Rome, had governed provinces, commanded armies, was a great orator, lawyer, and politician; who did not disdain to write a treatise concerning all the ways that are necessary for the improving lands, and how stables and houses were to be built for several sorts of cattle, and how presses were to be made for wine and oil, &c. Insomuch, that any one may see he was perfectly acquainted with country business, and that he did not write for ostentation, but for the use and service of mankind.

And rendered to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool.] This was a prodigious number, and being rendered unshorn, made them more valuable. But we are to consider that these countries abounded with sheep; insomuch, that Solomon offered a hundred and twenty thousand at the dedication of the temple, (2 Chron. vii. 5.) and the Reubenites drove from the Hagarites a hundred and fifty thousand, (1 Chron. v. 21.) For they frequently brought forth two at a time, and sometimes twice a year, as that great man Bochartus shews in the same book, cap. 46. and produces a famous place in Pliny, which shews that this was the most ancient tribute. For he saith in the Censorian Tables, all the rents of the people are called pastures, "quia diu hoc solum vectigal fuerat," (lib. xviii. Nat. Hist. cap. 3.) But Ludolphus hath observed two things for the illustrating this history of the king of Moab, which seem to be very considerable. First, that this was not annual tribute, but satisfaction for damages which the Israelites had sustained in the war with them, or by their revolt from them, as the LXX. understand it. And then the word *ajil* should not be translated a *ram*, but a *wether*; for one ram will serve a great many sheep, (lib. i. Comment. in Histor. Æthiop. cap. 3. n. 30.)

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.*] As was said before, chap. i. 1. and here again repeated, only to introduce the following history.

Ver. 6. *And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel.*] As soon as he was settled in his kingdom, his first business was to raise an army to reduce Moab to obedience.

Ver. 7. *And he went.*] After his army was raised, he went out of Samaria.

And sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.] He returned the very same answer to him which he had given to Ahab his father, when he desired his assistance against Syria, (1 Kings xxii. 4.) wherein he had been so unsuccessful, that it should have made him more cautious how he joined with his son; especially since he seemed to have been afraid to have to do with his brother Ahaziah, (1 Kings xxii. 49.) But Jehoram having reformed some things, (ver. 2.) it made him, perhaps, have a better opinion of him: and by shewing kindness to him, he might hope to persuade him to proceed further. And besides, the Moabites had lately invaded his country, (2 Chron. xx. 1. 10.) which might move him to embrace an opportunity to chastise them for it.

Ver. 8. *And he said, Which way shall we go up?*] Jehoshaphat having agreed to join with him, it is likely the king of Israel asked this question, and Jehoshaphat made the following answer.

And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom.] Which he chose, because he would have the assistance of the Edomites, who were his tributaries. And it is probable Moab was but weakly fortified on that side.

Ver. 9. *So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom.*] There was no king at this time in Edom, as we read in the last chapter of the foregoing book, (ver. 47.) but a viceroy appointed by the king of Judah. Yet such are called kings, 1 Kings xx. 1. (See Grotius.) And Jehoshaphat, I suppose, now required him with his people to help him in this war.

And they fetched a compass of seven days' journey.] That they might come upon the backs of the Moabites, where they did not expect them.

And there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them.] That drew their carriages. For either there was a great drought in those parts, or they had mistaken their way.

Ver. 10. *And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.*] He doth not cry to God for help, but only bewail the straits into which they were fallen; which his own guilt made him imagine God had contrived for their destruction.

Ver. 11. *And Jehoshaphat said, Is not there a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire by him.*] This was spoken like a pious man; but it was a fault that he did not inquire before

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for direction in this war; as he did in that with the Syrians, (1 Kings xxii. 5.)

And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.] That is, was his servant, and ministered unto him.

Ver. 12. *And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him.*] For no doubt he had been informed how Elijah had chosen him to be his successor; and how he attended him till he was taken up to heaven; and what wonders he had already done.

So the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom, went down to him.] It is uncertain whither they went; but it is very observable, first, how much they honoured the prophet, for whom they did not send to come to them, but went to him. And secondly, how desirous the prophet was to do good, in that he followed the camp into this wilderness. For it is not likely they went back to Samaria to wait on him (where the story last left him, in the last verse of the foregoing chapter), which would have been a seven days' journey; and the army might in the mean time have been lost. Besides, ver. 16. shews he was not far from th em; and the servant in the foregoing verse speaks of him as present; saying, *Here is Elisha.*

Ver. 13. *And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother.*] He refuses with great disdain to entertain any discourse with him; and bids him confer with those who he knew could do him no service.

And the king of Israel said, Nay.] That is, I will not consult them; but do thou give us counsel how we may be brought out of this great distress.

For the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.] Though he refused to do any thing for his sake, yet he beseeches him to have respect to the other two kings, who must perish as well as he, if he did not help them.

Ver. 14. *And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand.*] It is observable, that the sons of the prophets are said to sit before their masters the prophets when they instructed them; (iv. 3. 8. and see the foregoing chapter, ver. 3.) but the prophets themselves stood before the Lord, their master, when he sent them upon any message. (See Corn. Bertram. de Rep. Jud. cap. 16.)

Surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look towards thee, nor see thee.] He saith nothing of the king of Edom, who was a dependant upon Jehoshaphat; whose piety he esteemed, and had some respect to all that belonged to him.

Ver. 15. *But now bring me a minstrel.*] One that could play well upon an instrument of music.

And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.] Every one knows that some sort of music wonderfully quiets and composes the spirits, when they are disordered, and raises them when they are flat and heavy. And therefore holy men did not neglect such helps to make them so sedate and cheerful, that they might be fit to receive Divine inspirations. But it is likely he that played now to Elisha, sung withal some hymn in the praises of God, and of his wonderful works, whereby the spirit of the prophet was sweetly composed, which had been disturbed, perhaps more than was fit, by his indignation at the king of Israel. And from hence we may conclude there were excellent musicians in Israel, as well as in Judah, where David had settled Divine music in great perfection. And it is very probable, what the heathen boast of their muses, was from hence derived.

Then the hand of the Lord came upon him.] That is, God wrought in him; and he felt himself moved by a Divine inspiration.

Ver. 16. *And he said, Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches.*] This shews they were in a place where the army was encamped in a valley, in which he ordered them to be set at work, to dig large ditches to hold water enough for them all.

Ver. 17. *For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.*] The words belonging to one of our senses are frequently applied to another: as, to *see wind* is to feel it, or hear it. And the meaning is, there should no wind stir to blow up clouds (as the south wind commonly did), nor should they see any rain fall; and yet they should have plenty of water in that valley, for themselves and all belonging to them. I suppose it fell upon the mountains at a distance from them, and came pouring down into the lower ground.

Ver. 18. *And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord: he will deliver the Moabites into your hand.*] Of which, I suppose, they had no hope, being much dispirited for want of water.

Ver. 19. *And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop up all the wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.*] Prophets were to be obeyed, when they commanded things contrary to a positive precept, as some part of this was, (see Deut. xx. 19.) Which they had power to dispense withal for a time, though not always, so as to annul the precept, as Maimonides expounds this matter in his preface to Seder-Zeraim. But some think this usage so severe, that they take the prophet's meaning to be no more than this: that God would give them such an entire victory, that they might be able to do all this if they pleased; and the Moabites were so ill neighbours, that it is very likely they did this execution upon them, (ver. 25.)

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat-offering was offered.*] When the people of God were praying at Jerusalem, at the time of the morning sacrifice, Elisha joined his prayers with them for this blessing.

That, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.] Whether it came from a sudden collection of a vast number of clouds, which poured down rain in abundance in the land of Edom, or from some rocks which God caused to gush out water; it came by a miraculous power, when there was no natural cause to produce it.

Ver. 21. *And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border.*] Intending to defend themselves; but not to march out of their country to give the enemy battle.

Ver. 22. *And they rose up early in the morning.*] The next morning, I suppose, after the water filled the valley.

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And the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood.] On the east side of their country.

Ver. 23. *And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.*] They knew there was no water there a few days before, and that there had been no rain; and therefore (the sun shining directly in their eyes, which made it look red) they concluded it could be nothing else but blood. And what blood could it be, but that of the three kings' army, who had fallen out, by reason, perhaps, of their different religion; or vexed at the straits they had brought one another into? And the Moabites easily believing what they wished, imagined they had nothing to do but to go and gather spoil, and not to fight at all.

Ver. 24. *And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them.*] They entirely routed and dispersed them.

But they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country.] But they did not content themselves with this victory, but pursued them so close, that they got into their country with them, and there made a greater havoc of them.

Ver. 25. *And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it: and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees.*] According to the permission given them by the prophet, ver. 19. intending, I suppose, to depopulate the whole country.

Only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof.] They left no walls standing, but only these of the royal city, which was exceeding strong. (See Isa. xvi. 7. 11.)

Howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.] They raised such batteries against it, that they drove them who defended it from the wall, and made great breaches in it.

Ver. 26. *And when the king of Moab saw the battle was too sore for him.*] That he was not able to defend the place any longer.

He took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not.] He made a sally with seven hundred stout men upon the quarters of the king of Edom (which it seems were the weakest), hoping to break through them and escape. But they were repulsed, and forced to retreat.

Ver. 27. *Then he took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt-offering upon the wall.*] Hereupon the king of Moab took his eldest son and made him a sacrifice before them all, as the last desperate remedy, hoping thereby to obtain powerful help from his god, through so precious a sacrifice of the dearest thing he had unto him. For it is well known, not only by the Holy Scriptures, but heathen writers, that in great distress they were wont to offer their own children upon their altars. Eusebius, lib. v. Præpar. Evangel. and Lactantius, lib. i. Div. Instit. cap. 21. mention several nations who used these sacrifices: and Cæsar, lib. vi. de Bello Gallico, saith of the Gauls, that when they were afflicted with grievous diseases, or in time of war, or great danger, *they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed they would offer them.* For they imagined God would not be appeased, "Nisi pro vita hominis reddatur vita hominis," *unless the life of a man was rendered for the life of a man.*

Abarbinel, indeed, thinks that he offered the eldest son of the king of Edom, whom he took prisoner in the late sally. But it could not be said of him, that this son was to reign in his stead; for the king of Judah made whom he pleased his deputy over Edom. And this would not have made the three kings withdraw the siege, but prosecute it with greater fury. And Abarbinel acknowledges, that their wise men in Pesikta and the Sanhedrin understand it as I do: and that some of them think he offered him, in imitation of Abraham, to the God of Israel, hoping to move him to be favourable to him. Which no less man than Grotius follows. And indeed it is highly probable, that this custom of offering human sacrifices sprung from the offering of Isaac, from whence the Moabites, who were neighbours to Canaan, learnt it.

And there was great indignation against Israel.] Or, as it may be translated, *great repentance upon* (or *in*, or *among*) *Israel.* That is, they were extreme sorry and troubled at this barbarous sacrifice, and wished they had not pushed on the war so far; which ended in such a horrid action, which brought an odium upon them.

And they departed from him, and returned to their own land.] Hereupon they raised the siege, by common consent, and returned home, for fear any such thing should be done again.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *NOW there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying.*] It is observed by St. Jerome, that Elijah and Elisha had no wives: "Et virgines multi filii prophetarum;" *and many of the sons of the prophets were virgins:* but it is plain by this place that they were not all so; but had liberty to marry if they pleased.

My husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord.] Was a worshipper of the true God, and not of Baal, nor the calves: which was the reason, it is likely, of his poverty; such men being discountenanced among the idolatrous Israelites.

And the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be his bondmen.] Because she was not able to pay his debts: in which case the Hebrews had such a power over their children, that they might sell them (being looked upon as their goods) to pay what they owed; and the creditor might force them to it. And Huetius thinks that from the Jews this custom was propagated to the Athenians; and from them to the Romans. The Hebrew doctors have a fancy, that this prophet was Obadiah, (mentioned 1 Kings xviii. 3.) and that the creditor was Jehoram the son of Ahab. Which is utterly ungrounded.

Ver. 2. *And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me: what hast thou in the house?*] Towards the discharge of thy husband's debt.

And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.] Which was a thing of great use; both for the service of God and of men.

Ver. 3. *And he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.*] As many as she could get, and not small vessels.

Ver. 4. *And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee, and upon thy sons.*] That none might come in to disturb her in what she was about.

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And shalt pour out.] Of the pot of oil which she had.

Into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.] And call for another that was empty.

Ver. 5. *So she went from him, and shut the door upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.*] Believing she should by this means be relieved.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son.*] Who brought her the empty vessels; for the other son was employed in setting aside those that were full.

Bring me yet a vessel.] For she was confident the pot of oil would still afford more.

And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.] When there was no vessel to receive it.

Ver. 7. *Then she came and told the man of God: and he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children upon the rest.*] We must first do justice; and then expect God's blessing upon the provision we make for ourselves and our family.

Ver. 8. *And it fell out on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem.*] A city in the tribe of Issachar, (Josh. xix. 18.)

Where was a great woman.] Who had a great estate, and it is likely kept a great house.

And she constrained him to eat bread.] Was very importunate with him to take a repast at her house, and prevailed with him to accept of her kindness.

And so it was, that, as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.] She made him so welcome, that he made no scruple, when he had occasion to go that way, to step in there and refresh himself: which it is likely she invited him to do.

Ver. 9. *And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive.*] By her frequent conversation with him.

That this is a holy man of God.] Not only a prophet; but a person of great sanctity.

Which passeth by us continually.] For Shunem was in his way as he went from Carmel (which was not far from hence) to Beth-el and Jericho, and other places of the sons of the prophets.

Ver. 10. *Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall.*] A private room remote from the house, where he might retire; and without noise or disturbance give himself to prayer and meditation, and follow his sacred studies.

And let us set up for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick.] Furnish it with all things necessary for a single person.

And it shall be, that when he cometh, he shall turn in thither.] Take up his lodging there, if he think good.

Ver. 11. *And it fell out on a day that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.*] And it appears by the story, that he became their constant guest.

Ver. 12. *And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he called her, she stood before him.*] Waiting to know what he wanted. But he having been so kindly entertained by her for some time, sent for her to give her thanks, and to desire to know what he should do for her.

Ver. 13. *And he said unto him, Say now unto her.*] He seems to me to have whispered to Gehazi, to ask her the following question. Whereupon she withdrew, thinking he had some business with him before he could speak with her.

Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care.] Been exceeding kind to us, in taking care we should want nothing.

What is to be done for thee?] That is, wherein can I serve thee? For he was very desirous, as all good men are, to be grateful.

Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?] It seems the prophet had a great power at court since the late victory over the Moabites. And therefore, if she had any suit to make to the king, he doubted not to effect it; or had any grievance to complain of, which she suffered by the soldiers, he offered to get it remedied.

And she answered, I dwell among my own people.] Whatsoever vexation any might suffer by the soldiers upon the borders, she tells him she lived safely and quietly among her friends and good neighbours; being so free from want that she needed not petition the king for any thing.

Ver. 14. *And he said, What is then to be done for her?*] This answer being returned to his master by Gehazi, Elisha asked him, what he thought might be most welcome to her. Which he might easily know, going about the house and observing all things there, which Elisha did not, who lived retired.

And Gehazi said, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.] He knew women were desirous above all things to have children: which she neither had, nor was like to have, by reason of her husband's age.

Ver. 15. *And he said, Call her.*] This shews she withdrew presently, when he first sent for her, (ver. 12, 13.)

And when he had called her, she stood in the door.] Either out of modesty or reverence; or being afraid to disturb him.

Ver. 16. *And he said, About this season, according to the time of life.*] The next year, after thou hast gone the usual time.

Thou shalt embrace a son.] From the word *Habeketh*, which we translate *thou shalt embrace*, some of the Hebrew doctors conjecture that this son proved afterward the prophet Habakkuk: which is a mere fancy, rejected by Abarbinel and others; who make account Habakkuk prophesied in the time of Manasseh or Josiah.

And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thy handmaid.] Do not jest with me.

Ver. 17. *And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that time that Elisha said unto her, according to the time of life.*] It is likely he named the very day when he should be born; and it fell out exactly as he had said.

Ver. 18. *And when the child was grown, it fell out on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.*] Either for pleasure, or to inquire of his health. This shews still the truth of that which I have often observed, that great men in ancient times (for the quality of his wife shews this was no mean person, ver. 8.) followed their country business themselves; looking after their corn and their cattle, and labouring with their own hands for their health, and the increase of their estates, by their industry in their improvement.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto his father, My head, my head!*] Either walking so far, or staying long in the sun (which shone hot in harvest-time), put him into a fever, which grievously affected his head.

And he said to a lad, Carry him home to his mother.]

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That she might look after him, and do what was proper for his case.

Ver. 20. *And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees until noon, and then died.*] It seems he went out in the morning to his father, and was seized with such a sudden violent pain, as in a few hours killed him.

Ver. 21. *And she went up, and laid him upon the bed of the man of God.*] Hoping for help by him, whose master she had heard (no doubt) had restored a child to life.

And shut the door, and went out.] Kept it as private as she could, that her husband might not know the child was dead; which would have been a great grief to him.

Ver. 22. *And she called to her husband, and said.*] By a messenger which she sent to him.

Send me now, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again quickly.] So as not to hinder his business.

Ver. 23. *And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath.*] It appears by this, that the prophets were the public instructors of the people; and their houses were a kind of school or synagogue, unto which they resorted upon the days here mentioned, to be taught their duty, out of the law of God, and to be resolved in their doubts. And the prophets accordingly were constantly in some certain place upon these days, to give the people their instruction.

And she said, It shall be well.] In the Hebrew, *it is peace.* That is, she prays him to believe that she went for no hurt; but for his and her benefit.

Ver. 24. *Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.*] She ordered him to make all the haste he could, as fast as the ass would go; without any respect to her, unless she called to him to drive more softly.

Ver. 25. *So she went and came to the man of God to Mount Carmel.*] This is a place which he, and Elijah also, much frequented: which makes it credible there was a school of the prophets here; it being a mountain full of trees, which made it fit for sacred exercises. As soon as Elijah was taken from him, Elisha fetched a circuit by Jericho and Beth-el to come hither; and from thence went to Samaria. For which no good reason can be given, but that it was to visit the places which his master had frequented, and instruct those who studied there, as Elijah had been wont to do.

And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite.] He was surprised to see her coming at an unusual time.

Ver. 26. *Run now, I pray thee, to meet her.*] To shew his respect to her.

And say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thine husband? is it well with the child?] He bids him make particular inquiry after all that were most dear to her.

And she answered, It is well.] Some translate it, *It shall be well.* But there is no need of that. For they were well in part; that is, she and her husband. And she did not think fit to tell Gehazi all the truth, but to deliver it to the prophet himself.

Ver. 27. *And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet.*] After the manner of a most humble supplicant; resolving not to let him stir till he granted her request.

And Gehazi came near to thrust her away.] Believing his master did not expect such abasement, especially from her, who had been so kind and friendly to them.

And the man of God said, Let her alone; her soul is vexed in her.] Do not disturb her, for she is too full of grief already.

And the Lord hath hid it from me.] God had not shewn him the cause of it, that he might have prevented it.

And hath not told me.] The prophets did not know all things, but only what God was pleased to impart unto them. (See 2 Sam. vii. 3.) For the Spirit was not in them after the manner of a supernatural faculty, or infused habit (as we speak), whereby they might act what and when they pleased; Moses himself, the great prophet, not being able to determine some things till he had consulted the Divine Majesty, (Numb. xv. 13, 14.)

Ver. 28. *Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?*] As much as to say, she was well satisfied without a son: and did neither desire one, nor was forward to believe she should have one when freely promised: but to lose him after he was bestowed upon her, was an unspeakable affliction to her.

Ver. 29. *And he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins.*] That he might travel with greater expedition.

And take my staff in thy hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any man salute thee, answer him not again.] Lest they should enter into discourse, and stop his speed.

And lay my staff upon the face of the child.] He thought it might work a miracle, as Moses's rod and Elijah's mantle did: and if the woman had had a faith strong enough, it might have been sufficient. But she distrusted it, and would have Elisha go himself. Abarbinel thinks he had no thoughts of reviving the child by this means, but only ordered his staff to be laid upon it, to preserve him from putrefaction: which is a low conceit.

Ver. 30. *And the mother of the child said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.*] This seems to me to signify, that she did not confide in what he ordered Gehazi to do; but thought his presence necessary to touch the child, and pray to God to restore him.

And he arose, and followed her.] Being overcome by her importunity, and his own kindness to so great a friend.

Ver. 31. *And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing.*] No sign of life appeared, as Gehazi, I suppose, expected.

Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.] He speaks of death as a sleep: in which he continued, notwithstanding he had done as Elisha commanded. And it is likely that power was withheld which might have accompanied the staff, because the prophet changed the method of his proceeding in working this miracle; when the woman would have him go himself, and did not pray to God, that upon the laying on of the staff he might revive.

Ver. 32. *And when Elisha came into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.*] Where his mother had left him when she went to Elisha, (ver. 21.)

Ver. 33. *He went in therefore, and shut the door upon*

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them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.] He shut the door, that he might not be disturbed by any body in his prayer to God.

Ver. 34. *And he went up.*] Upon the bed.

And lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child.] This could not be done all together, because his face and body were much larger than the child's, but successively: he laid his mouth upon the child's mouth, and his eyes and hands upon the child's eyes and hands, as Elijah had done in the like case, in token that God inspired his soul again into him, at his earnest prayer.

And the flesh of the child waxed warm.] Not from the external heat of Elisha's body, but from an inward principle of life, which was restored, and began to move in him.

Ver. 35. *And he returned.*] From the bed.

And walked in the house to and fro.] Took a turn or two in the house to refresh himself, after the pains he had taken in prayer, and otherways, for the child's recovery.

And went up, and stretched himself upon him.] As he had done before. For this miracle was not wrought in an instant, but gradually: by continued vehement prayer to God.

And the child sneezed seven times.] A sign of health, whereby his head was purged, in which his pain lay, (ver. 19.)

And the child opened his eyes.] After his sneezing he looked upon Elisha, and it is likely spake to him.

Ver. 36. *And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her: and when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.*] She came only to the door of the room, till he bade her take up her son, and then she came in, as it follows.

Ver. 37. *Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself down to the ground.*] Giving thanks to God, and to him, with a most profound reverence.

And took up her son, and went out.] Publishing, no doubt, this wonderful work of God to all her family; who made it known abroad.

Ver. 38. *And Elisha went again to Gilgal.*] Where he was with Elijah, a little before he was taken up into heaven, (ii. 1.) For those places, wherein he had been with his master, he loved to visit; that he might work wonders there, and confirm them in a belief that he was a prophet.

And there was a dearth in the land.] A great scarcity of provisions.

And the sons of the prophets were sitting before him.] Which was the posture of disciples when their masters taught them, who sat above, and their scholars below, as I observed, ii. 3. and see Acts xxii. 3. whence Bertram observes, their schools and academies were called *ishiboth*, that is, *sessions*.

And he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.] This shews that they lived together in *society*, and after their lectures were wont to eat together with their master: who ordered his servants to prepare some food for them; which was very plain and common, such as the gardens or fields would afford; without much labour, and of small price.

Ver. 39. *And one went into the field to gather herbs.*] They went into the fields, I suppose, to gather what green things they could find; because there were no pot-herbs in their garden at home, by reason of the drought.

And found a wild vine, and he gathered thereof wild gourds his lap-full.] This is thought to have been coloquintida, which hath a leaf something like that of a vine, and purges vehemently.

And came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not.] Neither he that gathered them, nor they that shred them, knew what they were; but took them to be the leaves of a wild vine.

Ver. 40. *So they poured out for the men to eat: and it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot: and they could not eat thereof.*] It was so bitter and distasteful, that they concluded there was some venomous herb in the pot. Perhaps they might know it by the taste to be what it was: an herb that purges extremely, and is poison, if not qualified and taken in a moderate quantity.

Ver. 41. *But he said, Then bring meal: and he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat: and there was no harm in the pot.*] Which alteration was not from any virtue in the meal, but from the power of God. Therefore, the Jews justly reckon this as the eighth miracle which Elisha wrought, after he was made a prophet.

Ver. 42. *And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first-fruits.*] This was a seasonable present, it being a time of dearth, when bread was very scarce. And it being called *biccurim* (which was the name for the first-fruits belonging to the priests), it is likely this was not such a present as men were wont to make when they came to ask a prophet any question, and to be resolved of their doubts, (like that, 1 Kings xiv. 3.) but a free-will-offering for the better subsistence of the prophet. Unto whom it is probable, pious people gave that portion, which was assigned by God for the priests, to whom they could not now carry their first-fruits, they being in the land of Judah. And I suppose the schools of the prophets might be partly maintained by this means.

Twenty loaves of barley.] Which were not very large; for then it would not have been a miracle, that they sufficed for a hundred men.

And full ears of corn in the husk thereof.] Which being parched, they were wont to eat. (See Ruth ii. 15.) But Dr. Hammond approves rather of our marginal translation, and thinks these words should be rendered, He brought ears of corn *in a satchel, or scrip.* (See Matt. x. annot. *e*.)

And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.] That is, to the sons of the prophets, with whom he then was, when this present was brought to him.

Ver. 43. *And his servitor said, What! shall I set this before a hundred men?*] Just as the apostles said unto our blessed Saviour, when he intended to feed a far greater multitude with less food. By this it appears there were a great many scholars, who lived in this community; and that they used a frugal diet.

And he said again, Give the people, that they may eat.] That is, do as I bid you, and make no objections.

For thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.] As the multitude left of the loaves our Saviour caused to be set before them, John vi. 11.

Ver. 44. *So he set before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord.*] Something like

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this was done by his master Elijah, for the woman of Sarepta, in time of famine; whose barrel of meal and cruse of oil wasted not for many days, till God sent rain upon the earth, (1 Kings xvii. 14. 16.)

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *NOW Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria.*] Commander-in-chief of his whole army, whom we call general.

Was a great man with his master.] In great favour with him.

And honourable.] In high esteem with all the people.

Because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria.] He had been victorious in such battles as he had fought; which this Divine writer would have the Israelites look upon as the Lord's doing.

He was also a mighty man of valour.] Being the person (as the Jews say in Midrasch Tehillim) who drew the bow at adventure and killed Ahab, (1 Kings xxii. 34.)

But he was a leper.] Which did not exclude him from the society of men, in that country, where the Jewish law was not in force. But it was a great blemish to him, and also like to prove deadly; there being no cure for this disease, which was very common in Syria, as I have elsewhere noticed.

Ver. 2. *And the Syrians had gone out by companies.*] The word which we translate *company*, doth not signify an army; but such troops (or parties, as we call them) as made excursions and inroads into the enemy's country, to get booty.

And had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little young maid.] Young men and maids were a desirable part of the prey which they got; whom they sold for money, or employed them in their own service.

And she waited on Naaman's wife.] Either she was his part of the spoil in that expedition, or they made a present of her to him (being beautiful, perhaps, and ingenious), or he bought her of the soldiers.

Ver. 3. *And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord was with the prophet that is in Samaria!*] The history left him last at Gilgal; but he used to be in several other places; and when she was taken captive was at Samaria.

For he would recover him of his leprosy.] She related, it is likely, the wonderful things which he had done; and therefore was confident he could work this cure.

Ver. 4. *And one went in and told his lord, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.*] Her words being related to Naaman, he went and told the king his master what she said, and begged his leave to go to the prophet in the land of Israel. The following words warrant this sense.

Ver. 5. *And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.*] That he might honourably reward the prophet, and those that attended him.

Ver. 6. *And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now, when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent my servant to thee, that thou mayest cure him of his leprosy.*] The beginning of the letter is omitted, as not pertinent to the matter in hand. It is likely it contained the usual compliments; after which he desired him, together with this letter, to receive his servant Naaman, and to cure him of his leprosy; that is, to take care he might be cured by the prophet. But this not being plainly expressed, the king of Israel apprehended that the intention of this demand was only to pick a quarrel with him, and seek an occasion, or rather a pretence, for a war with him.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive.*] He rent his clothes either as one in great affliction and trouble, or (as some will have it) because he looked upon it as blasphemy, to ascribe that power to him which belonged to God alone. For none but he could cure a leprosy; which he expresses by killing and making alive. Every body, even beasts, can kill; but when one is killed, to make him alive again (thus these words must be understood in conjunction) is the work only of the Almighty.

That this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?] To cure this disease was as hard as to raise a dead man to life; for the skin was dead, and the leprosy fretted and eat into the flesh.

Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.] Though he had seen what miracles Elisha had wrought, yet he either had forgot them, or thought this beyond his power; or, was loath to see still more demonstrations of his power with God; and so did not send to him upon this occasion.

Ver. 8. *And it was so, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.*] As the word prophet commonly signifies a man that declares things which none could know but God, who reveals them by his Spirit; so here it signifies a man endued with a Divine power, who could do that which no man could effect unless God was with him.

Ver. 9. *So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.*] Expecting, I suppose, that the prophet would come out to him; or rather out of reverence to the prophet, unto whom he sent a message, letting him understand the cause of his coming; for the prophet presently answers him, though by his servant, not by himself.

Ver. 10. *And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying.*] It is not to be thought that Elisha took state upon him; but it is to be ascribed to the retired sort of life which the prophets led, that he did not shew himself to Naaman. We see an instance of this in the foregoing chapter, where we read that he did not so much as speak with the great woman who entertained him at her house, and built an apartment on purpose for him; but let her understand what he had to say by his servant Gehazi, (ver. 12, 13, &c.)

Go and wash in Jordan seven times.] Thus lepers were sprinkled, by the law of Moses, seven times, (Lev. xiv. 7, &c.) But it is plain, by the next verse, Naaman expected the prophet would have been so civil as to come out to him, or invite him to his house, and discourse with him: neither of which the prophet thought fit to do; partly for a trial of his faith, and partly to let him know that this was not so difficult a thing as the king imagined, but so easy for him to effect by the power of God, that he need

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not come out to talk with him about it: let him but go to Jordan and wash there seven times, and the cure should be performed. Jordan had no more virtue in it (as he rightly saith afterward) than other rivers; nor was the earth of Israel better than that of Syria (though he begged two loads of it), but God presided more particularly over this country, and his power here appeared: and in this appeared the more, because water being cold, was very bad for this disease: the root of it being a white waterish humour, as Abarbinel notes, which would naturally, by this means, be increased.

And thy flesh shall come again to thee.] For the leprosy had eaten into it, and consumed it in part, as it did Miriam's, (Numb. xii. 12.)

And thou shalt be clean.] Freed from this filthy disease.

Ver. 11. *But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, I thought, Surely he will come out to me, and call upon the name of his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.*] He was as angry with the prophet, as if he had scorned and mocked him. First, he thought himself despised, in that he did not come to him and salute him: and then he thought it a thing ridiculous to go and wash in Jordan; for what could that water do more than any other? Thus men slight common and easy things, and admire those that are rare and difficult; and in their passion reject that which God himself propounds to them, if it be not agreeable to their humours, and their conceits. In which passion, if he had continued, he had been a leper to his dying day.

Ver. 12. *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters in Israel?*] The valley of Damascus, which lay between Libanus and Antilibanus, was washed by five rivers; the two principal of which descended from Mount Hermon, *viz.* Abana and Pharpar; the last of which run by the walls of Damascus, and the other run through the city, and divided it into two parts, as Bochartus observes.

May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned, and went away in a rage.] He did not consider that he was now under the direction of a prophet, who was supposed to speak from God, who might have prescribed what method he pleased for his cure; which was to come from his Divine power alone, and not from the virtue of any water whatsoever.

Ver. 13. *And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?*] Happy are they who have such excellent servants as these, who both had the courage to speak the truth to their master, and the prudence to order it with all submission and reverence. For *my father* was a title of honour in that country; by which name they called their lords: as kings were called the fathers of their country. And these servants, perhaps, had heard the young maid talk much of the power of the prophet, which made them very desirous their master would not refuse his advice; which they urge him to follow with great reason; by representing to him that it was the advice of a prophet, who was guided by God to give him these directions. And, as it was not fit for servants to say to their masters, when they order a thing, Why so? Why not otherways? so much less should a man say to God, or his minister, who speaks in his name; especially when he commands things that may be done without much trouble, or any pain. For if he had bade him cut and burn, as chirurgeons many times do in grievous sores, he would have submitted to it: and therefore it was unreasonable not to comply with his prescriptions, when he required him only to go and wash himself in the river Jordan, which was a thing very easy, in his way home, and would put him to no pain.

Ver. 14. *Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God.*] He shewed himself a person of great probity and discretion; who was not in such a rage but he could hear reason; and did not refuse good counsel from his servants; but suffered himself to be convinced and overruled to yield unto it.

And his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.] God was not so angry with him, as he was with Elisha; but upon his repentance, and obedience to his directions, vouchsafed him a perfect cure; there being no mark left of his leprosy, but his skin as clear and smooth as that of a little child. This was the only cure of a leprosy that we read of, till Christ the great prophet came into the world.

Ver. 15. *And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him.*] Now Elisha seems to have admitted him into his presence.

And said, Now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel.] He returned to give thanks to God, as the good Samaritan did to our Saviour; acknowledging the God that Elisha worshipped to be the true God, and that there was no other.

Now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.] A reward, or rather a token of his gratitude to him; for the Hebrews call all gifts a *blessing*: the Hebrew word *barac* signifying not only *benedicere*, but *benefacere*.

Ver. 16. *And he said, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.*] He did not think it unlawful to take it, for he received gifts from others. But he would have strangers to their religion know how good the God of Israel was; who made his servants so good, that they did the greatest good to mankind for nothing. Which generous piety was apt to invite others to the worship and service of this great and good God. For it gives great authority to a teacher of virtue not to be covetous. (See Lactantius, lib. i. Div. Instit. cap. 4.)

Ver. 17. *And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth?*] As much as two mules could carry or draw.

For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering, nor sacrifice to any other god, but unto the Lord.] Though he refused to accept his present, yet he doubted not he would present him with two burdens of earth, which he intended to employ in erecting an altar, whereon he would sacrifice to no other god but the Lord. He judged it reasonable to have an altar out of God's land, because he saw he peculiarly dwelt in Israel. And though he might have taken enough as he went along in his way home, yet he desired it as a gift from the prophet; fancying, perhaps, that he would put a greater virtue into it by his blessing; as he had done into the waters of Jordan: therefore Ralbag

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thinks he desired to have this earth out of Elisha's house where he dwelt; and Abarbinel thinks, from under his very feet in the place where he stood; of which there is no certainty. But it is plain he desired to receive it from the prophet, who had convinced him that there was no god like to his; who had such power, and made men so virtuous, as to be above the love of money.

Ver. 18. *In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there.*] This was the god of the Syrians, but no author informs us what god this was, nor whence so called. Only many conjecture, because *Rimmon* in Hebrew signifies a pomegranate, that *Venus* is hereby meant, to whom such fruit was sacred. But Scaliger understands this to be *Jupiter*, the thunderer, as they called him. And our Selden thinks it is derived from *rum*, which signifies *high*. Whence Hesychius saith, ὁ Ῥαμὰς signifies ὕψιστος θεὸς, *the most high God.*

And he leaneth on my hand.] Or *shoulder:* which he does out of state; or, perhaps, out of weakness, for his support. In the additions to the book of Esther, mention is made of two young women that waited on that queen, upon one of which she leaned, and the other held up her train, (xv. 4.) And it was not only the custom among the Persians and Syrians, but the Israelites also, as we read in this book, (vii. 2. 17.)

And I bow myself in the house of Rimmon.] Together with his master; who could not well bow, if Naaman stood upright, and did not bow his body with him.

When I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.] He hoped he might, without offence to the Divine Majesty, whom he alone resolved to worship, keep the great office he had under the king his master, and consequently bow himself when he went with him into the temple of Rimmon: he who sees into the hearts of men, knowing it was no act of worship to that god; but only a necessary respect to his master. And so the word is used for civil honour, as well as religious adoration. Thus Lud. de Dieu hath clearly rendered this whole verse, *In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant; when my master enters into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, he leans upon my hand, and so I bow myself (that is, together with him) in the house of Rimmon: when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.* Let him not take offence, since I intend not to worship Rimmon; as appeared by his sacrificing only to the God of Israel. An Israelite, indeed, was forbidden to bow before an idol, whatsoever his mind or intention was in that act: but a stranger was not bound by this law, as Mr. Selden shews the opinion of the Jews is, (lib. ii. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 11.) Therefore, when Naaman went into the temple, not of his own accord, but merely to wait upon his master, and perform the duty of his office; since he professed himself a worshipper of the most high God alone, and brought earth out of his land, and sacrificed only upon the altar made of it: all he thought might understand he did not worship Rimmon, but only paid his respects to the king when he bowed with him.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto him, Go in peace.*] The prophet did not condemn this, but bade him not trouble himself about this matter; for he did not offend against God's law, which was not intended for such as he was: though there are some of the Jews who think that these words, *go in peace*, relate to the verse foregoing; that he need not to trouble himself about carrying earth with him out of the land of Israel to make an altar (for it doth not appear he gave him any), and so left this matter of bowing in the house of Rimmon undetermined. And no less a person than Bochartus hath a large dissertation about this whole matter; wherein he endeavours to defend their opinion, who think Naaman begs pardon for what he had done in times past, not for what he should continue to do; and renders these words (as Dr. Lightfoot also doth), *when I have bowed*, &c. But this seems to me altogether improbable; for then he would not have mentioned what he did as the king's servant; but simply the idolatry he had committed in worshipping Rimmon. Besides, the Oriental versions, as well as the Greek and the Vulgar, and the Hebrew doctors generally, as well as Christian interpreters, understand it as we do, that he speaks of the future act of bowing; which, being only a civil action, and he declaring himself publicly to be a worshipper only of the God of Israel, he hoped would not be imputed to him as a sin. And so the famous Buxtorfius, in a letter to Theod. Hackspan saith, "Omnes, quotquot vidi, interpretes referunt ad futurum," &c. *All interpreters, as many as I have seen, refer this to the future, and not to the time past.* And so doth the Chaldee paraphrast himself: and I am very much of the same opinion.

So he departed from him a little way.] About a mile from the city, as the Jewish doctors understand it.

Ver. 20. *But Gehazi, the servant of the man of God said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman the Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought; but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.*] He seems to be angry that his master had been so kind to one that needed not his charity, and was also one of another nation; and therefore, in his passion, swore he would take something of him. Which covetousness plunged him into a great many other sins, as the apostle observes it usually doth, (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.) Dr. Lightfoot thinks the Hebrew text hath divinely omitted a letter in one word, that it might the more brand him for this villany. *I will run*, saith he, *after Naaman, and take* מומה *a blot*, instead of מאומה *somewhat.*

Ver. 21. *And Gehazi followed Naaman: and when Naaman saw him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?*] Behold the honour he gave to the prophet, in doing such honour to his servant; which testified he had a great sense of God, and of his goodness to him, in his heart.

Ver. 22. *And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there is come to me from Mount Ephraim two of the sons of the prophets.*] It seems there was a school there, as well as at Jericho, Beth-el, Carmel, and other places.

Give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of raiment.] To relieve their poverty. This was the first fruit of his covetousness, which put him upon inventing such a wicked slander of his master. For why should Elisha desire so much silver for two young scholars? Which might tempt Naaman to think, that though he publicly declined to take a gift from him, yet he secretly desired it. (See Dr. Hammond on St. Matt. vi. annot. *k.*)

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Ver. 23. *And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him.*] It is likely Gehazi pretended to keep strictly to his master's orders, and would have but one, till Naaman's generosity pressed and overcame him to take more.

And he bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of raiment, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.] As servants do before persons of honour.

Ver. 24. *And when he came to the tower.*] To the place where Elisha lodged: or, as some will have it, to a *secret place*, where he laid up what he had got.

He took them from the men, and bestowed them in the house; and let the men go, and they departed.] For he was afraid his master should see them.

Ver. 25. *And he came in, and stood before his master.*] As servants were wont to do, to see if their master wanted any thing.

And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.] This was another impudent lie, wherein he thought to deceive his master, though he was a prophet. Which was an impious endeavour to deceive the Spirit of God, whose minister Elisha was: like that lie of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 3, &c.

Ver. 26. *And he said, Went not my heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?*] Did not God represent to my mind, as if I had been present, how Naaman came to meet thee, and what thou saidst to him, and what he gave thee? For, no doubt, he recited all that had passed between them; to convince him of his folly (in thinking to cheat him), and put him to shame and confusion.

Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and vineyards, and olive-yards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?] Which Gehazi designed to purchase with the two talents: at a very unseasonable time, when the nation, for their sins, were in danger to be carried captive out of their land. Which, though it did not fall out till above a hundred and fifty years after this, yet great devastations followed the death of Elisha.

Ver. 27. *The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever.*] Unto many generations, as the word *for ever* frequently signifies. But the Hebrew doctors say this relates only unto his children that were then born; who were conscious to his crime, and approved of it. (See more of this, viii. 4, 5.)

And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.] He punished him with the worst sort of leprosy, which was incurable. For his sin was exceeding great, or rather he was guilty of many sins besides those already mentioned; being a thief, and taking that to himself which was given to others. Nay, he was a sacrilegious person, in robbing the sons of the prophets, who were men belonging to God, in a special manner. The Hebrew doctors reckon seven sins, for which God punished men with the plague of leprosy, and endeavour to prove it out of Scripture; and Gehazi was guilty of more than one of them, and therefore justly punished in an extraordinary manner. They are, an evil tongue, shedding of blood, a false oath, uncovering of any forbidden nakedness, inflation of spirit, rapine, and envy.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *AND the sons of the prophets.*] That were at Gilgal; for that is the place last mentioned where the prophet was, (iv. 38.) and was also near to Jordan, mentioned in the next verse.

Said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee.] They had their colleges sometimes in cities (as in Beth-el), and sometimes in the fields, and sometimes upon mountains. It is probable this was in the fields; where Elisha, for the present, was resident among them.

Is too strait for us.] Their number of scholars was so much increased under so eminent a master as he was, that there was not room enough for them.

Ver. 2. *Let us go, we pray thee.*] They were so much under his government, that they did not take the liberty to go any whither without his leave.

Unto Jordan.] Near to which many trees grew.

And take from thence every man a beam.] A piece of timber.

And let us make us a place there, where we may dwell.] A tabernacle large enough to contain them all. From whence we may gather, that the sons of the prophets did not spend all their time in studying the law, meditation, and prayer, and such holy exercises; but also employed themselves in some manufactures, as the apostles did in aftertimes, some of which were tent-makers, (Acts xviii. 3.) like to these here mentioned.

And he answered, Go ye.] He consented to their design, the place which they chose being very commodious for students. As St. Jerome observes, who, in more places than one (see his epistles to Rusticus and to Paulina), compares the monks of his time with these sons of the prophets, "Qui habitabant in agris, et solitudinibus, et faciebant sibi tabernacula prope fluenta Jordanis."

Ver. 3. *And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.*] They thought their design would prosper the better under his conduct; and that if any one questioned what they did, his authority would overawe them.

Ver. 4. *So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.*] They began to go about their work.

Ver. 5. *But as one was felling a beam, the axe-head fell into the water.*] Being not well fastened to the helve; or rather the helve breaking.

And he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.] Good men are religiously careful that none suffer by their kindness to them. This shews, that as these sons of the prophets wrought with their own hands, going themselves to cut down wood to build withal, so (some of them at least) they were but poor, being not furnished with tools for their work, but forced to borrow.

Ver. 6. *And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick.*] To serve, I suppose, instead of a helve.

And cast it into the water, and the iron did swim.] A double miracle, as the Jews understand it, that iron, which was sunk down to the bottom, rose up; and then went to the stick, and was joined to it, at its helve. For to what end should he throw a stick into the water, but that it should serve this purpose?

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Ver. 7. *Therefore said he, Take it to thee. And he put out his hand and took it.*] It fell near the river-side, or was brought thither when it rose up.

Ver. 8. *Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.*] He did not rely merely on the number of his forces, but secretly resolved, by the advice of his council, to place them in such posts where he might hope to surprise the Israelites. It may seem strange, that after such a great benefit lately received in the cure of Naaman, the king should send him, who was captain of his host, to fight against Israel. But who can tell how long this was after that time, when Naaman might be dead? or, perhaps, Naaman might have lost his place; because he refused to worship Rimmon; and no benefit will reconcile inveterate enemies.

Ver. 9. *And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.*] And had laid an ambush for him there.

Ver. 10. *And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of.*] He sent some spies to see whether Elisha gave him true information.

And saved himself there, not once or twice.] By this means he frequently saved his soldiers from falling into the hands of the Syrians; who lay in wait for them in such places, where they would certainly have gone, if they had not been told of the danger.

Ver. 11. *Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sorely troubled for this thing; and he called his servants.*] With whom he had consulted how to carry on this war, (ver. 8.)

And said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?] Betrays my counsels to him; for he could not think he should meet with such constant disappointments, unless it were by treachery.

Ver. 12. *And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words thou speakest in thy bedchamber.*] It is likely Naaman had spread the fame of the prophet so much in this court, that some of them made further inquiry after him; and heard more of his miraculous works; and thence concluded he could tell the greatest secrets, as well as to do such wonders as were reported of him.

Ver. 13. *And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him.*] A very foolish design. As if the prophet could not as well know this, as he did the rest of his other counsels.

And it was told him, saying, He is in Dothan.] A city in the tribe of Manasseh; not far from Shechem and Samaria.

Ver. 14. *Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host.*] That the people of Dothan, being affrighted at the sight of such a number of soldiers, might not dare to defend the prophet.

And they came by night, and compassed the city about.] That no intelligence might be carried to Samaria.

Ver. 15. *And when the servant of the man of God was risen early.*] As students were wont to do.

And was gone forth.] Out of the door of the house, which stood high; the city being built upon a hill.

Behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots: and his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?] Perhaps the Syrians had assured the inhabitants they intended no harm to them; but only came to take Elisha. Which the young man hearing, it put him in great fear; for being but newly come to his master in the room of Gehazi, and having perhaps seen none of his wonderful works, he gave himself and his master for lost men.

Ver. 16. *And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.*] Faith drives away fear; but it was hard for the young man to believe this, till he had more experience of God's providence over his prophet: and therefore Elisha prays he might have a demonstration of it.

Ver. 17. *And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire.*] He beheld the camp of God there, (as the angels are called Gen. xxxii. 2.) ready at hand to defend his master. Legions of angels, (Matt. xxvi. 35.) which were far more numerous and powerful than the host of the Syrians which he saw compass the city; but did not see this heavenly host till God opened his eyes, and represented them to him. The ancients think that the angels, when present with us, appear where they please, and are invisible where they please, though present. Now this appearance of theirs in this place is called the opening of his eyes; because it had the same effect. For he beheld the mountain (on which, I suppose, the city stood), where he saw none but Syrians before, was now full of fiery chariots and horses, which, as it here follows, had encircled Elisha.

Round about Elisha.] That is, he saw in this vision, as if Elisha was in the midst of this glorious camp of angels; who defended him so that none could penetrate and break through unto him.

Ver. 18. *And when they came down to him.*] He seems to have gone out of the city to them, under the Divine protection; intending to go to Samaria. And they seeing him, asked him the way to the man of God.

Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha.] So that they might not be able perfectly to distinguish one thing from another.

Ver. 19. *And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city.*] Some think we are not bound to speak truth to an enemy; but there is no need that this should be asserted here. For it was true that they were not in the way to find Elisha; whom they should not see till they came to another city.

Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek.] As he really did. But their minds were struck with blindness, as well as their eyes; or else they would not have committed themselves to the conduct of a stranger, to follow him in an enemy's country, they knew not whither.

But he led them to Samaria.] This shews they were not wholly blind, for then they could not have been led by him; but were dark, as we speak, and could not clearly discern who it was that led them, nor whither they were going. Here the Jews cry, Behold, a double miracle! Elisha's servant saw that which appeared to nobody else;

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and the Syrians could not discern that which every body else saw.

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw; that, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.*] To their great astonishment, no doubt, when they found that he had made them all captives, whom they came to carry away to Syria.

Ver. 21. *And the king of Israel said to Elisha, when he saw them, My father.*] This miracle touched him with great reverence to the prophet.

Shall I smite them? shall I smite them?] This repetition of the question expresses his eager desire to fall upon them, and kill them, if the prophet would have permitted.

Ver. 22. *And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them.*] There was a command to destroy the people of the seven nations; yet not if they yielded to them. But as for other persons, who were taken in the war, they were not bound to destroy them; but it was humanity rather to spare them. Whence it is, that the prophet here forbids the king to smite these, who were not under the curse of the people of Canaan.

Wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword, and with thy bow?] As much as to say, Thou wouldest not be so cruel, as in cold blood to kill those whom thou thyself hadst taken prisoners in a battle. Much more then are those to be spared, who are not thy captives, but God's. Thou hast not taken them with thy sword, or with thy bow: but he hath brought them to thee, and delivered them into thy hand; not that thou mayest kill them, but use them kindly. To this purpose Ralbag. (See Selden, de Jure Nat. et Gent. p. 745.)

Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.] And tell him what civility and kindness there is among the people of God. This is a rare example of that which St. Paul recommends to us, Rom. xii. 20. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink," &c.

Ver. 23. *And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master.*] This is a new wonder, that the hearts of the Israelites should so yield unto the command of the prophet, as not only to spare, but to entertain bountifully their old enemies.

And the bands of the Syrians came no more into the land of Israel.] Great hatreds are sometimes overcome by unexpected and undeserved benefits; as many of the heathens have observed, that this is the noblest way to conquer them, particularly Valerius Maximus: "Speciosius injuriæ beneficiis vincuntur, quam mutui odii pertinacia pensantur;" *injuries are more gloriously overcome by benefits, than requited by pertinacious mutual hatred.* But the sense of benefits in bad natures doth not last long; for in the very next verse we read, how the king of Syria besieged Samaria. Which seems to contradict what is said here, that the Syrians came no more into the land of Israel. But the meaning of that is (for no man can think that any author whatsoever would contradict himself in the same breath), either that for this time they retreated quite, and laid aside all thoughts of war, though afterward they broke out again into hostility: or (which is the plainest) that their bands made no more incursions and inroads; but they resolved to come and fall upon them, not in small parties, and by ambushes, (as they did before, ver. 8.) but with a formed army, wherewith they laid siege to Samaria.

Ver. 24. *And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria.*] The name of Ben-hadad was common to all the kings of Syria, as Pharaoh was to those of Egypt.

Gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.] It seems the Israelites had not forces to appear against him in the field: so that he marched directly to Samaria, and laid siege to it.

Ver. 25. *And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver.*] The siege lasted so long, or they were so ill provided for it, that there was a great scarcity of food in this city: insomuch that an ass's head was sold for so many shekels as make five pounds of our money. A great sum for the head, when the whole body was little worth; and it being an unclean creature, it was not lawful for the Israelites to eat (yea, was accounted unclean by the Arabians), unless in case of extreme necessity. See Bochartus, in his Hierozoïcon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 13. where he observes out of Plutarch, that there was such a scarcity in Artaxerxes's army, when he was among the Cadusii, that an ass's head was sold for threescore drachms.

And the fourth part of a cab.] A *cab* was a very small measure of corn; containing, as the Jews say, as much as twenty-four eggs would hold. It is never mentioned in the Scripture, but only here; though very often in the Talmud, in the title Kiddushim. (See Imbonacius, in the Biblioth. Mag. Rabbin. tom. v. p. 349.) All agree, it was such a measure as I have mentioned; so that the fourth part of it was no more than six eggs would contain, called a *log*, as Bochartus thinks.

Of dove's dung.] So the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and LXX. translate the Hebrew word *hirjonim:* and so a great many of the Jewish doctors, Jarchi, Kimchi, Ralbag, understand it. Though it be very hard to believe, that *dove's dung* should be so plentiful in a city as to be sold in any quantity, or that men should eat it; when every one knows there is no nourishment in such excrements, and less in that of doves than in others, as is observed by Bochartus: who, after he hath confuted many other opinions, hath made it very probable, that *fitches* or *lentiles* are here meant; which were the vilest of all food, and yet sold at this dear rate. For that some sort of food is here meant, is plain from what goes before. (See his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 7.)

For five pieces of silver.] Which the same author computes to be as much as nine French livres.

Ver. 26. *And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall.*] To see if they kept their guards well; or, to observe how the enemy lay.

There cried unto him a woman, saying, Help, my lord, O king!

Ver. 27. *And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press?*] Some take the first words to be a curse, and translate them as we do in the margin, *Let not the Lord save* (or help) *thee.* Like that among the gentiles, "Dii deæque te perdant;" *may thou perish.* Thus Josephus understands them to be the words of a man in a great passion, and full

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of fury, that she should implore relief from him, who could do nothing for himself. For he thought she had cried to him for victuals, as appears by the last words.

Ver. 28. *And the king said unto her, What aileth thee?*] When she had pacified his anger, or it cooled of itself, he asked her the cause of her cry.

And she answered, This woman.] Who stood by her.

Said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow.] Thus began the prophecy of Moses to be fulfilled, Deut. xxxviii. 54, 55, &c.

Ver. 29. *So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.*] Either that she might save him, or that she might eat him alone, and thereby preserve her life the longer.

Ver. 30. *And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes.*] Out of great grief at what the woman had said; or, perhaps, out of indignation at the prophet, with whom the next verse shews he was very angry.

And he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.] His royal robes, which were uppermost, being torn, they saw sackcloth (in token of great humiliation) next to his skin. For these idolatrous kings were not so profane, but they observed some of the ancient rites of religion: among which this was one; to abase and afflict themselves, in times of great calamity, by putting sackcloth upon their naked body.

Ver. 31. *Then he said, God do so to me, and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.*] Such was the arbitrary power which these kings exercised; which took away men's lives, without any formal process against them; and the reason of this furious resolution seems to be, either because Elisha had hindered him from smiting the great host of the Syrians, when he had them cooped up in Samaria, (ver. 20—22.) which might have disabled them from bringing him into these straits: or, because Elisha did not employ his interest in God, as he expected, to give them deliverance. Therefore he swore he should not live till night.

Ver. 32. *And Elisha sat in his house.*] In the school, where the sons of the prophets came to be instructed by him.

And the elders sat with him.] We often read in Ezekiel of the elders of Israel sitting before the prophet to hear him, (viii. 1. xxii. 24.) And so some understand it here, of the chief persons in Samaria, who were come to consult him. But it rather signifies his chief scholars, some grave persons, who applied themselves to the study of Divine things, and were now with him.

And the king sent a man from before him.] Commanded one that attended him to go, and execute the sentence he had pronounced against Elisha.

But, ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head?] He understood, by the spirit of prophecy, the wicked intentions of the king; who was like his father Ahab, that had murdered many of the prophets of the Lord.

Look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?] He charged them to lay hold of him before he came into the room, and not suffer him to enter; for the king would immediately follow him, to revoke his order. So he foresaw, by the same spirit of prophecy, that the king repented of what he had decreed, and was coming to revoke it; and therefore he only required the elders to do that which he knew the king would do himself, *viz.* stop the messenger at the door, and let him proceed no further. This will not warrant private men to apprehend public officers; nor to use such words to princes as the prophet here doth to Joram, whom he calls *the son of a murderer*, by a Divine motion. Which authorized him to represent him as the impious son of a very impious father.

Ver. 33. *And, while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?*] Some imagine that the messenger being come, spake these words in the king's name. But it seems more reasonable to think the king, who was also come, spake them himself, in a fit of raging despair. He could not but acknowledge, that the Lord had brought them into this distress. Upon which Elisha exhorted him to wait till he would please (who only could do it) to deliver them. But he impatiently answered, he had waited so long in vain, that he had no hope left, since they were driven to such extremity, that women ate their own children. Or, these words may be thus interpreted (taking the former part of them to be spoken by the prophet, and the latter by the king); *And he said* (that is, the prophet said), Acknowledge the hand of God in this evil, which comes from him. To which the king replied, And what else can I expect from the Lord, unless it be such plagues? No, saith Elisha in the very next words, ye shall have plenty here to-morrow.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *AND Elisha said.*] Unto the king, who followed the messenger, (see foregoing chapter, ver. 32, 33.) and spake such words as Elisha here satisfies him were very unreasonable.

Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord, To-morrow, about this time, shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel.] The Hebrew word *seah* signifies a certain measure, containing the thirtieth part of an *omer:* which is about a peck of our measure.

In the gate of Samaria.] Which was the market-place, as well as a place for other public meetings, (see 2 Sam. xix. 8.)

Ver. 2. *Then a lord, on whose hand the king leaned.*] Some think this was the messenger which the king sent to see execution done upon Elisha. Whosoever he was, he was greatly beloved by the king; for when he went abroad he leaned on him, which was a sign he was dear to him. For this state kings in those countries took upon them, to lean upon some favourite. As queen Esther, the Jews say, had a young lady on whom she rested her right hand, after the manner of the eastern kings. (See upon ver. 18.)

Answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?] He was incredulous, and seems to have laughed at what the prophet said: looking upon it as unlikely, as that God would rain corn from heaven, as once he did manna.

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And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not eat thereof.] A just punishment of his unbelief. And such will be the portion of those that believe not the promise of eternal life.

Ver. 3. *And there were four leprous men.*] The Jews will have these to have been Gehazi and his three sons; as they say in Gemara Sanhedrin, p. 416. edit. J. Coch.

At the entering of the gate.] Of the city of Samaria. From whence lepers were thrust out, as anciently out of the camp, (Lev. xiii. 46. xiv. 3. Numb. v. 23.) But they got as near the gate of the city as they could, for fear of the enemy. It appears by this that the Israelites observed the ceremonial law, though they were gross idolaters.

And they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?] For the city could no longer supply their wants, having not sufficient for themselves.

Ver. 4. *If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there.*] Lepers might sometimes come into their cities, if there was a great occasion, keeping their due distance from every one; as appears, some think, from Gehazi's talking with the king himself, in the next chapter, (viii. 4.) but more plainly from this place. (See Grotius upon St. Luke vii. 12.)

And if we sit still here, we die also.] The besiegers having carried away all the food thereabout.

Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians.] Who possibly might take compassion upon miserable people, though enemies to them.

If they save us alive, we shall live.] They will not let us starve, but give us food.

And if they kill us, we shall but die.] They knew the worst that could happen to them was to lose their lives; which they should certainly do where they were; and therefore they chose an uncertain evil before a certain.

Ver. 5. *And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians.*] In the close of the evening, as appears from ver. 9. 12.

And when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria.] Unto their trenches.

Behold, there was no man there.] Not a man to guard them, nor so much as a centinel to watch them.

Ver. 6. *For the Lord had made the host of Syria to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host.*] By the ministry of angels he made such a rattling like that of chariots, and prancing of horses, that the Syrians imagined a great army was not only marching towards them, but ready to fall upon them.

And they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of Egypt, to come upon us.] Those people of the land of Canaan called Hittites, who dwelt about Hebron and Beer-sheba, were rooted out by the Israelites. But either some of them fled, and settled themselves in some neighbouring country, and there grew very populous; or else, we are to understand by the kings of the Hittites (as Josephus doth), the kings τῶν νήσων, *of the isles*, lib. ix. Antiq. cap. 2. As if *chittim* was the same with *cetim*, as all isles, he saith, are called. Every one of which had a king; as Egypt itself was then divided into several kingdoms; whose help, the Syrians thought, the king of Israel had procured.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore they arose, and fled in the twilight.*] Being but newly gone when the lepers came thither.

And they left their tents, and their horses, and their asses.] Asses were employed in war as well as horses; at least for carrying of their baggage. So Bochartus observes out of Pollux, χρεία δ' εἰς πολέμους σκευοφόρων μὴν ὄνων, *asses are of use in war to carry burdens.* There were several people, also, that fought upon asses, as others did upon horses; which he proves out of Ælian and other authors. (See Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 13.)

Even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.] They thought of saving nothing but themselves; their fear being so great, that they left all they had behind them.

Ver. 8. *And when these lepers came into the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.*] They had satisfied their hunger in the first tent, so that they had nothing now to do, but to get what treasure they could find, and secure it.

Ver. 9. *Then they said one to another, We do not well.*] When they had both well refreshed and enriched themselves, and also secured their booty, they began to reflect upon the distress of their brethren; and condemned themselves for making no more haste to impart unto them the discovery they had made of the enemy's flight, and the plenty of all things they found in their camp.

This is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace.] Do not publish the goodness of God to us all.

If we tarry till the morning-light, some mischief will come upon us.] The Syrians might possibly recover out of their fright, and return when they saw none pursue them: or, some of them might be lurking thereabout, and come and kill them.

Now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.] Impart this joyful news to the city. For every good citizen is in duty bound to discover every thing that is for the public safety.

Ver. 10. *So they came, and called to the porter of the city.*] To him that was the chief commander at the gate of Samaria.

And they told them.] Him and the guard that was with him.

Saying, We came into the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.] Standing without any body in them; but full of provision and riches.

Ver. 11. *And he called the porters.*] Of the king's house.

And they told it to the king's house within.] Reported it in the court, till it came to the king's ears.

Ver. 12. *And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us.*] What their stratagem is.

They know that we be hungry, therefore are they gone out of the camp, to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they shall come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.] His long sufferings had made him suspicious and cautious; and this was no improbable conjecture.

Ver. 13. *And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; behold, I say, they are even as all*

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the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed), and let us send and see.] He repeats his advice twice, that it might make the greater impression on the king. The sense of which is this: that they were almost consumed with hunger, and must shortly die, as all the horses and the Israelites had done, whom the famine had killed. Therefore, if these horses and men were taken by the Syrians, there would be no great loss of them; for they would be lost if they remained in Samaria.

Ver. 14. *They took therefore two chariot-horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.*] Whether they were gone or not. Some understand the horses of two chariots, which might in all be five: but it is more probable the king would venture no more than two horsemen, which he thought enough; who took two of the horses of his own chariots to make discovery.

Ver. 15. *And they went after them unto Jordan.*] Finding the camp empty, as the lepers had related, they pursued them as far as this river.

And, lo, all the way was full of garments, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste: and the messengers returned, and told the king.] The certainty of their flight to their own country.

Ver. 16. *And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.*] They found such store of provision in the tents of the Syrians, that it made this sudden change in the price of corn, according to Elisha's prediction.

Ver. 17. *And the king appointed the lord, on whom his hand leaned, to have the charge of the gate.*] To take care the people did not run out tumultuously, and leave the city empty; nor commit any disorder in the gate, being very eager to get victuals.

And the people trod upon him in the gate, and he died.] They came out in such crowds, and pressed upon him so hard, that they threw him down, and trod him to death.

As the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.] See ver. 2.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to-morrow at this time in the gate of Samaria.*] By this it should seem there was a market kept in the gate of Samaria, where provisions were sold: and this lord was set to see good order kept, that they might neither take them by force, nor make any disturbance.

Ver. 19. *And the lord answered the man of God, saying, Now, behold, if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.*] This part of the history is repeated, because it is a most remarkable fulfilling of a Divine prediction, whereby their belief of God's providence, ordering all things in a wonderful manner, was confirmed.

Ver. 20. *And so it fell out unto him: for the people trod upon him in the gate, and he died.*] Before he could enjoy the benefit of that plenty which God had bestowed upon them. Which did not at all alter their hearts; but they continued so obstinately deaf to all the prophet's admonitions and miraculous works, that in the next chapter we read of another long famine coming upon them.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *THEN spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he restored to life.*] See iv. 35, 36.

Saying, Arise, and go thou and thy household, and sojourn where thou canst sojourn.] In some country out of the land of Israel.

For the Lord hath called for a famine.] He had already ordered and decreed it.

And it shall come upon the land seven years.] Continue as long again as that in the days of Ahab, which lasted three years and a half. For as their iniquities increased, so did their punishments. Some of the Jews will have this to be the terrible famine spoken of by Joel the prophet; who they fancy lived in these days. And four years of it, they say, were caused by noxious creatures, which ate up all the fruits of the earth; and the other three by a drought, for want of rain.

Ver. 2. *And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God.*] Who by this monition hath left us an example of a grateful mind, which never thinks it can sufficiently requite benefits received; and she was abundantly satisfied, that what he predicted would certainly come to pass.

And she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.] This country was so near, that she might easily remove her family thither, and likewise hear sometimes from her own country. They were idolaters, indeed, but they suffered those that were not to live quietly among them, as their forefathers had done; who entertained Abraham and Isaac with much friendship, and did not trouble themselves about their religion; as Jacob, in like manner, sojourned a long time among idolaters in Mesopotamia. This shews the severity of God's anger against Israel, that he accounted them worse than the Philistines; who had plenty among them, when the Israelites were almost starved.

Ver. 3. *And it came to pass, at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house, and for her land.*] Which some think her kindred had seized, as if she had been dead. But it is more likely that she carried her relations along with her into the land of the Philistines; and it was the custom here, as in other places, that they who left their country had their goods confiscated. (See Grotius.)

Ver. 4. *And the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.*] Some of the Jews think, that the king seeing Gehazi, asked him how he came to be leprous; and thereupon he related to him the history of Naaman the Syrian: which moved the king, either to satisfy his curiosity, or pass away the time pleasantly, to desire to hear all the other miracles Elisha had wrought; but he had no intention to be convinced by them, and turn to God. But then here arises a question, how Gehazi came to be admitted to speak with him; being a leper, who was not to come into any company, much less into the king's presence. This difficulty, some think, cannot be solved without affirming, that this fell out before Gehazi left Elisha's service; such ὑστερολογία, as the Greeks call

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it, being frequent in Scripture; and the Jews, in Seder Olam Rabba, place this famine before the story of Naaman, which spoils what they say of the occasion of this discourse. But there is no need to assert this: for either Gehazi upon his repentance might be restored to health; or he might speak with the king at a due distance, as he walked in the field for his recreation; and desired to be entertained with a relation of Elisha's miracles. Thus Naaman conversed with Elisha's family at a distance; and the lepers called to our Saviour, as he went along the highway, (Luke xvii. 12.)

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he restored to life, cried to the king for her house, and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.*] By a wonderful providence she came to present her petition, and brought her son with her, in that very nick of time, when Gehazi was telling the story of his restoration to life; that the king might be the more fully satisfied of the truth of what he related from her own mouth.

Ver. 6. *And when the king asked the woman, she told him.*] That is, confirmed what Gehazi had said.

So the king appointed unto her a certain officer.] In the margin, *an eunuch;* that is, one of his bedchamber.

Saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field.] Not only her house and land, but all the profits that had been made of them, and brought into his exchequer.

Since the day that she left the land, even till now.] This was a high act of justice, and an argument of some goodness left in a bad man, that he would not gain any thing by her calamity.

Ver. 7. *And Elisha went to Damascus.*] In the time of the famine, I suppose he went thither, as the woman did to the Philistines.

And Ben-hadad king of Syria was sick: and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.] Who having cured Naaman, had raised a great opinion of his power with God, in that country.

Ver. 8. *And the king said unto Hazael.*] Who was the captain of his host.

Take a present in thy hand, and go meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?] They who consulted prophets, were wont always to carry a present with them, in token of the honour they paid them; as appears by many instances, particularly of Jeroboam's wife in this book. It is probable, also, he begged his prayers for his recovery, acknowledging him to be a man of God.

Ver. 9. *And Hazael went to meet him.*] As he was coming into Damascus.

And took a present with him of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him.] This was a very noble present; which, whether he accepted or refused, is not mentioned in the holy Scripture. Abarbinel thinks he accepted it, because nothing is said to the contrary, as there is in the case of Naaman, who presented him with silver, and gold, and raiment, and such-like things of value. Whereas this was only a provision of food, such as bread, and wine, and fruit, and fowl; which was a fit present for him to make to the prophet, who might be presumed to be weary with his journey, and as fit for him to accept for his refreshment.

Ver. 10. *And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me that he shall certainly die.*] His disease was not of such a nature as would endanger his life, if he did not lose it by some other means; as the prophet foresaw he would. For Josephus saith, his disease was only a deep melancholy, into which he fell upon the shameful flight of his army, when no enemy was near them. This affected his body, and took away his appetite; but might have been cured.

Ver. 11. *And he settled his countenance steadfastly, until he was ashamed; and the man of God wept.*] The most simple sense is, He looked upon Hazael so long, with a settled countenance, that Hazael was ashamed, and he himself fell a weeping. Perhaps he fastened his eyes upon him as a man astonished, and that in an ecstacy saw some dreadful thing represented to him. Others interpret it, he turned away his face on one side, until he was ashamed, because he wept; which he would not have had Hazael seen. Others, he settled his countenance, not to weep; but he could not refrain from tears.

Ver. 12. *And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.*] This last expresses the highest degree of barbarous cruelty; for which there was no occasion, if he did but kill the women with child, for the child in the womb would die with them, without ripping them up. Therefore a late learned man, looking on this as a thing unheard of, will have the word *haroth,* not to signify women with child, but castles or fortified places which he should demolish: though he cannot but acknowledge, that the cutting up women very naturally follows *slaying their young men, and dashing their children,* which goes just before. And he should have taken notice, that the very first evil he mentions that Hazael should do to them, is *setting their strong holds on fire.* (Gousset Comment. Linguæ Hebraicæ, p. 216.)

Ver. 13. *And Hazael said, But what! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?*] This is commonly understood as a disclaiming of such barbarity, which he abhorred as a beastly thing. But the words in the Hebrew sound otherways, being a submissive form of speech, wherein the speaker undervalues and debases himself, as appears from 1 Sam. xxiv. 15. 2 Sam. ix. 8. and run thus; *But what is thy servant? a dog.* As much as to say, A mean and contemptible creature, who can never have power to do such great things; which none but a prince can do.

And Elisha answered, The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.] This was as much as declaring and appointing him king of Syria: which Elijah ordered him to do; and was as much as if he had anointed him. (See 1 Kings xix. 15.)

Ver. 14. *So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, What saith Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldest surely recover.*] He told him only the first part of his answer, and that not sincerely, as he intended. For he did not say he *should* surely recover, but that he *might* recover; his disease being in itself not mortal.

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Ver. 15. *And it came to pass on the morrow.*] His eager desire to reign would not suffer him to expect his master's death, but he made haste to dispatch him the very next morning after he came from Elisha.

That he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water.] The covering of his bed, which (as many think) was made of goats' hair; or, some other thick cloth, that would suck up a great deal of water.

And spread it upon his face, so that he died.] He being feverish (as Josephus thinks) and complaining of heat, Hazael pretended to cool him by this means; but indeed choked him; by thrusting the cloth, perhaps, into his mouth: so that he could make no noise, nor did any sign of violence remain upon his body; but the murder was committed so secretly, that it was thought he died a natural death. But nothing can be concealed from God, who took care to have the villany recorded to posterity, by revealing it to his prophet.

And Hazael reigned in his stead.] Being in great favour with the people, especially with the soldiery; and Ben-hadad, it is likely, leaving no son.

Ver. 16. *And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.*] All the seeming contradictions between this verse and chap. i. 17. and chap. iii. 1. are thus briefly reconciled by Huetius:—Jehoram beginning to reign with his father Jehoshaphat in his seventeenth year, and Joram king of Israel in his eighteenth, the first year of Joram king of Israel will fall out in the second year of Jehoram, king of Judah: whose father dying in the twenty-second year of his reign, Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign alone in the fifth year of Joram king of Israel. (See Demonstr. Evang. propos. iv. p. 204.)

Ver. 17. *Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.*] Part of which was with his father, as I now observed, and the rest by himself. Dr. Lightfoot observing three dates of the beginning of his reign, gives this account of it:—The *first* was when he was made viceroy with his father, at the time he went out of the land for the recovery of Ramoth-Gilead. The *second* was when his father went upon his expedition with Jehoram, king of Israel, against Moab (chap. iii. of this book), from which time, he thinks, the beginning of his reign is fixed here, and in 2 Chron. xxi. 20. For after this time, Jehoshaphat was little at Jerusalem, but abroad either in his own land (which he perambulated that he might reduce the people to the true religion), or in Moab, to bring them into subjection, (2 Chron. xix. 20.) And *lastly*, at his father's death he was completely king of Judah, 2 Chron. xxi. 1. (See Harm. of the Evang. Prolegom. sect. 6.) So that the clearest solution of the difficulty mentioned in the foregoing verse is this (as Dr. Alix, a great man in this learning, and all others, hath observed to me), that Joram had three beginnings of his reign. One in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat, when his father designed him to be king; the second in the twenty-third year of his father, when he was crowned; and the last when his father (after he had reigned five-and-twenty years) died; and he reigned alone a little more than four years. Thus Solomon was made king before his father died, and again after his death, as Abarbinel observes. (See 1 Kings ii. 12.)

Ver. 18. *And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab; for the daughter of Ahab was his wife.*] *viz.* Athaliah, ver. 26.

And he did evil in the sight of the Lord.] Being seduced by his wife to forsake the religion of his pious father and grandfather. Thus Ahab himself was led to the worship of Baal by his wife Jezebel. So dangerous it is to marry with idolaters; for this wife of Jehoram, in all likelihood, was the author of that cruel policy of murdering all his brethren, for fear they should disturb him in his kingdom. (2 Chron. xxi. 2—4.)

Ver. 19. *Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake.*] Though he punished them severely, (see 2 Chron. xxi. 14—17, &c.) yet he would not cut them all off, but had patience with them a long time, upon the account of that excellent servant of his, king David; unto whom he had made a promise, as it here follows, and to his seed after him, of a perpetual kingdom.

As he promised him, to give him always a light, and to his children.] A succession in this dignity (as I have expounded it before), which was completed in the Messiah, whose kingdom shall have no end.

Ver. 20. *In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.*] After they had been subject to Judah a hundred and fifty years, ever since the time of David, who subdued that country. This was a great dishonour to him; but by this means the prophecy of Isaac was fulfilled. (Gen. xxvii. 40.)

Ver. 21. *So Joram went over to Zair.*] This word *Zair* is written differently from *Seir;* and therefore doth not signify any part of the country of Edom; but some city near to it.

And all the chariots with him.] With as great a force as he could raise, to reduce them to obedience.

And he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about.] The Edomites were not wanting in their own defence, but had surrounded him with an army; through which he broke in the night, and routed them.

And the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents.] To their own camp; where, it is likely, they were intrenched.

Ver. 22. *Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah.*] Notwithstanding this victory, they could not recover their dominion over this country; but Edom continued a kingdom under its own king.

Unto this day.] When this book was written, which was not long after this revolt. And they were not brought again under the power of the Jews till after the captivity of Babylon: when Hyrcanus the son of Simon conquered them, and they received circumcision; and came to have a free commerce with the Jews. Insomuch that Herod the son of Antipater, who was an Edomite, obtained the kingdom of Judea; and endeavoured to pass for a Jew, because they had received circumcision under Hyrcanus.

Then Libnah revolted at the same time.] Which was the reason, perhaps, why he could not pursue his victory over the Edomites, and regain their country; because he had enough to do at home, there being a defection of his own subjects from him. For this was a considerable city in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 42.) and belonged to the priests, (Josh. xxi. 13.) Which example, it is likely, other neighbouring cities followed. For the reason why they revolted, was because he attempted to set up his idolatrous worship

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among them; contrary to the law of God and of the kingdom. (See 2 Chron. xxi. 10, 11.)

Ver. 23. *And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] See 1 Kings xi. 41.

Ver. 24. *And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David.*] But not in the sepulchre of the kings, as we read 2 Chron. xxi. 20.

And Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Ver. 25. *In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign.*] In the conclusion of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth: as appears from ix. 29.

Ver. 26. *Twenty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem.*] But in 2 Chron. xxii. 2. it is said, he was forty-two years old when he began to reign: which seeming contradiction was anciently solved in this manner (by the author of Seder Olam Rabba, whom a great many Jewish and Christian writers follow): that the forty-two years mentioned in the book of Chronicles are not to be computed from the birth of Ahaziah, but from the time of the decree of cutting off the house of Omri: which was in the thirty-first year of Asa, when Omri began to reign, who reigned six years, and after him Ahab twenty and two; and Ahaziah his son two years, and Joram twelve: all which put together make forty-two years. This Dr. Lightfoot hath expressed more plainly thus: "The forty-two years have not relation to the age of Ahaziah, but to the kingdom of the house of Omri. And therefore the words of the original are not to be translated, *Ahaziah was forty-two years old;* but *Ahaziah was the son of forty-two years,* as Seder Olam translates it. And the reason why his reign is thus differently set down from all other kings of Judah is, because he was a branch of the house of Omri by his mother's side, (ver. 18.) and therefore was fit to be reckoned not by the line of the kings of Judah, but by the house of Omri and Ahab." But there is an easier and more likely reconciliation of these two places, by Kimchi, Abarbinel, and others, which is, that Joram being invaded by the Arabians, and also diseased, made his son Ahaziah king, together with himself, when he was forty-two years old. In this condition things remained twenty years; and then his father dying, they made him king alone, when he was forty-two years old: thus a great number of Christian interpreters also understand it. But then they suppose that Jehoram being thirty-two years old when he began to reign, reigned eight years (as it is said ver. 17.) after his father's death, that is, happily and prosperously; but after that, falling into the hands of the Arabians, and growing sickly, he reigned ingloriously twenty years, till he was sixty years old, his son administering affairs all this time for him: but since the LXX. in the book of Chronicles read not forty-two, but twenty, many learned and good men think the ancient Hebrew copies agreed thereunto: but by the carelessness of transcribers, forty came in instead of twenty. Which it is better they think to acknowledge plainly, than to use forced and constrained interpretations, as the preceding seem to them to be. Perizonius hath lately censured them all, in these words, "Si quid ego video aut intelligo, multo rectius divinitati et auctoritati Scripturæ S. consulant, qui vitium istic librariorum in re per se levi agnoscunt, quam qui difficultatem volunt tollere, contortis, violentis, et absonis interpretationibus: quæ ab ipsa Scripturæ locutione, et clarissima Syntaxi longissime recedunt," &c. And then instances in this very place, and the foregoing expressions of it. (Prefat. in Ælian. Var. Histor. * * * * 2.)

And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.] So she is called also in 2 Chron. xxii. 2. that is, Omri's grand-daughter; who are often called daughters, as I have before observed. For it is certain Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab; but perhaps educated by Omri his father, and upon that account may be called his daughter. He was the youngest son of Jehoram, all whose other children and his wives were carried away by the Philistines and Arabians, when they made an inroad upon Judah, 2 Chron. xxi. 16, 17. where he is called Jehoahaz.

Ver. 27. *And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, as did the house of Ahab.*] Not only worshipped the calves, but also Baal.

For he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.] And so corrupted in his religion, by the affinity he made with that wicked family. Into which Jehoshaphat married his son, hoping, perhaps, to unite thereby the two kingdoms again: but it proved the ruin of his family; as appears by the book of Chronicles.

Ver. 28. *And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-Gilead.*] Just as Jehoshaphat went with Ahab to the same place: which Joram, it seems, endeavoured to recover to Israel, as his father had done.

And the Syrians wounded Joram.] Not mortally, as they did Ahab: but so, that he was fain to leave the field to be cured of his wounds in Jezreel.

Ver. 29. *And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds the Syrians had given him in Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria.*] Leaving his army at Ramoth-Gilead.

And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.] By this means the secret providence of God so ordered it, that they were both killed by Jehu, as a punishment of their idolatry.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *AND Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets.*] The prophet Elijah was commanded to do this which Elisha was now about to do; but Ahab's humiliation had moved God to defer the judgment pronounced upon him and his family; and so the execution of it was left to Elisha, who did not go himself because he was better known, and his business required secrecy; or, being old, he was unfit for such a journey: for the last time we read of him he was at Damascus. This young man, who was now attending him, the Jews in Seder Olam Rabba say, was Jonah the son of Amittai: which is the opinion also of Abarbinel, and other Hebrew doctors.

And said, Gird up thy loins.] Which implies he was to make expedition, and dispatch his business before it could be discovered.

And take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-

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Gilead.] Where Joram had left his army; and, as some think, they had now possessed themselves of it.

Ver. 2. *And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi.*] Who some think was left commander-in-chief of the king's army.

And make him rise up from among his brethren.] From the other officers of the army, (ver. 5.)

And carry him to an inner chamber.] Lest the rest of the captains should make any opposition, and apprehend him.

Ver. 3. *Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.*] The Jews think none of the kings of Israel were anointed, but only those of the house of David: nor all they neither, but only when there was a question about the succession. For had it not been for the faction of Adonijah, there had been no need of Solomon's unction. For which reason Jehu was anointed, because the succession to the kingdom of Israel was to be translated out of the right line of the family of Ahab unto another family, which had no right to the kingdom, but merely by this appointment of God: who not only by his word, but by this solemn rite, constituted him king of Israel.

Then open the door and flee, and tarry not.] Lest by any means what he had done should be discovered, and they might lay hold on him as a traitor.

Ver. 4. *So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-Gilead.*] This argued a great faith in this young prophet, that he undertook so readily the execution of this command. For there was no small danger to anoint a new king; as Elisha himself plainly suggests; when he bade him flee away, as fast as he could, as soon as he had done.

Ver. 5. *And when he came, the captains of the host were sitting.*] In council, I suppose, how to carry on the war, or about some other business. Though some fancy they were at dinner.

And he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain.] Looking upon Jehu.

And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain.] This shews that Jehu was the head of them, who asked the question in the name of the rest.

Ver. 6. *And he arose, and went into the house.*] Into a private room, (ver. 2.)

And he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him.] The oil being poured on his head, the Jews say he anointed him with it (as the manner was) in the form of a crown: in token that he was the head of the people, and had the supreme power over them committed to him.

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel.] They were still the people of the Lord by right and by profession, though they worshipped other gods with him. And it belonged to him to appoint what ruler he pleased over them; which he did by his prophet. Without which authority, if Jehu had taken the government upon him, he had been an usurper.

Ver. 7. *And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master.*] Now he acquaints him what God required of him upon this promotion.

That I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel.] To execute God's judgment on the house of Ahab, which he pronounced long ago, for their cruel murders of his prophets, and other good men in Israel; particularly Naboth. In this Jehu acted not out of a spirit of private revenge, for he had no quarrel with the house of Ahab, but as God's minister, who by his prophet authorized him to do what follows.

Ver. 8. *For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel.*] See upon 1 Kings xxi. 21.

Ver. 9. *And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah.*] See 1 Kings xiv. 10. xvi. 3.

Ver. 10. *And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her.*] See 1 Kings xxi. 23.

And he opened the door, and fled.] See ver. 3.

Ver. 11. *Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord.*] Returned to the council-chamber, where they continued sitting, (ver. 5.)

And one said unto him, Is all well?] They seeing the prophet look like a man in a fright, thought he brought some bad news.

Wherefore came this mad fellow unto thee?] So they call him, because he came in so abruptly upon them, when they were sitting in council; and because he fled away so hastily; and because they observed some motions in him which argued great disturbance. Though some think they, being profane idolaters, spake these words in scorn and contempt.

And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication.] They might know him to be a prophet by his habit, and by his way of speaking, as one that had authority. And prophets they knew commonly came to speak something concerning religion. By which general answer he thought to have satisfied them, and put by their further inquiry, that he might take time to deliberate of the most opportune season to declare this message of God to him.

Ver. 12. *And they said, It is false, tell us now.*] They were confident he came about some matter of great importance, which he seeming unwilling to discover, they pressed him the harder to tell truth.

And he said, Thus and thus spake he unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.] It is likely the spirit of courage, as well as of prudence, entered into Jehu, when he was anointed, so that he took heart to tell them boldly what the prophet had said. And the oil perhaps was still fresh upon his head, wherewith he anointed him, which he shewed to them.

Ver. 13. *And they hasted.*] God also moved the hearts of all the captains, immediately, without any consultation, to acknowledge him for their king.

And took every man his garment, and put it under him.] They made a kind of throne of their very garments, and raised him up above the rest of the company.

Upon the top of the stairs.] They did not stay till they came down into the street, but forthwith, upon the very top of the stairs of the place where they were sitting, acknowledged him for their sovereign, by spreading their garments under his feet, to tread upon. So De Dieu understands the words. There is a late author who guesses these were winding-stairs in a turret, on the top of which

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tower they placed Jehu, that all the people might see him, and hear him proclaimed their king. (Gousset in his Comment. Linguæ Hebraicæ, p. 173.)

And blew with the trumpet, saying, Jehu is king.] They proclaimed him to be appointed by God to be king of Israel, which used to be done by the sound of the trumpet. (1 Kings i. 32.)

Ver. 14. *So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram.*] Contrived, with the rest of the captains that commanded the army, how to destroy Joram. For which they had the fairer opportunity, because he was gone from the army to Jezreel, as it here follows.

(Now Joram had kept Ramoth-Gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria.] That is, kept a strong garrison there, upon the frontiers of his kingdom; and left his army also thereabout (for they are meant by *all Israel),* for fear Hazael should make any new attempt to recover it.

Ver. 15. *But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria).*] This was said before, but here repeated, to shew how Jehu came to effect his design so easily. Which was because Joram was absent from his army: among whom if he had continued, it is likely, some of them, if not all, would have adhered to him, and fought for him.

And Jehu said, If it be your minds.] If they were all agreed that he should be their king.

Then let none go forth nor escape out of the city.] This shews that Ramoth-Gilead was in the possession of the Israelites. From whence he would have none to be sent, nor suffered to go forth, but the gates be narrowly watched.

To go to tell it in Jezreel.] For he knew that secrecy and speed were necessary to the execution of such great designs as he had in hand.

Ver. 16. *And Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel (for Joram lay there). And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram.*] This is repeated, to shew that Joram continued at Jezreel, whither he went from Ramoth: and that Ahaziah, who came to visit him, continued also with him.

Ver. 17. *And there stood a watchman on the tower of Jezreel.*] These watchmen seem to have been set on high places, in time of peace, as well as war, wheresoever the king was, that he might not be surprised. For David at Jerusalem was admonished by the watchman that his sons were safe, when he feared they had been lost, (2 Sam. xiii. 34.) as afterward, that news was coming from the army that fought against Absalom, (xviii. 24, 25.)

And he spied the company of Jehu as they came, and said, I see a company.] A troop, or squadron of horse, as we now speak.

And Joram said, Take a horseman, and send to meet them, and say, Is it peace?] He was afraid the Syrians had got the better of his army; or some more of his subjects had revolted, as Libnah had done.

Ver. 18. *So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.*] The messenger spake in the king's name; but he spake to a greater king, who bade him not to trouble himself about peace or war, but follow him. Which he durst not refuse, seeing such a company of soldiers with Jehu.

And the watchman said, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again.] Which put them in doubt what to think.

Ver. 19. *And he sent out a second on horseback, which came unto them, and said, Thus saith the king, Is it peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.*] To the same question the same answer was returned; that it did not concern him, whether they were friends or enemies; but his safest way was to follow Jehu.

Ver. 20. *And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi.*] Who was his grandfather, but a more eminent person, it is likely, than Jehoshaphat his father; and so he was commonly called his son.

For he driveth furiously.] He was noted, it seems, for fierceness and eagerness in pursuing his designs. But the Chaldee paraphrast takes it quite otherwise, that *he drove slowly;* as if he would entice Joram to come out of the city and meet him, having no mind to engage in an assault or siege of Jezreel.

Ver. 21. *And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel, and Ahaziah king of Judah, went out each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu.*] Not to fight him, but to meet him before he came to the city, that if there was any sedition he might compose it by his authority; or, perhaps, in honour of Jehu, who he saw would deliver the news himself, and not entrust a messenger with it.

And met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.] By a special providence of God, which brought them together in that place.

Ver. 22. *And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu?*] Seeing him look sternly, I suppose, he began to suspect some danger.

And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts, are so many?] He means her idolatries, wherewith she bewitched the people, still continued, and were multiplied. Some think, indeed, that she added corporal fornication to her spiritual, and used evil arts to provoke men to filthy lusts. And, indeed, all manner of lewdness was wont to accompany idolatry; and in Rev. ii. 20. they who are compared to Jezebel are said to entice Christians to fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols; unless by fornication we there understand idolatry, and by eating things sacrificed to idols, having communion with idolaters.

Ver. 23. *Joram turned his hands.*] The hand of him that drove the chariot.

And fled.] Towards Jezreel; where if he had kept, and inquired what Jehu came for, he might have defended himself for some time against him.

And said to Ahaziah, There is treachery, O Ahaziah!] Which he discovered too late, having no forces to resist those of Jehu.

Ver. 24. *And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms.*] Or shoulders; it being, I suppose, a chariot open behind.

And the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.] God so ordered it, that he shot him quite through the heart, so that he died immediately.

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Ver. 25. *Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take him, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite.*] Part of which Ahab had made a garden; but the rest remained a field.

For remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father.] With the rest of his guard, when he went to take possession of Naboth's vineyard. In the Hebrew the words are exactly thus: *Remember, thou and I were among those who rode two and two together after Ahab,* &c. That is, he was attended by his guard, who were wont to ride in pairs, two and two, and Jehu and Bidkar rode at that time together, and heard Elijah's words.

The Lord laid this burden upon him.] This punishment, which is frequently by the prophets called *a burden,* Isa. xiii. 1, &c. was denounced against Ahab, and extended to his son, 1 Kings xxi. 19. where these very words are not recorded; but Elijah said more than is there set down, which Jehu well remembered.

Ver. 26. *Surely, I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord.*] Some think that Jezebel contrived the death of Naboth's sons, together with their father, that they might lay no claim to the possession of their father. But these words may signify no more (as Grotius and others have observed) than the poverty to which they were reduced. For all punishments and miseries are called *blood* among the Hebrews; (Lev. xvii. 4.) and to take away their estate, upon which they should have lived, was in effect to take away their blood, in which is the life of every creature; as we say now of grievous oppressors, that they suck the blood of others; and commonly call them blood-suckers.

And I will requite it in this plat, saith the Lord. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the Lord.] Without any burial; that, according to the prophecy, he might be eaten by the fowls of the air, (1 Kings xxi. 24.)

Ver. 27. *But when Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden-house.*] Which was built upon part of Naboth's vineyard.

And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so, at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam: and he fled to Megiddo.] He could not get to his own country, and so sheltered himself at Megiddo, which was not far from Samaria, whither his servants carried him, as a safer place (for he was not mortally wounded), and there he hid himself for fear of Jehu, as we read 2 Chron. xxii. 9.

And he died there.] Not at Megiddo; but being searched for and taken in Samaria, he was brought to Jehu at Jezreel, where he commanded him to be slain. Which seems to be beyond his commission; but as he was an idolater, so he was of the bloody house of Ahab by his mother's side, who was Ahab's daughter: (viii. 18.) and his destruction was of God, (as the author of the second book of Chronicles observes, xxii. 7.) who prompted Jehu thus to understand his command. Thus Abarbinel understands those words, *he died there.* Not in Megiddo, mentioned before, but in that execution of God's judgments on the house of Ahab.

Ver. 28. *And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers, in the city of David.*] Which honour Jehu permitted to be done him, because he was descended from the good prince Jehoshaphat. (See 2 Chron. xxii. 9.)

Ver. 29. *And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.*] See the foregoing chapter, ver. 25.

Ver. 30. *And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.*] In the Hebrew it is, *she put her eyes in paint;* that is, in *stibium,* which made the eyes look black, and was accounted beautiful; and also dilated the eyebrows, and made the eyes appear big; which, in some countries, was also thought very amiable. (See Grotius.) This was not intended to tempt Jehu with her beauty; but to keep up her dignity and state to the very last: for she was extremely proud.

Ver. 31. *And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?*] She thought, perhaps, he would not meddle with a woman; and therefore took upon her to rebuke and upbraid him with what he had done against her son; bidding him remember what became of Zimri, who was cut off by Omri his father-in-law, the founder of Ahab's family.

Ver. 32. *And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side, who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.*] Who, according to the custom of the eastern countries, were wont to attend upon queens in their chambers.

Ver. 33. *And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down.*] See how suddenly courtiers change with the fortune of their master.

And some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trod her under foot.] With his horses. This some of the Jewish doctors, particularly Ralbag and Kimchi, look upon as a punishment, according to the *lex talionis, like for like.* As she had done, so she suffered. For she caused Naboth to be stoned; and now she was condemned to be stoned herself: for there were two ways of stoning; either by throwing stones at malefactors, till they had knocked them down and killed them; or by throwing them down upon the stones from a high place, and breaking them to pieces. As Amaziah did with the captives he took of Mount Seir, 2 Chron. xxv. 12. (See Selden, lib. i. de Synedriis, cap. 5. p. 76, &c.)

Ver. 34. *And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her.*] That is, go and take care of her body, to see it decently buried.

For she is a king's daughter.] And was also the wife and the mother of a king, which moved him to have this regard to her, as all men naturally have to royal dignity; forgetting, in the mean time, what Elijah had prophesied against her in his hearing. Which he might easily do when he was merry, it is like, with eating and drinking liberally.

Ver. 35. *And they went out to bury her; but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.*] All the rest being eaten by the dogs. For it is probable, when the horsemen were gone, who trod her under foot, the footmen stripped her, and left her naked in her own blood; exposed to the hungry dogs, that came out of the city and devoured her.

Ver. 36. *Wherefore they came again, and told him: and he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his*

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servant Elijah the prophet.] Which he now called to mind, as he did his prophecy concerning Ahab and his sons.

Saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel.] See 1 Kings xxi. 23.

Ver. 37. *And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field, in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.*] No memory of her, nothing whereby to know there had been such a woman as Jezebel, should remain of her; suppose a picture, or effigies, to which men might point, and say, This is Jezebel. In our language, perhaps we should have said, *they shall not say, Here lies Jezebel:* for no monument was made for her, she having no sepulchre but in the belly of dogs. These words are not mentioned in 1 Kings xxi. being sufficiently included in what is there recorded: but perfectly remembered by Jehu; who now more largely recites the words of Elijah.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *AND Ahab had seventy sons.*] It is likely that grandsons are comprehended under the name of *sons*, as is usual in Scripture; though, by several wives, he might have as many sons as Gideon had.

In Samaria.] Unto which place the ruler of Jezreel had carried them, when they heard how Jehu had killed Joram; for fear they should fall into his hands: or, perhaps, during the war with Syria, their father had sent them thither, as a place of security (it being a strong city), in case of any ill accident that might happen.

And Jehu wrote letters, to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel.] The chief noblemen of the kingdom, who, I suppose, were fled thither with the king's sons; and perhaps were met to deliberate what to do in this juncture, whether or not to set up one of Ahab's sons to be their king.

And to the elders.] The principal persons in Samaria.

And to those who brought up Ahab's children, saying.] These are called *omanim (nourishers)*, because they had the care of his children from their infancy, and were now their *governors*, as we call them; who were of his kindred, (ver. 11.)

Ver. 2. *Now, as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour;*

Ver. 3. *Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house.*] This he said, because, perhaps, he heard they were consulting about a successor to Ahab. Or rather, he insults over them, and denounces war against them with scorn and derision, being secure of the event, that they were not able to oppose him.

Ver. 4. *But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand?*] They were timorous persons, bred up it is likely in ease and delicacy. For this argument had little in it; those two kings being unarmed, without any forces; which they were furnished withal to defend themselves, and their master's sons.

Ver. 5. *And he that was over the house.*] The high steward, as we call him, of the king's household.

And he that was over the city.] The governor of the city, who had all the soldiers under his command.

And the elders, and the bringers up of the king's children.] All the senators, and the great men that were entrusted with the care of the king's children.

Sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.] They basely submit to his pleasure, without making any composition: which it is likely they thought it to no purpose to endeavour, and did not expect such rigorous usage from him.

Ver. 6. *Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be mine, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take the heads of your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time (now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up).*] This is repeated, to shew the vile spirit of these great men; that could destroy so many royal persons, of whom they had the care, and who had offended nobody.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets.*] They seem not to have deliberated about the matter, though in itself so horrid; but instantly obeyed him.

And sent him them to Jezreel.] Following after themselves, as appears from ver. 11. expecting, perhaps, to be thanked for what they had so readily done; but, quite contrary, came to the same miserable end.

Ver. 8. *And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering of the gate until the morning.*] The gate was the place of public concourse for judgment, and other business; so that the laying them there was to expose them to public view, that every one might know there was none of Ahab's posterity left to reign over them.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people.*] Who were there gathered together, gazing upon this amazing sight.

Ye be righteous.] Be not troubled; for none of you are to blame in all this.

Behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him; but who slew all these?] If any were guilty, he acknowledges it was himself. But since they had slain so many, why should he be to blame for slaying one? since he had authority from God for what he did.

Ver. 10. *Know now, that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab.*] In these words he throws all the guilt from off himself; being only God's instrument to punish the house of Ahab, as he had foretold by Elijah. And therefore he resolved to proceed, till he had utterly extirpated all that depended on him.

For the Lord hath done.] As if he had said, This is not my doing, but the Lord's: whose command I obey.

That which he spake by his servant Elijah.] He mentions what he denounced, rather than what Elisha commanded, (ix. 8.) because the words of Elijah were publicly known; whereas Elisha's were spoken in private, and not by himself, but by one of the sons of the prophets, (ix. 7—9.)

Ver. 11. *So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men.*] Whom he had advanced to great offices, or dignities.

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And his kinsfolks.] All that had any relation to him.

And his priests.] Who had served him in his idolatrous worship, and confirmed him in it.

Until he left him none remaining.] In that place: but there were still some left in Samaria, (ver. 17.)

Ver. 12. *And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria.*] Having finished his work in Jezreel, he went to prosecute it in the chief city of the kingdom; which most needed reformation.

And as he was at the shearing-house in the way.] In the Hebrew the words are, *in the house of the shepherds' binding.* For they bound the feet of their sheep when they sheared them; and this was the place where the shepherds of Samaria were wont to do it.

Ver. 13. *Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who are ye? And they answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah, and we are going to salute the children of the king, and the children of the queen.*] That is, the children of Joram, and the children of Jezebel. But the *brethren of Ahaziah* were carried captive before this, as we read 2 Chron. xxi. 17. therefore by *brethren* we must understand his brother's sons, as it is explained in 2 Chron. xxii. 8.

Ver. 14. *And he said, Take them alive. And they took them, and he slew them at the pit of the shearing-house, even two-and-forty men; neither left he any of them.*] They were allied to the family of Ahab by the mother's side, (viii. 18.) and therefore he thought his commission (ix. 8, 9.) extended thus far; being afraid, also, it is likely, that they might, if they lived, be avenged of him for the death of Joram, Ahaziah, Jezebel, and their children, whom they were going to see.

Ver. 15. *And when he was departed thence, he lighted upon Jehonadab the son of Rechab, coming to meet him.*] A very pious and prudent person, as appears by his precepts to his sons, in the thirty-fifth of Jeremiah. Who hearing what Jehu had done, came, I suppose, to congratulate with him his happiness in fulfilling God's commands; and to encourage him in his proceedings to destroy idolatry. Scaliger, indeed, in his Elench. Trihæres. cap. 24. against Serrarius, endeavours to prove that this Jehonadab was not he that gave those precepts to his sons; but another in the days of Jeremiah: for it is not likely, he thinks, that a man addicted to such a quiet life as he instituted would come to meet Jehu; and therefore this was some military person of great note, who Jehu thought might be serviceable to him. But this is a weak argument; for why might not Jonadab, though he loved retirement, come to congratulate Jehu's zeal against idolatry, and Jehu be glad of such a man's company, whose known piety would gain him greater respect than the attendance of any great captain could procure him?

And he saluted him.] Some think that Jehonadab saluted Jehu, and spake the words following. But it seems plain to me that they are the words of Jehu, who saluted him, as soon as he saw him, and inquired of his welfare.

And said, Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?] The king professed great love to him, and asked him if he loved him as sincerely, and approved his actions, as he did Jehonadab's institutions.

And Jehonadab answered, It is.] The expression is double in the Hebrew, *Yes, yes;* to signify a vehement affection. Or, as a late learned writer (Gousset, in his Comment. Hebr. Linguæ) will have it, the former is spoken by Jehonadab, who said *It is;* and the other by Jehu, who answered, *Is it? then give me thy hand,* &c.

If it be, give me thine hand.] In token of friendship (Gal. ii. 9.) and of fidelity: as it was among the Romans, it appears by many places in Virgil: for instance, Æneid. iii.

"Ipse pater dextram Anchises, haud multa moratus,
Dat juveni, atque animum præsenti pignore firmat."

And he gave him his hand, and he took him up to him into his chariot.] Which was a great honour, and a token of high esteem, to ride with the king in the same chariot.

Ver. 16. *And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.*] To vindicate his honour, and fulfil his commands.

So they made him ride in his chariot.] He speaks in the plural number *(they made him)*, because the servants, I suppose, opened the door, and helped him up in the chariot, when Jehu gave him his hand.

Ver. 17. *And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him.*] Utterly rooted out his family.

According to the saying of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.] This is mentioned again; both to shew his warrant for what he did, and his exactness in fulfilling God's command.

Ver. 18. *And Jehu gathered all the people together.*] That is, all the heads of them, who represented the rest.

And said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu shall serve him much.] His zeal for the Lord exceeded its bounds; for he ought not to have taken any indirect course to fulfil his will: as he did in counterfeiting as much zeal for Baal, as he professed to Jehonadab he had for the Lord. God doth not stand in need of any man's sin to compass his ends: but Jehu made bold to dissemble deeply for the service of God; in which he cannot be excused.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests, let none be wanting.*] By *servants* he doth not here mean his worshippers; but, being joined with *prophets* and *priests*, they signified some that *ministered* with the priests in the worship of Baal: like the Levites among the people of God.

For I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal.] He might possibly mean a sacrifice not of beasts, but of men; even of all the worshippers of Baal; but he intended they should understand him otherwise, and therefore these words were spoken to deceive.

Whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live.] He thought that some, who considered what slaughter he had made of the family of Ahab (who introduced the worship of Baal, whom he pretended more highly to honour than Ahab had done), might suspect his design; and therefore he terrifies them with the fear of death, if they did not come to this great sacrifice.

But Jehu did it in subtilty, that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.] By destroying his prophets, and ministers, and priests; who being all cut off, his worship would fall to the ground. But the next verses extend this further, to all the worshippers of Baal in the whole country.

Ver. 20. *And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it.*] The last day of the feast of tabernacles, the great day of the feast, is called by this

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name of *Atzarah;* which we translate a *solemn assembly:* when it was not lawful to do any servile work, but wholly attend to the service of God, (Lev. xxiii. 36.) Such a day he now caused to be *sanctified* (as the word is in the Hebrew) for the service of Baal.

Ver. 21. *And Jehu sent through all Israel.*] To give notice of this great feast; and to require every one, upon pain of death, to be present at it.

And all the worshippers of Baal came, and there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full, from one end to another.] If this be meant of the whole number of Baalites throughout the kingdom, it seems scarce credible that the temple of Baal should be so large as to hold them all. But two things are to be considered; first, that this house or temple comprehended all the outward courts of it (as it did at the temple of Jerusalem), which were very spacious; and secondly, the number of his worshippers was much diminished since the death of Ahab: for Jehoram his successor had no great kindness for the worship of Baal, (iii. 2.) and men are apt to follow the example of their king. Besides, it is likely, Hazael king of Syria had destroyed many of them in his wars with Israel.

Ver. 22. *And he said to him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments.*] By *all the worshippers of Baal,* are not meant all the people that came to worship him: but his ministers and priests, who alone wore vestments of a different kind from the rest of the people; and so it was among the Jews, and all other nations.

Ver. 23. *And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the Lord, but the worshippers of Baal only.*] He calls those that worshipped the golden calves the *servants of the Lord:* because they worshipped the Lord by them, and abhorred the worship of Baal: whose sacrifice he pretended to fear might be profaned, if any strangers should be present at it. According to the common saying among the heathen, *Procul, o procul este profani.*

Ver. 24. *And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings.*] When they had begun their sacred offices.

He appointed fourscore men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.] This was but a small number for such an execution. But, it is likely, though no more appeared, yet there were others ready at hand to support them, if need were, in the undertaking. Or rather, these were set at the several gates of the outward courts; that if any endeavoured to make their escape, they might kill them. But the next verse seems to signify there was a greater body of men that went for that purpose into the temple.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass, as soon as they had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, that Jehu said to the guard, and to the captains.*] Of those troops that he had set to keep the peace, as he pretended, and prevent all disturbance.

Go in, and slay them, let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out.] There is nothing in the Hebrew that answers to the word *them:* nor is it likely that the captains and soldiers troubled themselves to cast their bodies out of the temple; where they were rather buried in its ruins. But the meaning is, having done this execution, the guard and captains rushed out of the temple in great haste, and immediately ran to the city of the house of Baal, as it here follows.

And went to the city of the house of Baal.] That is, a place near to Samaria, where Baal had another temple; which gave name to the place: or rather, there were great buildings adjoining to the temple of Baal in Samaria, where the prophets, and priests, and their servants lived, called a *city,* because they were so large.

Ver. 26. *And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burnt them.*] They worshipped several other lesser gods (whose images they had in this temple), together with the supreme god, whom they called Baal; as the others were called Baalim. So Servius writes upon the first of the Georgics, that *veteri ritu, according to ancient custom,* after the priests had invoked the special gods, to whom the sacrifice was intended, "generaliter omnia numina invocabantur," *all the gods were invoked,* lest any of them should think themselves neglected.

Ver. 27. *And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal.*] Demolished his temple, and the image of Baal in it: which was either the sun, or Belus.

And made it a draught-house unto this day.] It was turned into a jakes, as we now speak, a place where men went to ease nature; which was the highest contempt that could be put upon it.

Ver. 28. *Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.*] So that he was never worshipped more in this country; but they were perfectly freed from this sort of idolatry. Which must be acknowledged to have been a very great work: all the eastern people, and particularly the Syrians and Zidonians, and other neighbouring nations, being addicted to this worship, and had been so from ancient time; as what I observed before shews, (1 Kings xvi. 31.) from the many cities, woods, mountains, and fountains, which before Joshua's time were known by the name of Baal: and there is mention of Baal-shalisha in this book, iv. 42.

Ver. 29. *Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Beth-el, and in Dan.*] Which he still worshipped; being afraid, as his predecessors were, that if he took them away, as he had done Baal, the people would return to the house of David. For which reason all the following kings of Israel continued this false worship till their captivity; when these calves were carried away with them. So they say in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 22. "In the twentieth year of Pekah came Tiglath-pilneser, and took away the golden calf that was in Dan, and departed;" which they endeavour to prove out of 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, 21. And a little after, "in the twelfth year of Ahaz, the Lord stirred up the spirit of the king of Assyria, and he carried away the golden calf in Beth-el, and departed: fulfilling what is written, Hosea x. 6."

Ver. 30. *And the Lord said unto Jehu.*] By some prophet; either Elisha, or the young man that was sent to anoint Jehu; or some other.

Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the

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fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.] His partial obedience was not without its reward: which had been greater if he had been as zealous in all things as he was in this one instance; the following history shews the truth of this prediction: the kingdom continuing in his posterity, till the days of Zachariah, who was the fourth from Jehu, (xv. 8.) and reigned only so long, as to make good this prophecy.

Ver. 31. *But Jehu took no care to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.*] This admonition from God (which sufficiently shewed he was not well pleased with him) did him no good; but policy prevailed against religion, and persuaded him to continue the old idolatry when he had destroyed the new.

Ver. 32. *In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel.*] He took several of their frontier towns, I suppose, and thereby opened a way to make great ravages in their country. For though Jehu was a valiant man, yet God did not prosper him, because he was not a sincere servant of his.

Ver. 33. *From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer (which is by the river Arnon), even Gilead and Bashan.*] This fully explains what was said in the foregoing verse, that God *cut them short*. For Hazael took all their country beyond Jordan: the whole kingdom, which the Israelites took from Sihon and Og. Thus these countries which the Israelites first conquered were the first that they lost.

Ver. 34. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] Which was extant in those days when this was written; and related his history more at large: of which this is a brief abridgment.

Ver. 35. *And Jehu slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.*

Ver. 36. *And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel was twenty and eight years.*] Longer than any of the kings of Israel his predecessors.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *AND when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose, and destroyed all the seed-royal.*] There were many of them cut off by Jehu, as we read in the foregoing chapter; and not a few by others, 2 Chron. xxi. 4. xxii. 1. but now their destruction was completed by Athaliah: who, as she was ambitious of government, so she was enraged to see Ahab's family cut off; and therefore resolved to do as much by the house of David: and perhaps she was afraid Jehu should come and kill her because she was of the house of Ahab; and therefore endeavoured to strengthen herself by getting into the throne, which she could not compass without the destruction of the royal family. For she was *a wicked woman*, as she is elsewhere called, and had played the harlot with another man, by whom she had children; as the Jewish doctors gather from 2 Chron. xxiv. 7.

Ver. 2. *But Jehosheba the daughter of king Joram.*] Not by Athaliah, but by another wife. For Athaliah would not have suffered her daughter to be married to the high-priest, nor would he (in all likelihood) have married the daughter of such a woman.

Sister of Ahaziah.] By the father's side.

Took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from the king's sons that were slain.] Some think that he was thrown among them, and thought to be dead; but she snatched him away, and brought him to life: or, as P. Martyr understands it, his nurse threw him among the slain on purpose to save his life, and came afterward and stole him away. But the plain meaning seems to be, that they being all ordered to be slain, she secretly stole him away, and preserved him.

And they hid him.] That is, she and her husband Jehoiada, the high-priest, to whom she was married, (2 Chron. xxii. 11.)

And his nurse, in the bedchamber, from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.] It appears, by the next verse, that this *bedchamber* was in the house of the Lord; that is, the temple. Which doth not in the Scripture always signify the sanctuary; but, in a larger sense, comprehends all the courts belonging to it. So Kimchi observes, that *the whole mountain of the house is called the house of the Lord.* And this chamber here spoken of was in the outward court of all, called, by Josephus, πρῶτον ἱερὸν, *the first holy place.* For in the inner court nobody lay, nor might any woman come into it. (See L'Empereur, upon Codex Middoth. cap. 2. sect. 3.)

Ver. 3. *And he was with her in the house of the Lord six years.*] The ministers of God were so true to Jehoiada, that he lay thus long undiscovered.

And Athaliah did reign over the land.] Not *de jure* (as the lawyers spake), but *de facto.* For if we may believe the Jews, it was not lawful for a woman to reign over them. So Maimonides, in the treatise Melachim: "They do not place a woman on the throne," because it is said, Deut. xvii. 15. *If thou wilt set a king over thee*, and not a queen. "And so in all the prefectures in Israel, they place none but men." She being therefore an usurper, it may seem strange she held the throne so long as six years, against the constitution of the kingdom. But, in after-ages, there is an example of one that held it longer. For Alexandra, the widow of Jannæus, after the death of her husband, possessed herself of the throne, and reigned nine years, as Josephus relates, lib. xiii. Antiq. cap. 24. (See Schickard, in his Mischpat Hammelech, cap. 2. Theor. 3.)

Ver. 4. *And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched.*] Jehoiada was not a mere private man, but a person of great authority in the kingdom, who, knowing Athaliah was an usurper, and that he had the right heir to the kingdom in his possession (which if he had not, his own wife had a better right than Athaliah), thought he had sufficient warrant to dethrone her, and set up him that had the undoubted title to the crown. Which he did when he was seven years old; because then he grew so big, that he could not well be longer concealed; and it was fit also he should be educated in a royal manner; which he could not be while he lay hid.

The rulers over hundreds.] The names of five of them are set down in 2 Chron. xxiii. 1. who were all, some think, of the tribe of Levi. For they of that tribe were the persons principally employed in this undertaking, as appears by the sequel. But we learn from that place in the Chronicles, ver. 2, that whosoever they were, they went about

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all Judah, and gathered not only the Levites, but *the chief of the fathers of Israel.*

With the captains of the guard.] The chief commanders of the soldiery, and those that had been the former king's guard: for it is not likely he durst call those who were the guard of the present queen.

And brought them to him into the house of the Lord.] Into that part of it where Joash was kept, where Jehoiada discoursed with them.

And made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the Lord, and shewed them the king's son.] He discovered to them the true heir of the crown, and they entered into a covenant to restore him: which they bound with an oath of secrecy.

Ver. 5. *And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye should do.*] These words, and those that follow, are certainly spoken to the priests and Levites (with whom those captains beforementioned were to join), as men whom Jehoiada had perfectly under his command, and whom he could trust: to whom he gives the following orders.

A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath, shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house.] The priests and Levites took their turns in their attendance at the temple; and their course was finished in the space of a week. Every week a course went out, and another came in. Now they who now entered upon their week of attendance (which was on the eve of every sabbath) were divided by Jehoiada into three parts; one of which he here orders to guard the king's house: that is, that part of the temple on the north where he lodged, and was now educated.

Ver. 6. *And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur.*] That is, the east gate of the temple, towards the city; which was the principal (and, at the first, the only) entrance into the house of the Lord. This is called *the gate of the foundation*, 2 Chron. xxiii. 5. (and by five other names, if we may believe the Talmudists), where another part were ordered to guard it. Abarbinel thinks this eastern gate was called *Sur*, being as much as to say, *go back;* because no unclean person durst enter into this gate: and the *gate of the foundation*, because it was, as he speaks, the *gate of the first sanctuary.*

And a third part at the gate behind the guard.] The other third part he set at the south gate, which looked towards the royal palace; and through which Athaliah was wont to come, and therefore had a guard near this place. Behind which these Levites were placed by Jehoiada, to observe their motions.

So shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down.] They were to take special care, that the house of the Lord was not any way profaned; suffering none to come nearer to it than they ought: and particularly watching those out of the palace, that they did not defile it. So De Dieu thinks the word *massach* (which we translate *be not broken down*) ought to be understood, being as much as *be massach*, by pulling away those that shall dare to pollute the holy place, and would come in to hurt the king. Or, as other learned men have interpreted it; they were to keep *the watch of the house at the breach:* which the wicked sons of Athaliah (which she had by another man) had made, as we read 2 Chron. xxiv. 7. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that, besides these three parts for the design which Jehoiada intended, there were three more (six in all) for the ordinary service of the temple. For he would not have that neglected, while he took care of the affairs of the kingdom. (See his book of the Temple, chap. 20.)

Ver. 7. *And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath.*] It is well known, that David divided the priests into twenty-four courses, to attend the service of the temple in their turns: every one of which courses ministered their week from sabbath to sabbath. So Josephus saith expressly, he ordained each should minister eight days, ἀπὸ Σαββάτου ἐπὶ Σάββατον, *from one sabbath to another*, (lib. viii. Antiq. cap. 2.) For that course which went out did not depart till the sabbath was over; and that which came in entered when it began; as the learned Mr. Whiston in his late Chronology expounds the words of Josephus, p. 156.

Even they shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord about the king.] He adds two parts of those who had finished their course, and went off to go home into the country, whom he would have to stay at Jerusalem, and assist the rest beforenamed; especially in strengthening that part of the temple that lay towards the palace; or rather to be the king's guard, when he came out of his lodgings (where he was at present) into the court of the Lord's house.

Ver. 8. *And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, he shall be slain.*] By *the ranges* is to be understood, if not the ranks of men that stood about the mountain of the house of the Lord, the ranks of trees that grew on either side of the causey, or the rails that were set on either side of it, for the stay and safety of those that passed upon it. (See Dr. Lightfoot in the same place.)

And be ye with the king as he goeth out, and as he cometh in.] When he went out to walk, or do any other thing; and when he returned to his apartment.

Ver. 9. *And the captains of the hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with those that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.*] To shew they were all disposed according to his order.

Ver. 10. *And to the captains of the hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that were in the house of the Lord.*] They did not come armed into the temple, lest they should give any suspicion; but Johoiada furnished them with such weapons as the temple afforded; particularly with the spears and shields, which king David had used, and dedicated after all his wars as monuments of God's *goodness* to him; and perhaps several spears and shields of great men, which he had taken as spoils in his wars.

Ver. 11. *And the guard stood, every man with his weapon in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple.*] The guard within the court mentioned ver. 7. stood from the south part of the temple towards the palace, to the north part of it, where the king lay hid, about the great altar of burnt-offering (which was at the east gate) and the sanctuary; and then the king was brought forth, and placed below the altar, that all might see him.

Ver. 12. *And he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony, and they made him king, and anointed him.*] Having produced Joash, he put the crown on his head (which I suppose was kept in

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the sanctuary), and then put the book of the law into his hand, according to Deut. xvii. 18, 19. which is called the *testimony*, because God therein testified what he would have the king and them all do. And thereupon he declared him to be king of Israel, and then anointed him: which it was not necessary to do (and therefore he is said to be *made king* before it was done), being the son of a king, had not Athaliah disturbed the succession, and pretended to the kingdom. Therefore, to settle all things, he was anointed as Solomon and Jehu were. But there is a doubt what is meant by *eduth*, which we translate *testimony;* supposing it comes from the root, which signifies to *testify*. But there are those, particularly Forsterus, Avenarius, and others of greater note, who derive it from the Hebrew word *adah*, which signifies to *clothe, put on*, and *adorn;* and so take *eduth* for some royal ornament, which was a mark of kingly dignity: and that, it is probable, might be a bracelet which Jehoiada put upon the young king, together with the crown. This conjecture is countenanced by what we read of the Amalekite, who brought the bracelet on Saul's arm to David, as well as the crown that was on his head. (See Fortunatus Scacchus Myrothec. iii. cap. 41.)

And they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king!] The guards and the people (as the next verse explains it) testified their joy by clapping their hands and shouting, as they did at king's Solomon's coronation, (1 Kings i. 34. 39.) For *clapping of hands* was a token of joy, as appears by many places, (Psal. xlvii. 1. Isa. lv. 12.)

Ver. 13. *And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guards, and of the people.*] Who were now assembled to see their king.

She came to the people into the temple of the Lord.] Into the outward court where they were met together. And she seems in a great fright to have come alone, or but few attendants with her.

Ver. 14. *And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was.*] Some of the Jews, and many great men among Christian writers, understand by this pillar the brazen scaffold which Solomon erected at the dedication of the temple, (2 Chron. vi. 13.) But the plainest meaning seems to me, that he stood by the post of the east gate in the inner court, where the station of the king was. Which Vitringa hath made probable, in his Synagoga Vet. p. 31, &c. where he observes, that the king alone entered at the east gate on the sabbath and the new moons; but on the other days at the south or north gate, where the people entered; which he gathers from Ezek. xlvi. 1, 2. He *stood*, I suppose, only to be better seen by the people; otherwise sitting was a posture of authority.

And the princes, and the trumpeters by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets.] This made her soon apprehend the danger she was in, as it here follows. For the people, when they saw their young king, expressed their joy, it is likely, in some such acclamations as the people of Rome made at the inauguration of Claudius, "Claudi Auguste, Principem te, aut qualis tu es semper Octavianus, te respublica requirebat, tu frater, tu pater, tu amicus, tu bonus senator, tu vere princeps," as Trebel. Pollio relates in his life. For though Joash had done nothing praiseworthy, being but a child; yet they rejoiced in the felicity which they promised themselves in his reign, under the government of such a man as Jehoiada.

And Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, treason!] Adding, as Josephus relates, Take that boy and kill him; meaning Joash, in whose behalf this conspiracy, as she called it, was made against her. But she spake like a distracted woman, there being nobody on her side to execute any of her commands.

Ver. 15. *And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of hundreds, and the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges.*] Through which they had suffered her to come, being a queen, contrary to the order, ver. 8.

And him that followeth her kill with the sword.] If any body appeared to abet and rescue her, he commanded him to be slain.

For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord.] From whence they dragged her, until they had brought her down to the bottom of the causey, and there they slew her.

Ver. 16. *And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there she was slain.*] That is, saith the same author (chap. 5. sect. 2. of the Temple), they got her out of the mountain of the house, and brought her down the causey; and when she came near the horse-gate, through which the horses went up out of the stables of Millo, when the king had occasion for them, there they slew her.

By the which the horses came into the king's house.] There was another horse-gate in the main wall of the city, (Jer. xxxi. 39.) but that was distinct from this; which was peculiar to the king's horses: and therefore a distinctive character is set upon it, that it was the horse-gate *towards the king's house*, (2 Chron. xxiii. 15.) So it should be rendered, rather than *by the king's house:* for neither of these gates was near his house, but at a distance from it; and we may call this gate here spoken of, the back-way to the king's house at the stable-gate.

Ver. 17. *And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people.*] He first takes care about religion, and engaged them in a solemn covenant to root out idolatry, and to restore the true worship of God, and continue in it.

Between the king also and the people.] That they should be his obedient subjects, and he should govern them by the law. This was directly agreeable to the apostolic precept, "Fear God, and honour the king."

Ver. 18. *And all the people of the land went to the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly.*] Accordingly they began immediately to make good their covenant, in destroying the worship of Baal: which had been introduced among the people of Judah by Jehoram, (viii. 18.) and was continued by Ahaziah, (ver. 27.)

And slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altar.] To which it is possible he fled, as a place of refuge; or they dragged him hither to make him a victim to his god.

And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord.] Levites to keep the door, lest any one who was unclean should enter into it. (See more, 2 Chron. xxiii. 18, 19.)

Ver. 19. *And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the*

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captains of the guards, and the people of the land.] Brought them out of the temple, that they might conduct the king to his palace, as it here follows.

And they brought down the king from the house of the Lord, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house.] By that gate of the king's palace, where a guard was to be kept for his safety.

And he sat on the throne of the kings.] Which was the accomplishment of his inauguration.

Ver. 20. *And all the people of the land rejoiced.*] Applauding what Jehoiada had done.

And the city was in quiet.] Nobody appeared in defence of Athaliah.

And they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house.] Not far from it: the people having so little kindness for her, that they suffered her to be slain without any opposition. In the Chronicles, indeed, the words are, *the city was in quiet after that they had slain Athaliah,* (2 Chron. xxii. 21.) Which may import there was some bustle before, when she was apprehended; but after her death there was no stir: nor do we read they were so much concerned for her as to bury her.

Ver. 21. *Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.*] Being so very young, he was very unfit for so weighty a charge; but he was under the direction of so excellent a counsellor, that while Jehoiada lived, all things went well, and the nation was very happy, as we read in the next chapter. But that good man being dead, he was seduced by some greatmen about him to idolatry: (2 Chron. xxiv. 17, &c.) which shews him to have been a weak prince, who wanted judgment in things of greatest moment.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *IN the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba.*

Ver. 2. *And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.*] This history shews of what advantage it is to have good instructors and counsellors about a king. For Jehoiada preserved Joash in good ways while he lived: but when he was dead, Joash changed his manners, and was persuaded by the flatteries of some of his courtiers to fall into idolatry; and he killed the son of this pious Jehoiada, who reproved him for it, (2 Chron. xxiv. 17. 21.)

Ver. 3. *But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.*] These private altars (on which they sacrificed to the true God), I observed before, were not removed by the best of their kings till the reign of Hezekiah. And this king was too young, and his authority too weak (though he had Jehoiada to assist him), to attempt to break such a long-continued custom, especially when some of the princes in their hearts were idolaters.

Ver. 4. *And Jehoash said unto the priests.*] The house of God being suffered to run to decay, in the time of Athaliah and her son; Joash, in gratitude to God, who had preserved him there, resolved to have it repaired; and, in order to it, commanded what money should be set apart for that purpose.

All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the Lord.] That had been, or should hereafter be brought and dedicated to the service of God and of the temple.

Even the money of every one that passeth the account.] This and the following money he commanded the priests and Levites to go through the kingdom, and gather it for the repair of the temple, as we are told, 2 Chron. xxiv. 5. They were not to expect till the people should bring it in, but go and gather it, every man of his acquaintance, where he knew it to be due. And so the foregoing words are to be translated, not *that is brought,* but *to be brought* into the house of the Lord. Which money arose three ways; the first is here mentioned, *the money of every one that passeth* (for the words *the account* are not in the Hebrew), which some understand of the offering which pious people of other nations made, who came to worship at Jerusalem: (1 Kings viii. 41.) or rather, of those who were come to twenty years of age, and being past that, were to pay half a shekel. This had been much neglected in the time of Athaliah (as the Jewish doctors think), but now being carefully gathered, there was enough to maintain the daily sacrifice (which was supported out of this money), and to carry on also the reparation of the temple. Though Abarbinel thinks it was wholly applied to the reparation; and the people voluntarily offered for the maintaining of the daily morning and evening sacrifice.

The money that every man is set at.] This was the second way: by the money that every man who had vowed himself to God, was to pay, by the estimation that the priest should make for his redemption; according to that law, Lev. xxviii. 2, 3. For so the words are here in the Hebrew, *the money of a man whose taxation is the money of his soul:* that is, who is taxed such a sum of money, whereby his soul might be freed from the vow wherewith he had bound himself. For till this money was paid, his life was not his own, but God's.

And all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord.] This was the third sort of money for the reparation of the temple; that which any man would give freely for that service which they were to receive of them.

Ver. 5. *Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance, and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.*] This money, thus collected, he entrusted with the priests, and commanded them to see it employed to the use for which it was given.

Ver. 6. *And it was so, that in the three-and-twentieth year of king Jehoash, the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.*] They were both dilatory and careless in gathering the money, (2 Chron. xxiv. 5.) and did not bring in what they had gathered to begin the work. Whereupon the king revoked his former order, and entrusted other men (as it here follows) with this work. Thus are things seldom done well, that are committed to the care of many.

Ver. 7. *Then king Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? Now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.*] He ordered two things; first, that they should gather no more money of the people; and se-

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condly, that they should not have the care of seeing the temple repaired; but pay what had been gathered into other hands.

Ver. 8. *And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.*] They submitted to the king's new orders, and wholly committed the business to those whom he thought fit to employ.

Ver. 9. *But Jehoiada the priest took a chest.*] By the king's order, (2 Chron. xxiv. 8.)

And bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the Lord.] On the right side of the gate that went into the court of the priests: not far from the altar which was within the court, as appears from 2 Chron. xxiv. 8. Dr. Lightfoot thinks these two texts do not relate to the same time. For at the first the chest was set in the very court of the priests near to the altar, as it is here said in this place: so that the money still passed through the priests' fingers; who took it of the people and put it into the chest which was in their court, where the people could not come at it. But the money not coming in so fast as was expected this way; he removed the chest, or made another, and set it without the court, at the entrance of it, where every one might have access unto it. And he proclaimed through all the country they should bring in their money thither: which came in so plentifully, that there was enough for the repair of the house, and for other uses also.

And the priests that kept the door put therein all the money brought into the house of the Lord.] There was a proclamation made, that all the people should bring in their half-shekel, which Moses commanded every one of such an age to pay: and they brought it to the priests who stood at the door that let into their court, and saw them put it into the chest, (2 Chron. xxiv. 9.)

Ver. 10. *And it was so, when they saw there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high-priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the Lord.*] The high-priest would have a witness of his actions, lest he should be suspected of any fraud, as perhaps others had been; and would not open the chest without the assistance of the king's secretary of state; nor would he open it in the temple, but had it brought by the Levites into the king's office; and there the secretary and the high-priest, or any officer of his, emptied the chest, and told the money, and then put it up in bags, which it is likely they sealed; and then they sent the chest into its place again. This they did every day, as we read 2 Chron. xxiv. 11.

Ver. 11. *And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, and had the oversight of the house of the Lord.*] These bags of money were delivered (by the king and Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 12.) not to the priests, whom the king had found tardy, and perhaps faulty, in converting the money to their own uses; but to some select persons, who had this peculiar business committed to them, to see the reparation, and to employ good workmen, and to pay them their wages.

And they laid it out to the carpenters and builders that wrought upon the house of the Lord.] To buy materials for the work, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 12. *And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the Lord, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.*] For all other things, of what kind soever they were, which they found necessary for the reparation.

Ver. 13. *Howbeit, there were not made for the house of the Lord bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of the Lord.*] Though these were wanting, yet the money was limited to the reparations of the house; and the king ordered that no vessel of any sort should be bought for the temple, till the temple itself was put into a good condition. So the LXX. render it, *there shall none be made for the house any vessels*, &c. (that is, he commanded there should be none made), but all given to the forenamed workmen, as long as there needed any reparations. So it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 14. *But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the Lord.*] The masons and carpenters, and such-like workmen, had all the money, to be laid out according to their discretion, upon the reparation of the temple alone, till the work was finished. And then they gave an account of what money remained in their hands, and that was laid out to purchase such vessels as are before mentioned, for the service of the temple, (2 Chron. xxiv. 14.)

Ver. 15. *Moreover, they reckoned not with the men into whose hands they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen; for they dealt faithfully.*] They were so confident of the honesty of the overseers, that they took no account of the money they had paid the workmen; who were also men of such clear reputation, that what they laid out was not questioned. This was a rare example of fidelity in managing the public money; and there was one man in Greece, Aristides, who was so trusty in the opinion of all the people.

Ver. 16. *The trespass-money and the sin-money was not brought into the house of the Lord: it was the priests'.*] This money was not applied to the aforesaid use; but put into the hands of the priests, that sacrifices for trespasses and sins might be offered for those that gave it.

Ver. 17. *Then Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it.*] This was a city of the Philistines, but taken by king David, and added to the dominions of Israel, (2 Sam. viii. 1. 1 Chron. xviii. 1.) and now taken from them by Hazael.

And Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.] Having made himself master of this place, he plainly declared, by the disposition of his affairs, that he intended to make an attempt upon Jerusalem. This fell out after Jehoash had forsaken God, and fallen to idolatry; as appears by the book of the Chronicles; where a much different relation is made of the expedition of the Syrians. Insomuch that Abarbinel thinks (which is approved by several Christian writers) there were two expeditions. In the first of which Hazael came up in person against them, as is here related; but they purchased peace of him: and then in the end of the year, after they had killed Zachariah, the war was renewed; though Hazael did not come himself, but sent a small army, which they were not able to oppose, which destroyed a great many of the people, and sent great spoils to Damascus, (2 Chron. xxiv. 23. 25.)

Ver. 18. *And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed*

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things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria; and he went away from Jerusalem.] The preservation of his kingdom, he thought, warranted this; but he had brought these dangers upon himself by his apostacy from God.

Ver. 19. *And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

Ver. 20. *And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla.*] The Syrians had left him labouring under great diseases at this place called Millo: where his servants slew him in his bed, as we read 2 Chron. xxiv. 25. There was another place called Millo, hard by the king's palace at Jerusalem: therefore, to distinguish this from that, this is called *Millo that goeth down to Silla;* as Abarbinel thinks.

Ver. 21. *For Jozachar the son of Shimeath.*] He was called by another name also, *viz.* Zabad.

And Jehozabad the son of Shomer.] This was his father's name, it is likely, and his mother was called Shimrith, who was a Moabitess; as Shimeath was an Ammonitess, (2 Chron. xxiv. 26.)

His servants, smote him, and he died.] They were friends of Jehoiada (as Josephus thinks), who took this revenge upon Joash, for the death of Zachariah the son of Jehoiada, as is expressly noted, 2 Chron. xxiv. 25.

And they buried him with his fathers in the city of David.] But not in the sepulchre of the kings, (2 Chron. xxiv. 25.) For though they did him so much honour as to bury him in the royal city, yet not all the honour that was usual; because he had forsaken God, and slain one of his prophets.

And Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.] His servants did not kill him, with an intention to usurp the kingdom: but only to revenge the blood of Zachariah. For they suffered his son to succeed Joash peaceably, who slew those that had slain his father, (2 Chron. xxv. 3.)

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *IN the three-and-twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years.*] Some have raised a doubt about this account, because Joash began to reign in the seventh year of Jehu, (xii. 2.) who reigned but twenty-eight years; (x. 36.) from whence if seven years be deducted, there remains no more than one-and-twenty, not three-and-twenty years, as is here said. To which Kimchi and Abarbinel answer, There were two incomplete years: for when it is said Joash reigned in the seventh year of Jehu, it must be understood of the beginning of his seventh year; and in like manner, when he speaks here of the three-and-twentieth year of Joash, it must be understood of the beginning of the same year. And so they are called three-and-twenty, when they were but one-and-twenty perfect years. But it is better to say (as my worthy friend Dr. Alix thinks) that there was an interregnum of a year between the death of Jehu and the first of Jehoahaz.

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and followed the sins of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.*] Was not reclaimed by the severe punishments God inflicted on him.

Ver. 3. *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel; and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all their days.*] The word *their* is not in the Hebrew; so that it may be translated all *his* days, as it is explained ver. 22.

Ver. 4. *And Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him.*] Not for his sake, but for the sake of the pious ancestors of this people, with whom he had made a covenant of great mercy to be shewed to their posterity; which in their great distress he now afforded them. (See ver. 23.)

For he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them.] Intending their utter ruin, which God would not yet permit, but bear longer with them.

Ver. 5. *(And God gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians.*] Some understand by this *saviour,* an extraordinary captain, whom God raised up to fight their battles with great success. But it being said, that while Hazael lived he oppressed them, (ver. 22.) it is more reasonable to understand by this *saviour,* the son of Jehoahaz; who, when Hazael was dead, delivered them from their bondage, (ver. 25.) And, perhaps, he did this in his father's lifetime, who made him joint sovereign with himself.

And the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as aforetime.] They lived quietly and securely, not only in their fortified towns, but in the villages and the fields.

Ver. 6. *Nevertheless, they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, but walked therein.*] Neither their miseries, nor God's mercies to them, made any alteration in them; but they continued in those sins which had ruined the house of Jeroboam, and many of his successors.

And there remained the grove also in Samaria).] We read of a grove which Ahab planted in honour of Baal, 1 Kings xvi. 33. But his worship being utterly destroyed by Jehu, I cannot but think that he cut down that grove: and therefore the grove here mentioned had in it the image of some other god.

Ver. 7. *Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots.*] With the men belonging to them.

And ten thousand footmen.] This explains what he means by *the people* in the foregoing words; not all the people of Israel, but the soldiers, or men of war; of which there were no more left than this small number.

For the king of Syria had destroyed them.] God left them in his hand to make this destruction among them, killing some, and carrying others captive.

And had made them like the dust by thrashing.] By perpetual wars and captivities; which made very great depopulations.

Ver. 8. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] The judgments of God upon him were the most remarkable, because he was a *man of might:* and was so far from being able to stand before the Syrians, that they beat him to dust.

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Ver. 9. *And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria, and Joash his son reigned in his stead.*] Called in the next verse Jehoash.

Ver. 10. *In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years.*] A difficulty seems to arise, by comparing this verse with the first: where it is said, Jehoahaz king of Israel began to reign in the twenty-third year of Joash king of Judah, and reigned seventeen years: from whence it follows, that Jehoash began to reign not in the thirty-seventh, but in the thirty-ninth, or fortieth year of Joash king of Judah. But this only shews the truth of what I said upon ver. 5. that he reigned with his father three years: after God was so gracious as to raise up a deliverer to them; who was this son of his, by whom peace was restored to them. This we note in the margin, he reigned *in concert with his father,* (xiv. 1.)

Ver. 11. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: but he walked therein.*

Ver. 12. *And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] They were all recorded in the book so often mentioned; (see 1 Kings xi. 41.) and his fight with Amaziah is particularly related, and set down at large, in 2 Chron. xxv. 17, 18, &c.

Ver. 13. *And Joash slept with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat upon his throne.*] From whence some of the Jewish doctors gather, that he reigned with his father at least one year; though Abarbinel denies it, but without reason.

And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.] He doth not here conclude this history of Joash; for he afterward relates great things done by him. But being to speak of the death of Elisha, upon which those things depended, he interposes that before he proceeds further to relate his acts.

Ver. 14. *Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died.*] This was in the tenth year of Joash, as they say in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 19. and from thence gather how long Elisha continued a prophet in Israel, *viz.* from the nineteenth year of Jehoshaphat till this time; which was sixty-five years.

And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face.] This was no sign of his hearty affection to him (for he would not hearken to his word), but he bewailed himself, and his people, who were in danger shortly to lose so great a defender.

And said, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!] They are the words of Elisha concerning Elijah, when he was taken up to heaven, (ii. 12.) signifying the great authority he had maintained among them (which is included in the word *father*), and that by his counsel and prayers they had obtained glorious victories over their enemies.

Ver. 15. *And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows: and he took unto him bow and arrows.*] This was to represent the wars he was to have with the Syrians.

Ver. 16. *And he said to the king of Israel, Put thy hand upon the bow; and he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.*] This was to represent that they were not to trust in their arms, and their valour; but in God alone, who would give them the victory.

Ver. 17. *And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it.*] Part of Syria lay east or north-east from Judea: and the Syrians also had possessed themselves of all the land of Israel eastward; (x. 33.) from whence he signified, by what follows, Joash should expel them.

Then Elisha said, Shoot: and he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, the arrow of deliverance from Syria.] A sign the Lord would wound the Syrians by the arms of the Israelites, and give them a glorious deliverance from their tyranny.

For thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek.] In the territories belonging to it, (of which, see 1 Sam. iv. 1. xxix. 1.) The Syrians had taken Gath; and Aphek, I take it, was not far from it: so that it was as much as to say, they should drive them out of the country; as it follows.

Till thou hast destroyed them.] Not all the people of Syria, but all their forces wherewith they infested Israel.

Ver. 18. *And he said, Take the arrows: and he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground: and he smote thrice, and stayed.*] That which he represented before by the shooting of an arrow, he represents again by smiting upon the ground with the arrows; *viz.* victory over the Syrians, whom he should overthrow and cast down to the ground in battle.

Ver. 19. *And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times, then shouldest thou have smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed them: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.*] By the former sign the king of Israel might have understood that this was intended to signify the same thing; and I suppose the prophet spake so, as to give him to understand he would have him smite a good many times. And he was angry at his sloth and unbelief, which made him stop at the third stroke; for if he had done it oftener, he should have utterly disabled them. He had before represented great victories which he should obtain; but not till now, how often he should overcome; which he was admonished by God to let him know by this sign. And it is probable the prophet himself did not know, till he saw how often he smote on the ground.

Ver. 20. *And Elisha died, and they buried him: and the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.*] Which was the usual time when people went out to war, as I have shewn upon 2 Sam. xi. 1. (see there); but whether it was the next spring after his death, or some years after, is doubted: but the words seem plainly to import it was the next spring.

Ver. 21. *And it came to pass, as they were burying a man.*] Carrying him to his grave.

They spied a band of men.] A party of the Moabites, who were coming towards the place where they were to lay the corpse.

And they cast him into the sepulchre of Elisha.] Which being near to the place where they then were, they rolled away the stone, and laid the body by Elisha's; for fear, if they proceeded to the sepulchre prepared for this man, they should fall into the hands of the Moabites.

And when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha.] From hence some conclude, that this invasion of

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the Moabites was some years after Elisha's death; when his flesh was consumed, and only his bones remained.

That he revived, and stood upon his feet.] By which miracle God did the highest honour to his prophet, and confirmed both the truth of what he had promised the king, and the belief of a future life. For this was something more than he had done in Elisha's lifetime, when he could not without many prayers, and stretching himself with great application upon the body of the child, raise it to life again; whereas now, upon touching of his dead body only, God restored a man, in an instant, to perfect health; for he stood upon his feet, and, it is likely, walked home with those that brought him to be buried. It is a poor conceit of Abarbinel and others, that he was a wicked man, whom God rather would raise to life again, than suffer his dead body to rest by such a holy person as Elisha. It had been enough, if this had been the reason, to have thrown this dead body out of Elisha's sepulchre, and let it lie upon the ground.

Ver. 22. *But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.*] None of these things which Elisha promised were accomplished while Hazael lived; but after his death, Joash the son of Jehoahaz (as it here follows) vanquished Ben-hadad the son of Hazael.

Ver. 23. *And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion upon them, and respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*] For whose sake he spared them, and would not let the oppression of the Syrians continue so long as to ruin them.

And would not destroy them, neither cast he them out of his presence as yet.] But allowed them a longer space for repentance.

Ver. 24. *So Hazael king of Syria died, and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead.*] The name of Ben-hadad had for a long time been common to the kings of Syria, and now was renewed in another family.

Ver. 25. *And Joash the son of Jehoahaz took again, out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war.*] He took all the country on the other side of Jordan in the days of Jehu; (x. 33.) besides which he made further conquests on this side Jordan, in the days of Jehoahaz: whether Jehoash recovered all is not certain; but what his father lost, it is here said he regained.

Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.] It is not recorded where these three battles were fought; but the success of them was so great, that he retook all that his father had lost.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *IN the second year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz king of Israel, reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah.*] This was, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, the thirty-eighth year of his father Joash king of Judah; three years current before his death. For his father had thrown himself into such a miserable condition by his apostacy, and his murder of Zachariah, (xii. 17, 18.) that he was become unfit to manage the kingdom. (See Harm. of the Evang. Proleg. cap. 6.)

Ver. 2. *He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.*] Joash king of Israel reigned sixteen years, (xiii. 10.) therefore Amaziah reigned fourteen years while he lived, and after his death fifteen years; which make twenty-nine. (See ver. 17.)

Ver. 3. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father: he did in all things according as Joash his father did.*] For both of them in the beginning of their reigns did very well; but both in their latter end fell into idolatry. Both of them also, as Abarbinel observes, contemned God's prophets, who spake to them in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 4. *Howbeit the high places were not taken away; for yet the people did sacrifice and burn incense on the high places.*] Even in the best part of his reign, before he fell to idolatry, this licence continued, which had been long practised against the law of God. In this he imitated his father, (xii. 3.)

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass, when the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king his father.*] He durst not venture upon this piece of justice presently, till he was well settled in his authority, and had divested those of all power who were the friends of those murderers. Who seem to have continued still at court, for they are called *his servants.*

Ver. 6. *But the children of the murderers slew he not: according to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.*] In this he acted like a good man, and was not moved to cut off the children, contrary to law, for fear they should make a faction against him, and take revenge for their father's death.

Ver. 7. *He slew of Edom.*] He alone, and the men of Judah, made the following slaughter: having, at the command of a prophet, abandoned the help of the Israelites, though he had purchased it with a great sum of money; (2 Chron. xxv. 7—10.) the Edomites had revolted from Judah in the days of Joram, (viii. 10.) and now Amaziah endeavours to reduce them.

In the valley of Salt.] A place mentioned 2 Sam. viii. 13. where see what I have observed concerning the reason of this name.

Ten thousand.] And he took as many captives. (See 2 Chron. xxv. 12.)

And he took Selah by war.] The metropolis of Arabia Petræa; which took its name from hence: for *Selah* is the same with the word *Petra*, a *rock;* upon which the city stood. From this rock he seems to have thrown down the ten thousand whom he took alive, and broke in pieces, as is said in the forenamed place, 2 Chron. xxv. 12. *Hagar* signifies the same, as Bochartus observes, by which name the Arabians called it, from the rocky mountain which hung over this place, which St. Paul calls by the Arabic name *Hagar.*

And called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.] Which name imports, *obedience of God,* or *to God:* because, having taken it, he settled, as some imagine, the laws and statutes of Moses in this place; or rather, he acknowledged, by giving it this name, that the possession of this place was a reward of his obedience to the man of God, who required

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him to dismiss all the forces he had hired of the Israelites, (2 Chron. xxv. 10.)

Ver. 8. *Then Amaziah king of Judah sent a messenger to Jehoash, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face.*] Being flushed with his great victory over the Edomites, and incensed by the damages the Israelites had done him, (2 Chron. xxv. 13.) he sent this challenge to the king of Israel, saying, Let us set our armies in battle-array one against the other, and try our strength. Which some think he did only to try their military skill and prowess; not to revenge injuries, or get his own again. Which, if he had intended, he would have assaulted the Israelites on a sudden; and not given them such a fair warning to stand upon their defence. But it is more probable, that, being encouraged, as I said, by his late victory, he resolved to be revenged for the slaughter of his ancestors by Jehu, (chap. ix.) and for the late spoil the Israelites had made in his country; (2 Chron. xxv. 10. 13.) but he resolved to have satisfaction in a fair and honourable way, and not by surprise. And the words may be thus understood: *Either give me satisfaction, or let us try it out in a battle.* It is probable, also, he might think of conquering the kingdom of Israel, if he did not satisfy him, and bring it back to the house of David: for so Jehoash understood him, as Josephus thinks, and the sequel shews.

Ver. 9. *And Jehoash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon.*] He compares himself to a cedar, and Amaziah to a thistle; which is a poor shrub, not worthy of that name; but having drawn blood on some poor traveller, and sorely afflicted him (as Amaziah had done the Edomites), grew very proud, and would be no longer one of the shrubs, but equal to the most goodly trees.

Saying, Give me thy daughter to my son to wife.] Make an affinity with me, and let us be one kingdom. So some understand it, that Jehoash thought he would have him join his great kingdom, which was ten tribes, unto his poor one of two tribes; that, being united, there should be but one king over them all; and they should try their fortune in a pitched battle, which of them two should be the king. But this seems to be too much strained. He only intimates, that if he should desire a friendly alliance with him, he despised it as below him, as much as a thistle is below a cedar.

And there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle.] This represents how easily his soldiers (who are compared to wild beasts) would repress his insolence.

Ver. 10. *Thou hast indeed smitten the Edomites, and thine heart hath lifted thee up.*] This hath made thee proud.

Glory in this, and tarry at home.] Be content with the honour thou hast won, and be quiet.

For why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?] He admonishes him to desist from this needless provocation of his neighbours; which might end in his ruin.

Ver. 11. *But Amaziah would not hearken: therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up, and he and Amaziah looked one another in the face.*] Encountered one another in a fight.

At Beth-shemesh, which belongeth to Judah.] See 1 Sam. vi. 12.

Ver. 12. *And Judah was put to the worse before Israel, and they fled every man to their tents.*] So their houses were called, from their having no other habitations for a long time in the wilderness; and in Canaan many continued in such dwellings. Josephus saith, the people of Judah did not strike a stroke; but being possessed with a panic fear, when they saw a formidable army set in battle-array against them, ran away.

Ver. 13. *And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh.*] I suppose his ancestors are mentioned to shew that this was the greater disgrace to him; being descended from a race of kings, which Jehoash was not.

And came to Jerusalem.] Bringing Amaziah with him; and letting the inhabitants know (as Josephus saith) that he would slay him before their eyes, if they did not immediately open their gates unto him; which was accordingly done.

And broke down the wall of Jerusalem, from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits.] That the city might lie open to his invasion, if they should break the conditions he imposed upon them.

Ver. 14. *And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages.*] The sons, I suppose, of the principal persons of the city, for a security that they would be quiet, and give him no disturbance.

And returned to Samaria.] For he had enough to do to defend himself from the Syrians; and therefore did not intend a conquest of the kingdom of Judah, nor set a garrison in Jerusalem: but contented himself with the spoil of it; and perhaps made them tributaries to him. This was a heavy punishment upon Amaziah for going after other gods, (2 Chron. xxv. 20.)

Ver. 15. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] There were many other things which happened in this war, as Abarbinel observes, besides these here compendiously related; for which he refers to a record which was very well known in those days, but now is lost.

Ver. 16. *And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel, and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.*

Ver. 17. *And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, lived after the death of Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz king of Israel, fifteen years.*] But in no great credit with his people; for Rasi thinks he lived most of his time in Lachish, whither he was forced to fly (as it follows), by reason of a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem.

Ver. 18. *And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] He mentions nothing of *his might* which he shewed; being a weak prince, who lost the reputation of his country.

Ver. 19. *Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem.*] Their city having been exposed to reproach by the great breach made in their wall, and spoiled of its best ornaments, and some of their children carried away as hostages for their good behaviour, he became very odious to the great men of the city; all this being brought upon them by his pride, and rashness, and apostacy from God, (xxv. 27.)

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And he fled to Lachish.] The conspiracy, it seems, grew so strong, that he could not resist it; but was forced to seek for safety by flight, in a fortified city upon the borders of the Philistines.

But they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there.] They sent to have him privately murdered (as Josephus reports it), which some undertook and effected.

Ver. 20. *And they brought him on horses.*] In a chariot.

And they buried him in Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.] They did him some honour when he was dead, though they hated him when he was alive.

Ver. 21. *And all the people of Judah took Azariah.*] Called *Uzziah* in the next chapter, ver. 30. and in 2 Chron. xxvi. 1. Both signify the same thing; one being as much as *the help of God*, the other *the strength of God*.

(Which was sixteen years old), and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.] But this was twelve years after Amaziah's death: for he was made king in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam, (see upon xv. 1.) who began to reign in the fifteenth of Amaziah, (ver. 23.)

Ver. 22. *He built Elath.*] Repaired it.

And restored it to Judah.] It was a city belonging to Edom, (Deut. ii. 8. 2 Chron. viii. 17.) which king David, I suppose, took when he conquered this country; but in the days of Joram the Edomites revolted, and recovered Elath.

After that the king slept with his fathers.] It is a probable opinion of Abarbinel, that the king his father, after the great slaughter of the Edomites, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, took this place; but did not annex it to the kingdom of Judah, by reason of his succeeding troubles. Which Azariah did, by building a wall about it, and fortifying it; whereby he secured the possession of it.

Ver. 23. *In the fifteenth year of Amaziah king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.*] Which was much longer than any of the kings of Israel: Jehu himself, the first of his family, reigning but twenty-eight years, which was longer than any before him, as I observed, x. 36.

Ver. 24. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.*] As he had the name, so he trod in the steps of him who first corrupted Israel with idolatry.

Ver. 25. *He restored the coast of Israel, from the entering of Hamath to the sea of the plain.*] As Joash his father had restored many cities which Ben-hadad had taken; so Jeroboam restored a large territory which other kings had taken from them; *viz.* all the country from Libanus on the north, to the lake Asphaltites on the south.

According to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher.] The prophet Jonah encouraged them to this war, promising them success in it. Whose words are not here set down; but this place shews that God was very merciful to them, though a very wicked people, still in continuing prophets among them, when Elisha was dead. And this prophet, the Jews fancy, was the son of the woman of Sarepta, whom Elijah raised from the dead. For which I cannot find they have any ground, but this poor conceit, that he is called the son of *Amittai*, i. e. *of truth*, say they: because his mother said to the prophet, when he restored her son to her, *Now I know the word of God in thy mouth is truth*, (1 Kings xvii. 24.) But this is fully confuted from this single observation, that he is said to be of Gath-hepher, which was far from Sarepta, towards Tiberias in the tribe of Zebulun, as St. Jerome tells us.

Ver. 26. *For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter.*] He shewed them this favour, not for any goodness that was in them; but in compassion to their misery, which was greater than could be expressed.

For there was not any shut up, nor any left.] Men of all sorts were destroyed: or, as some interpret it, they had lost all they had in their houses, and all that was in the field. But see of this phrase, 1 Kings xiv. 10. xxi. 21.

Nor any helper for Israel.] None to relieve, much less to deliver them.

Ver. 27. *And the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.*] But since the Lord had not yet decreed to root them out of their own land; therefore he saved them, even by this wicked prince, for the present, from their enemies; who would otherwise have made an utter end of them.

Ver. 28. *Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel,* &c.] Or rather, *by Israel*, as Abarbinel expounds it; by the hand or power of Israel they were restored. For when David fought against the Syrians, and brought them in subjection to him, he put garrisons into Damascus and Hamath, (2 Sam. viii. 6, &c.) Which the Syrians afterward recovered when they rebelled against Judah: but Jeroboam possessed himself of them again, and by his valour made them as subject to Israel as they had been to Judah.

Ver. 29. *And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.*] He was the third king of Israel of Jehu's race, and so might be said to sleep with his fathers of Israel.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *IN the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.*] Here is a great difficulty, in the solving of which interpreters much vary: for Amaziah the father of Azariah lived but fifteen years after the beginning of Jeroboam's reign; (xiv. 17.) therefore Azariah began his reign, not in the twenty-seventh, but in the beginning of the seventeenth of Jeroboam. Some think Jeroboam reigned with his father eleven years: others, that there was an interregnum: that is, the throne was vacant eleven, or rather twelve years, between the death of Amaziah and the inauguration of Azariah. Dr. Lightfoot makes no doubt of the truth of this: that Azariah being but sixteen years old in the seven-and-twentieth of Jeroboam, he was but four years old at his father's death; and the throne being empty for eleven or twelve years, the government was managed by some of the grandees in his minority. But Ralbag will have these twenty-seven years of Jeroboam not to be those which were past, but those which

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were to come; and the meaning is, Azariah was made king when Jeroboam had yet twenty-seven years to reign; before the family of Jehu came to an end. For after this Jeroboam reigned twenty-six years, and his son six months; which make twenty-seven imperfect years. This Abarbinel thinks is the literal sense: but the other is more agreeable to the constant account of the reigns of other kings. (See Mr. Whiston, in his late View of the Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 91.)

Ver. 2. *Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem.*] In which time, which was longer than any king of Judah or Israel reigned, he did many great things; which are recorded in 2 Chron. xxvi. from ver. 5. to 16.

Ver. 3. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Amaziah his father had done.*] He governed well in the former part of his reign, and was prospered by God; (2 Chron. xxvi. 5.) but offended in the latter end of it, as Amaziah his father had done.

Ver. 4. *Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and offered incense still on the high places.*] Which was a common error (as I have often observed) which continued through the reign of the best of their kings, till the time of Hezekiah.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper to the day of his death, and he dwelt in a several house.*] The cause of this stroke is related at large in 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, &c. And by a *several house* the Jews understand a house in the country, which was *domus libera:* where he might have liberty to take his pleasure, but not to meddle with public affairs.

And Jotham the king's son was over the house, judging the people of the land.] Over *the king's house,* as it is in 2 Chron. xxvi. 23. That is, he lived in the palace, and managed all the affairs of the court, and of the kingdom. This was in the seven-and-twentieth year of Azariah, when he was smote with the leprosy (as Rasi makes account), and he continued a leper twenty-five years, during which time Jotham took upon him the administration of the government, his father being incapable of it.

Ver. 6. *And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

Ver. 7. *So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David; and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.*] He was not buried in the very *city of David,* but in the *field of the burial which belonged to the kings,* (2 Chron. xxvi. 23.) In which field, it is probable, the sepulchre of the kings was: wherein they would not bury Azariah, because he was a leper; but yet very near to the sepulchre, where his ancestors lay interred.

Ver. 8. *In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months.*] Some are confident the throne was vacant two-and-twenty years between the death of Jeroboam and the inauguration of his son; either through wars from abroad (which Jeroboam might have provoked against his house, by the conquest of Hamath and Damascus), or through war at home, which appears, they think, from this disastrous end of Zachariah, ver. 10. (See Dr. Lightfoot, in his Prolegomena to his Harmony of the Evangelists, sect. 6.) But there are few that follow this opinion, though one most learned in these, as well as other things (Dr. Alix), thinks there was an interregnum of twenty-four years. If there be any difficulty in this account, most think it is sufficiently solved, by saying, that it was the thirty-eighth year, from the time that Azariah began to reign with his father.

Ver. 9. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.*] Therefore God cut him off speedily; the time approaching, when he intended to put an end to the kingdom of Israel.

Ver. 10. *And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.*] It is uncertain who this Shallum was, or what was the pretence of his conspiracy, and of his possessing himself of the throne; but it is pretty plain, I think, that he laid his treason privately and secret, (ver. 15.) and then made an open assault upon the king's person in the face of all the people.

Ver. 11. *And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.*] We read of nothing that he did; therefore the meaning is, that his behaviour in the six months' time wherein he reigned, how he managed things, and provoked this conspiracy, are recorded elsewhere: the author of this book intending only to give a brief account of the remaining kings of Israel.

Ver. 12. *This was the word of the Lord which he spake to Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel, unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass.*] How unfaithful soever they proved to God, he faithfully kept his promise which he made to Jehu: whose sons Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah, succeeded him in the throne of Israel. But this Shallum put an end to that family, and fulfilled the prophecy of Hosea, i. 4. "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel." For though Jehu had a command from God to destroy the house of Ahab, yet he did it with such ill affections, and for such wrong ends, that God avenged that blood by this man, who slew Zachariah, and the rest of his posterity, if there were any: at least, he made the kingdom to cease in this family, and not long after in all Israel; who were rooted out, and never restored to their country, as Judah was.

Ver. 13. *Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine-and-thirtieth year of Uzziah, king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria.*] We are not told how he reigned, but it is likely he followed the steps of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin.

Ver. 14. *For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum, the son of Jabesh, in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.*] Josephus thinks Menahem was general of the army of Israel, which besieged Tirzah when Zachariah was slain: and he hearing what Shallum had done, came and served him in his kind, and made himself king.

Ver. 15. *And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.*] A larger account was given of his conspiracy, and the occasion of it, and his success in it, in that book; where some other memora-

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ble acts, which it seems he did in a month's time, were recorded.

Ver. 16. *Then Menahem smote Tiphsah, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it.*] Some take this Tiphsah to be the same with that mentioned in 1 Kings iv. 24. But that lay upon the river Euphrates, whereas this was near to Tirzah; which was once the royal city of Israel: to the siege of which Josephus thinks Menahem returned after the slaughter of Shallum; not as general of the host, but as their king: but they knowing he had no title to the kingdom, would not open their gates to him. Therefore he took it by force, and spoiled it, and all the territory about it, until he came to Tiphsah, which he used more cruelly.

And all the women therein that were with child he ripped up.] By which barbarity he thought to terrify the whole kingdom, that none might dare to withstand him.

Ver. 17. *In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah, king of Judah, began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria.*] He seems to have reigned with such fury, that none durst oppose him; but he possessed the throne ten years before God cut him off.

Ver. 18. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.*

Ver. 19. *And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land.*] That is, the land of Israel. He was governor of Babylon, who, together with Arbaces the Mede, slew Sardanapulus, the last of the Assyrian kings, and translated the empire to the Chaldeans. For he reigned over Babylon and Nineveh, and Arbaces over the Medes and Persians. He was the first king of Assyria that invaded Israel, and began their transportation out of their own country; as Abarbinel gathers from 1 Chron. v. 26. And this is the first time that we find any mention of the kingdom of Assyria, since the days of Nimrod, who erected a small kingdom here, (Gen. x. 11.) And they were no great people, one would think, when the seventy-second psalm was penned, where they are reckoned as auxiliaries to the children of Lot, against the Israelites, together with other small nations; but now they had a great and powerful empire.

And Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him, to confirm the kingdom in his hand.] By this great present he not only turned away the army of Pul from him, but purchased his friendship; so that he helped to establish his authority. Which was very tottering, by reason he was not only an usurper, but had exercised extreme great cruelty upon his people, which no doubt made him extremely hated, (ver. 10.)

Ver. 20. *And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria.*] By this means, I suppose, he thought to ingratiate himself with the common people; upon whom he laid no tax, but charged only the rich, according to the proportion of their wealth. For the Hebrew words do not import that he made every rich man in Israel pay fifty shekels; but that he gave to the king of Assyria so many shekels for every man, that is, for every one in his army. So they run exactly, *to give to the king of Assyria fifty shekels of silver for each man.*

So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land.] At that time he departed; but it is likely he afterward returned, in the reign of Pekah, and made the deportation beforementioned.

Ver. 21. *And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

Ver. 22. *And Menahem slept with his fathers, and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.*] This shews him to have been a mighty man, that, notwithstanding his violence and cruelty, he left the kingdom in his family: which the two foregoing kings could not do. But it is evident, there was an interregnum of a year between the reign of Menahem and Pekahiah: for Pekahiah did not begin his reign till the fiftieth year of Azariah (as it here follows), and Menahem died the year before; for he began to reign in the thirty-ninth of Azariah, (ver. 17.) and reigned but ten years.

Ver. 23. *In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.*] His reign was short; both because he himself was wicked, and his father also was an usurper.

Ver. 24. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.*] He was the wicked son of a wicked father; and so perished (as it here follows) by such a conspiracy as his father made against Shallum.

Ver. 25. *And Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieh.*] These were two valiant men, who some think were in the conspiracy with him against Pekahiah. But Abarbinel rather thinks they were two eminent courtiers, who were always about the king.

And with him fifty men of the Gileadites.] Who were his guards, and, perhaps, assisted him in his treason.

And he killed him, and reigned in his stead.] He was a great commander under Pekahiah; for the Hebrew word *shalish* signifies more than a bare *captain*. Therefore Josephus calls him a *chiliarch*, or an officer over a thousand men. And the word carrying in it the notion of three, some later writers have therefore thought him to be the third person in the kingdom, next the king. No question he was some considerable person, who had soldiers at his command to execute his designs.

Ver. 26. *And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.*

Ver. 27. *In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years.*] This is the fifth king that reigned over Israel during the reign of Azariah king of Judah.

Ver. 28. *He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.*

Ver. 29. *In the days of Pekah king of Israel.*] In the last year of his reign, as the Jews say in Seder Olam Rabba.

Came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria.] He was the son of Pul, and is called by other authors Phul, or Phul-Assur, and here Tiglath-Pul-Assur: the former part of this name being taken from the river Tigris, which is called by the inhabitants Diglito; from whose borders this king came.

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And took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah.] Two strong towns mentioned 1 Kings xv. 20. (See there.)

And Janoah.] A city in the tribe of Ephraim. (See Josh. xvi. 6.)

And Kedesh, and Hazor.] Which were in the tribe of Naphtali, (Josh. xii. 22. xix. 36.)

And Gilead.] Which was on the other side Jordan.

And Galilee, all the land of Naphtali.] The upper Galilee; which was possessed by this tribe, and by Zebulun.

And carried them captive to Assyria.] This was the second deportation of the ten tribes; the first being made by Pul, as I said before, who carried away the two tribes and half beyond Jordan; and this second was made by his son, who carried away two other tribes: then, nine years after, followed a third, in the days of the next king, (xviii. 9.) when the remainder of the ten tribes were carried away from their own land. The tribe of Judah still remained; but about eight years after the former, part of that was carried away by Sennacherib, when he took all their fenced cities; (xviii. 13.) which, with respect to the whole country, the Jews call the fourth deportation. Then a fifth followed, (xxiv. 15.) and a sixth; (xxv. 1, &c.) the last is mentioned, xxv. 25. Thus they are reckoned up by Abarbinel; and in this second (the Jews say, in Seder Olam Rabba), Tiglath-pileser carried away the golden calf which was in Dan. But see a more exact account of Judah's captivity in Mr. Whiston's learned Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 52.

Ver. 30. *And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah.*] Who Hoshea was, or what was the ground of his conspiracy, is not recorded; but we may suppose it to have been because he governed ill, and, by his cruel war with Judah, had brought the king of Assyria upon his own kingdom, (2 Chron. xxviii. 16.) and thereby lost a great part of it.

And smote him, and slew him.] As Pekah had served Pekahiah.

And reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham king of Judah.] These words create a difficulty; for it is said, ver. 33. that Jotham reigned but sixteen years. Which Seder Olam Rabba thus reconciles (for none can think any writer whatsoever would so soon contradict himself), that this conspiracy was begun in the latter end of Jotham's reign, but not put in execution till four years after his death. So that these words are to be understood as if he had said, *Twenty years after Jotham began to reign over Judah Pekah was slain.* Dr. Lightfoot gives another account of it; that the wickedness of Ahaz was so great, that the holy writer would not mention him on this occasion, but rather speaks of his good father, as if he were yet alive, in which he follows R. Solomon Jarchi. But this hath no show of truth in it; since so much is said of Ahaz in the following part of this history. A late very learned writer (in his Short View of the Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 47.) hath given a better account of it, in these words: "Because there had been yet no mention made of Ahaz's reign, therefore the old epocha of his predecessor Jotham is still made use of." But the plain truth is, that Jotham reigned four years with his father Azariah.

Ver. 31. *And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.*] In that book which is now called by the name of Chronicles his war with Judah is recorded, (2 Chron. xxviii.)

Ver. 32. *In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel, began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign.*] Why he should be all along called Azariah, and here only Uzziah, and ver. 34. no account can be given; unless it were to shew he had two names, as I have observed, 2 Chron. xxvi. 1. And it appears by the book of Chronicles, that Uzziah was as much used when that book was written as the other.

Ver. 33. *Twenty-five years old was he when he began to reign.*] Alone by himself; for he reigned some time with his father during his leprosy. (See Dr. Lightfoot in his Prolegom. to the Harm. of the Evang. sect. 6.)

And he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.] It is not said of what place, as is usual: this Zadok being so well known, that there was no need to set down his dwelling.

Ver. 34. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.*] Οὐδεμίας ἀρετῆς ἀπελείπετο, he wanted no virtue belonging to a good prince, as Josephus writes; (lib. ix. Antiq. cap. 11.) being (saith he) "pious towards God, just towards men, and studious of the public good."

He did according to all that his father Uzziah had done.] That is, according to all the good he had done; but did not imitate him in invading the priests' office.

Ver. 35. *Howbeit, the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still in the high places.*

He built the higher gate of the house of the Lord.] Which was between the house of the king and the house of the Lord, (xviii. 20.) It was built by Solomon; but this king added a noble structure to it.

Ver. 36. *Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] See 2 Chron. xxvii.

Ver. 37. *(In those days the Lord began to send against Judah Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah).*] These two kings entered into a confederacy against Judah, and made preparations for war before Jotham died; but he was so happy as to be laid in his grave in peace; their design being not executed until the reign of the next king.

Ver. 38. *And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.*

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *IN the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.*

Ver. 2. *Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.*] He was a little more than twenty years old. (See upon xviii. 2.)

And did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father.] As might have been expected from the good education which, no doubt, so pious a man as Jotham his father gave him; who left him an excellent example.

Ver. 3. *But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out be-*

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fore the children of Israel.] He was far worse than any of the preceding kings of Israel; for he imitated those abominable idolaters whom God rooted out of the land of Canaan: who it is most certain sometimes burnt their children in the fire, as sacrifices to their gods, (Deut. xii. 31.) and the children of Israel it is as certain imitated them, (Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. xxxiii. 37. 39.) But whether Ahaz did that, or only made his son pass through the fire by way of lustration (as they called it), cannot be determined. It is no argument that he did not offer him as a burnt-sacrifice, because Hezekiah outlived him; for he had more sons, it is likely, than him. See, concerning this horrible impiety, what I have noted upon Lev. xviii. 21. and upon Deut. xviii. 10.

Ver. 4. *And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.*] He added this to all his other sins (of consecrating his son to Moloch by passing him through the fire, if not offering him in sacrifice), that he himself sacrificed in high places, and on hills, and under every green tree; by his example encouraging this practice, which other kings had only tolerated. So we read, that people sacrificed in high places, even in good kings' reigns, xii. 3. xiv. 4. xv. 4, &c. but, as they sacrificed to God in those reigns, so we never read till now that any of those kings sacrificed there themselves, as this king did; who not merely suffered this, but gave countenance to it by his own practice, and thereby strengthened this licence of private sacrificing, contrary to the law of God; and, which was worst of all, sacrificing to other gods: it being very probable that he fancied some deity to inhabit under every well-spread flourishing tree.

Ver. 5. *Then Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him.*] This seems not to agree with 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, &c. where these two princes are represented as getting great victories over him. To which Abarbinel answers, that these things happened at different times. For the wars mentioned in the book of Chronicles were made severally by these two kings, wherein they prospered; being the ministers of Divine Providence. But when now they joined their forces together, and not only came against other cities, but against Jerusalem, God was pleased to make them miscarry.

Ver. 6. *At that time Rezin king of Syria.*] When he broke up the siege of Jerusalem, upon intelligence he received that Tiglath-pileser was coming to its relief.

Restored Elath to Syria.] This was a considerable port upon the Red Sea.

And drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there to this day.] This city had been recovered to the dominion of Judah by Azariah, (xiv. 22.) who took it from the Syrians; who now took it from them again, that they might not quite lose the fruit of their expedition against Jerusalem.

Ver. 7. *So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria.*] There is a learned man of our own, who hath lately given another account of the name of Pileser, than that abovementioned, (xv. 29.) For he thinks it is compounded of the names of two of their gods; Pil being the same with Bel, and Azer or Azar was the name of a planet worshipped by the Persians, *viz.* Mars: and they much affected to have the names of their gods in their own names; which was a common thing also among the Jews: for which reason the name of Tiglath was added, which was the name of Tigris (as I observed before), which, as all great beneficial rivers, mountains, and trees, was accounted sacred among the heathen. (See Dr. Hyde, Histor. Relig. Vet. Persar. cap. 3.)

Saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.] He not only put himself and all he had into his protection; but made himself his subject, to hold all he had of him by his favour. For that is the meaning of *I am thy servant and thy son;* that is, he was content to be his vassal, if he would be his protector.

Ver. 8. *And Ahaz took the silver and the gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.*] These treasures had been sent some years ago by Jehoash to the king of Syria; (xii. 18.) but it seems they were well replenished again by the piety of his successors, Amaziah, Azariah, but especially Jotham.

Ver. 9. *And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it.*] It is very uncertain when king Ahaz sent to desire this help. If it was when they were preparing to besiege Jerusalem, it was the effect of his great infidelity; for God had been so gracious to him, as to promise by the prophet Isaiah that those kings should do him no hurt, (Isa. vii. 4.) giving him a sign also to strengthen his faith. Others think, it was after the king of Syria and the king of Israel had miserably harassed Ahaz's country, though they could not take Jerusalem, as we read 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, 6, &c. Whensoever it was, the king of Assyria gave a powerful diversion to the king of Syria, invading his country, and besieging the chief city of it, of which he made himself master.

And carried the people of it captive to Kir.] A place in the country of the upper Media, as Josephus tells us: from whence he brought some people to plant in Damascus.

And slew Rezin.] Who was the last of their kings; for the Syrians never got up again, as the Jews observe in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 20. Whether he was legal successor to Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, or an usurper, is not certain.

Ver. 10. *And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria.*] To compliment him upon his success; and perhaps to do him homage, and to request him to do as much against Pekah as he had done against Rezin. For some think that after this he went and took all those places from Israel which are mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 29. And after all he fell upon Judah itself, and made great spoil there also, as is suggested in 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, 21.

And he saw an altar that was in Damascus.] A beautiful altar, both for the matter and form of it.

And king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.] Not only the height, and breadth, and shape of it; but all the carvings, I suppose, with the figures and images wherewith it was adorned.

Ver. 11. *And Urijah the priest built an altar, according*

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to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against the king came from Damascus.] He took care to have it done exactly according to the pattern; directly contrary to the command of God, who had appointed what kind of altar he would have, (Exod. xxvii. 1, 2, &c.) and that no other should be made of any matter or figure whatsoever. But there are always some men to be found, that will comply with the most wicked commands.

Ver. 12. *And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar.*] That is, liked it, and approved of it, as made perfectly agreeable to his mind.

And the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon.] The morning sacrifice: which he was so presumptuous, perhaps, as to offer himself. But not to God; for we are told expressly, 2 Chron. xxviii. 23. that he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus. A wonderful blindness! to worship those gods, and expect help from them, who could not preserve their own country from ruin.

Ver. 13. *And he burnt his burnt-offering.*] Some understand it, that he burnt it with spices.

And his meat-offering, and poured his drink-offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace-offerings, upon the altar.] These were all prescribed by the law of Moses: but he offered them in a wrong place, and unto other gods.

Ver. 14. *And he brought also the brazen altar, that was before the Lord, from the fore-front of the house, from between the altar and the house of the Lord, and put it on the north side of the altar.*] By these words, it is plain that Urijah had little more modesty than Ahaz: for he had placed Ahaz's altar behind the altar of the Lord, between it and the east gate of the court of the priests. But when Ahaz came, he removed Solomon's altar out of its place, which was before the sanctuary, and set it towards the north side of the court; that he might bring up his own, and set it there, where the altar of the Lord had stood. (See Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, chap. 34. latter end.)

Ver. 15. *And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar.*] Which he had now erected in the place of God's altar.

Burn the morning burnt-offering, and the evening meat-offering, and the king's burnt-sacrifice, and his meat-offering, with the burnt-offering of all the people of the land, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt-offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice.] He makes a solemn injunction, that all the public sacrifices, of what sort soever they were, whether made by himself or by the people, should be constantly offered upon his altar. Which he calls *the great altar*, because it was much bigger, I suppose, than the altar of God.

And the brazen altar shall be for me to inquire by.] He would not have it thought that he intended wholly to lay aside the altar made by Solomon: but rather to do it great honour, by reserving it for his own private use; when he pleased to inquire of God by it. But there being no mention of the name of the Lord, some think the meaning is no more, but that he would have it stand where he had set it; till he considered what to do with it: and they fancy that he made the famous dial of Ahaz with the brass of it. So they understand the Hebrew words *li lebaker*—I will take care of it, and order what shall be done with it. And therefore, according to this interpretation, he laid it quite aside. But the other seems more agreeable to the Hebrew phrase, *it shall be to me to inquire*, or *seek*, or *pray*: a private altar for his proper use: whereby he pretended to have still some regard to it, though he had degraded it.

Ver. 16. *So did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.*] Whatsoever good inclinations he had, they were all overruled by the commands of the king, with which he entirely complied.

Ver. 17. *And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases.*] See 1 Kings vii. 28, 29.

And removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones.] This was done out of contempt, that the sea might not appear so great and stately, nor be so useful to the priests, as it was before. For he intended quite to abolish, not only to deface, the service of God at the temple. So we read in 2 Chron. xxviii. 24. that he *shut up the doors of the house of God*, that none should worship there.

Ver. 18. *And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house.*] There is a vast variety of opinions concerning this *musach* (which we translate *covert*), and why it is called the *covert for the sabbath*. The most probable is, that it was a covered place, where the king sat in the porch of the temple, or at the entrance of it, upon the *sabbath*, or other great solemnities, which were called by that name. Thus Procopius Gazæus: This Ahaz took away, intending not to trouble himself to come to the temple; but to sacrifice any where: in every corner of Jerusalem, and in the several cities of Judah, which he would have be thought as holy as Jerusalem, (2 Chron. xxviii. 24, 25.) And it is a probable conjecture of a very learned man of our own, that Ahaz did this to express his hatred and contempt of the *sabbath*: for the worship of idols and violation of the sabbath are frequently joined together in Scripture, especially in Ezek. xx. 16. xxii. 8, 9. xxiv. 37, 38. and in a remarkable place in the Maccabees, i. 44. (See Spencer, de Leg. Hebræor. lib. i. cap. 1. 12.)

And the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord.] The passage through which the king came from his own house to the temple, he turned another way.

For the king of Assyria.] That he might ingratiate himself with him, by contemning his own country religion, and approaching nearer to his. But Procopius takes it the quite contrary way; that he did this *for fear of the king of Assyria*. Which moved him to make a shorter passage into the house of the Lord, that he might flee thither instantly for safety, in case of any danger: which is not probable, because he profaned it, and shut up the doors of it.

Ver. 19. *Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

Ver. 20. *And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.*

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *IN the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.*] This doth not agree with xv. 30. where it is said he began to reign in the twentieth year of Jotham, which was the fourth of Ahaz. To this Ralbag thinks it sufficient to

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say, that till the twelfth year of Ahaz he was but a servant of the king of Assyria; nor was reputed a king, but only a governor under him. And so Abarbinel. And it is no improbable conjecture of Dr. Lightfoot's, that Ahaz gave him a great deal of trouble, after the death of Pekah, in revenge of the slaughters he had made in Judah: so that he kept Hoshea out of the throne a great while, and upon this account is called the king of Israel, (2 Chron. xxviii. 19.) as well as because he walked in the ways of those kings. Our learned chronologer Mr. Whiston thinks there was an interregnum, for the space of full twelve years, from the death of Jeroboam the second. Which he takes to be most probable, and almost certain, from those words of Hosea, who prophesied in that king's time: "Now (or ere long) they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the Lord; what then should a king do to us?" Hos. x. 3. (See his Short View of the Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 48.)

And he reigned in Samaria over Israel nine years.] *viz.* After his peaceable possession of the throne: for, from the time that he pretended to it, upon the slaughter of Pekah, he reigned seventeen or eighteen years; *viz.* twelve in the time of Ahaz, who reigned sixteen years, and six in the time of Hezekiah, (xviii. 10.)

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.*] For he did not hinder his people from going to worship at Jerusalem: but, as the Hebrew doctors say, took away the guard that Jeroboam set in the passage, to keep men from going to the solemn feasts there. And one of the golden calves being carried away captive, his devotion, it is likely, was not great for the other remaining. And yet, notwithstanding, God exterminated Israel in his days: to shew (saith Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 22.) that it was not merely for the sake of their kings, upon whom the Israelites cast all the blame of their depravation, that they were carried captive. (See ver. 17—19, &c.)

Ver. 3. *Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria.*] Some take this to be but another name for Tiglath-pileser. For which I find no ground, and rather think Shalmaneser was his son, and successor in the kingdom of Assyria.

And Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.] Made himself a tributary to him; and presented him with gifts in token of his subjection to him, and as an earnest of his future obedience.

Ver. 4. *And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year.*] He designed to shake off his yoke, and be no longer his subject, as he found by two undeniable evidences. First, that he had sent to treat with the king of Egypt; and denied him the usual tribute, which he was bound to pay him every year. St. Jerome calls this king of Egypt Sua, and Josephus calls him Soan, and the LXX. Segor, who is the same with the famous Sabacon, an Ethiopian mentioned by Diodorus Siculus and Herodotus. (See Sir J. Marsham, Can. Chron. sect. 16. and our famous Usher, in his Annals, vid. A. 3989.)

Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.] He first besieged Samaria, and when he had taken it made him a close prisoner: the history of which follows.

Ver. 5. *Then the king of Assyria went up throughout all the land.*] He first possessed himself of the country of Moab (as the same great primate observes), that he might leave no enemies at his back; and destroyed their two chief cities, Ar and Kir-hares, according to the prediction of Isaiah, xvi. ver. 1. and the last: and then he invaded the kingdom of Israel, and possessed himself of it.

And went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.] Josephus rightly observes two expeditions of this king against the land of Israel: first, when he made Hoshea tributary to him; and now, when he made himself master of the whole country, and besieged the capital city, (lib. ix, Antiq. cap. 13.)

Ver. 6. *In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor, by the river of Gozan.*] There is no reason that any should imagine these Israelites were carried into Colchis, Iberia, Armenia the less, and the farthest Scythia, when the Scripture saith so expressly that they were carried into Assyria, and the cities of the Medes; and when the very places are to be found into which they are said here to be carried in those countries, *viz.* Chalac, and Chabor, and Gozan: for what was Chalach (as Bochartus observes) but Ptolemy's Chalachena, or the north of Assyria? and Chabor is plainly enough the same with his Χαβώρας, a mountain between Media and Assyria. Between which mountain and the Caspian Sea there is the city Gauzania, that is Gozan, between the two channels of the river Cyrus.

And in the cities of the Medes.] Whither Tiglath-pileser had carried others of them out of Galilee.

Ver. 7. *For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had served other gods.*] This they had done a long time: for, from the beginning of Jeroboam's schism to the carrying Israel captive was two hundred and sixty-three years.

Ver. 8. *And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom God cast out from before the children of Israel.*] Of the Amorites and other impious people, whom he expelled from the land of Canaan to make room for them.

And of the kings of Israel, which they had made.] *viz.* The golden calves, whose worship the kings of Israel had ordained, to keep them from going up to worship God at Jerusalem.

Ver. 9. *And the children of Israel did secretly those things which were not right against the Lord their God.*] Besides the public impiety authorized by their kings, they privately exercised idolatry, according to their own fancy.

And they built them high places in all their city.] They were not content to worship upon hills and mountains, but they raised high places in all cities to offer sacrifice.

From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.] In all places, both those that were desert, and those that were inhabited; or both in the country and in the city. For the *towers of the watchmen* are thought to be those little houses which the country people built, wherein to watch their flocks and their fruits, and preserve them from wild beasts or robbers.

Ver. 10. *And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree.*] The Hebrew word

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Asherim, which we translate *groves*, should be rendered idols of that name, as Selden hath observed, Syntag. de Diis Syris, ii. cap. 2. where he plainly demonstrates this word doth not signify the grove, but the *numen* or *deity* placed in the grove. For how should groves *be set under every green tree?* as it is here said the *Asherim* were. And thus Kimchi saith in the root *Ashur*, that every wooden thing that was worshipped was called *Asherah*. And Procopius Gazæus observes, that this word, which the LXX. here translate ἄλση, *groves*, others every where translate Ἀσταρώθ, which word, saith he, δηλοῖ τὴν Ἀστάρτην, Ἀφροδίτην, denotes *Astarte*, that is, *Venus*.

Ver. 11. *And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen, whom the Lord carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger.*] For, as the son of Sirach expresses it, *they sought out all wickedness, till the vengeance came upon them.* (See Eccles. xlvii. *ult.*)

Ver. 12. *For they served idols, whereof the Lord had said unto them, Ye shall not do these things.*] They worshipped many other gods, which were mere idols, against the express command of God, (Exod. xx. 23. Deut. iv. 15, 16, &c.)

Ver. 13. *Yet the Lord testified against Israel and Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers.*] I have before noted, that Abarbinel, in his commentary on these books, hath observed one or more prophets that were in every king's reign, both in Israel and Judah, from the time of Saul to Zedekiah, in whose time Jerusalem was laid desolate. These admonished them of their duty, as it here follows, and endeavoured to preserve them in God's true religion, or to recover them when they apostatized from it; particularly in the days of this very king, when Israel was carried captive, they had the prophets Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Micah: and in the days of the last king when Judah was carried captive, they had Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments, and my statutes, according to all the laws which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.] As he had given them his laws by Moses; so he continued a succession of prophets after him, whom he sent to call upon them to observe these laws.

Ver. 14. *Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like the neck of their fathers.*] A metaphor taken from refractory oxen, that will not bow down their necks to the yoke. Even so the Israelites refused to submit to the yoke of God's laws.

That did not believe in the Lord their God.] This was the original of all the sins they committed: they did not believe God's prophets, but hearkened to deceivers.

Ver. 15. *And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them.*] By his servants the prophets.

And they followed vanities.] So idols are called, which, as the apostle speaks, are *nothing;* having no power to do either hurt or good.

And became vain.] Like the idols they worshipped; senseless, sottish, and good for nothing.

And went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them.] See Exod. xxiii. 24. 32. and many other places.

Ver. 16. *And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove.*] The making a grove was a greater impiety than is commonly imagined. For in their groves they worshipped Baalim, as appears from Judg. iii. 7.; that is, heroes, to whom those groves were consecrated, being their sepulchre. And here many filthy rites were practised, in honour of Venus, Bacchus, and such-like deities.

And worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.] They grew worse and worse, not contenting themselves with the worship of the two calves, &c. but worshipped the stars of heaven, (against which Moses had given them a particular caution, Deut. iv. 19.) Saturn, Jupiter, Venus, and the moon, but especially Baal, which was the sun.

Ver. 17. *And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments.*] Which were the most abominable sins of the heathen. (See Lev. xviii. 21. xix. 26. xx. 2, 3, &c. Deut. xviii. 10. and upon ver. 3. of the foregoing chapter.)

And sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.] They were so industrious to do wickedly, and so incessant in it, as if they had been slaves that were sold to that drudgery.

Ver. 18. *Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight.*] From the holy land, where his temple was, in which he dwelt among them.

Till there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.] Unto whom adhered part of Benjamin and the Levites; who, as it here follows, imitated the wickedness of Israel; but yet had some mixture of good kings among them. Whereas all the kings of Israel persisted in the sins of Jeroboam; and therefore, before their removal out of their land, they suffered great calamities, no less than nine of their kings being killed (as Abarbinel notes) before their last king was carried captive.

Ver. 19. *Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.*] Followed the idolatrous devices of the ten tribes; as they did most notoriously in the last reign of Ahaz: whose son Hezekiah indeed made a noble reformation; but it lasted no longer than his time, so extremely was this nation corrupted.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord rejected.*] With loathing and abhorrence, as the word imports.

All the house of Israel.] The whole ten tribes.

And afflicted them, and delivered them into the hands of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.] See x. 32, 33. xiii. 3. 7.

Ver. 21. *For he rent Israel from the house of David.*] Here was the foundation of their ruin.

And he made Jeroboam the son of Nebat their king; and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the Lord, and made Israel sin a great sin.] Of which he was the author; but they were too forward to comply with him.

Ver. 22. *For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did: they departed not from them.*] They were so inclined to idolatry, that a long succession of God's judgments upon them could not reclaim them.

Ver. 23. *Until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets.*] Unto whose admonitions and threatenings they had no regard.

So was Israel carried away out of their own land to As-

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syria unto this day.] As they *sold themselves to do evil,* (ver. 17.) so God delivered them up to be slaves to those whose gods they had worshipped, (ver. 16, 17.)

Ver. 24. *And the king of Assyria brought men.*] This was not done by Shalmaneser, but by his son Esar-haddon, (Ezra iv. 2.)

From Babylon.] Which was then subject to the king of Assyria; but not long after revolted.

And from Cuthah.] A city of Chaldea, as Abarbinel expounds it: and so doth our Dr. Hyde out of several Persian writers, (Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. cap. 2.) But it rather here signifies a country called Cush also (which, perhaps, had its name from the forenamed city), from whence the greatest part of this colony being brought, the people in aftertimes were called Cuthæi. For the same author truly observes, that the country called Cush was, in the Babylonish dialect (afterward called the Chaldean), called Cuth. For they were wont to change the letter *schin* into *thau.* In this country, in the land of Shinar, Cush first settled; and his posterity spread itself into Arabia.

And from Ava.] The Avites were a very ancient people, who were driven by the Caphtorim out of Hazerim; and went and settled beyond Euphrates. (See upon Deut. ii. 23.)

And from Hamath.] This was a city of Syria, on the borders of Canaan; which was now subject to the king of Assyria, by a late conquest of it, (xvi. 9.)

And from Sepharvaim.] There is a city called Siphara, on the side of which the river Euphrates runs, not far from the sea. From this mixture of nations it was, that afterward there happened such a confusion of laws, and manners, and rites of religion, as was in this country.

And placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria.] That is, the whole country, wherein the ten tribes formerly dwelt.

And dwelt in the cities thereof.] Which were not destroyed, I suppose, but left standing, with a design to send new inhabitants into them.

Ver. 25. *And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the Lord; therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which slew some of them.*] And did not the Israelites also want the fear of the Lord, as Abarbinel here notes, and yet were not devoured by lions? To which he answers, that though the Israelites also served idols, yet they did not deny the Divine power and providence; but imagined these idols to be the intermediate causes by which the Divine influences might be conveyed unto them: for it is plain Jeroboam did not deny the Lord, (1 Kings xiii. 6.) but acknowledged his power. But these new inhabitants believed the idols which they worshipped to be true gods; and therefore were destroyed by lions, because they did not acknowledge the power and providence of God over all inferior beings, whose land this was; and hereby he vindicated his ancient inheritance and possession to himself.

Ver. 26. *Wherefore they spake unto the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them; because they know not the manner of the God of the land.*] They took the God of Israel to be of the same kind with their own, who affected a particular country and people, and would be honoured with peculiar rites, which were acceptable to him, and none else. The Syrians had the same conceit of *topical* gods, as I observed upon 1 Kings xx. 23. and see below, xviii. 35.

Ver. 27. *Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests, whom ye brought from thence, and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.*] The Jews in Pirke Eliezer, cap. 38. tell the story thus: that the king of Assyria called the elders of Israel together, and said, All the while you dwelt in the land of Samaria, it was not infested with lions; what is the reason that my people are devoured by them? To which they answered, Our lord the king, this land will not receive any uncircumcised nation. Let two of you go then (replied the king) and circumcise them, and teach them the book of the law. So R. Dosithæus and R. Zachariah were sent, who did the business. Here they make bold to go beyond the Scripture, in making two great doctors to have been sent, when there was but one. Though it is very probable there were some associates who accompanied this principal priest: for the text saith, when the king bade them *carry one of the priests* thither, he added, and *let them* dwell there. Which signifies he did not go alone: though he alone was to teach them, as it follows, *the manner of the God of the land.*

Ver. 28. *Then one of the priests, whom they had carried away from Samaria, came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the Lord.*] That is, how they should worship and serve him. From whence many learned men conclude, that he brought the book of the law with him, without which he could not fully instruct them how to worship God, and govern themselves: which book they suppose was written in the Babylonian character, because it was to teach a colony of that nation. This is opposed by a late learned man, who earnestly contends, that the book of the law was not brought to them till the time of Sanballat; and therefore this priest instructed them without the book, only by tradition. Which is not probable; for they would have had little regard to him, if he had not produced the authority of that holy book, delivered to them by that great lawgiver Moses, the man of God: for, that he taught them the right way of worshipping God according to the law, as it was practised in Judah, is very likely; being sensible that God abhorred the other worship which Israel practised; for which he had thrown them out of their land.

Ver. 29. *Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.*] It seems the people of Israel, who are here called Samaritans, had built little temples in the high places; wherein these new inhabitants worshipped the gods of the country from which they came, (that is, the *gods of Assyria,* Ezek. xxvii. 7.) together with the God of Israel.

Ver. 30. *And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth.*] The Jewish doctors do but trifle in their exposition of this word, which they say signifies *a hen and chickens.* The word plainly imports, *the tabernacles of daughters,* or of *young maidens:* who were consecrated to Venus, whose name Mr. Selden probably conjectures was derived from *Benoth.* The old idolaters, it is evident, did prostitute their daughters in honour of Venus, as not only Strabo, Herodotus, and other profane writers testify; but some think is suggested in holy Scripture, Lev. xix. 29. And

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therefore they of Babylon are said to make the *tabernacles of daughters;* that is, chapels wherein their daughters were prostituted to every one that came to worship Venus, as the manner was in Babylon, from whence the forenamed authors testify this filthiness had its original. (See Selden, de Diis Syris Syntag. ii. cap. 7. and Vossius, de Idololatr. lib. ii. cap. 22.)

And the men of Cuth made Nergal.] Which the Jews would have to signify *a cock.* But their conjecture is better, who think it signified *fire.* For the men of Cuth are those that were afterward called Persians; who, it is certain, anciently worshipped the fire. (See Selden, cap. 8.) But the famous Bochartus ingenuously confesses he doth not know what *Nergal* was; but that there is a sort of palm-tree called *Nergil* by the Persians, Arabians, and Indians, of which they report strange things. From whence, perhaps, the Persians gave the name of *Nergal* to this idol, as in Syria their god was called *Rimmon,* from the pomegranate. (Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 16.)

And the men of Hamath made Ashima.] I know no ground the Jews have to say, this word *Ashima* signifies a *smooth goat.* Our great Selden modestly acknowledges he doth not know what god it was, (ib. cap. 9.) But a late author takes *Ashima* to be the same with Mars: because among the ancients *A S* signified the same with Ἄρης among the Greeks; and *schemah* is as much as hearing or obedient, (Jo. Gensius de Victimis Humanis, par. i. p. 92.) And this *A S* he conjectures is the same whom the Romans called *Hesus,* whom Lucan mentions in his Pharsalia, lib. i. ver. 443.

——— "Horrentque feris altaribus Hesus."

But, after all, I think my learned friend Dr. Alix hath made the most probable conjecture, that *Ashima* is the name of God, whom the Hebrews call *Hashem, the name:* from whence *Ashima,* I doubt not, is derived. Accordingly Aben Ezra saith, in his preface to the book of Esther, that he saw in a Samaritan Pentateuch, Gen. i. 1. *Bara Ashima,* instead of *Bara Elohim.* Which Bochart censures as a falsity, because no such word is to be found in the whole Samaritan Pentateuch; but it might be then in some paraphrase upon it.

Ver. 31. *And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak.*] Nobody knows what these were; for no credit is to be given to the Jews, who say, the former was in the shape of *a dog,* and the other of *an ass.* Selden thinks they were the same idol called by different names, but was not able to give an account of them.

And the Sepharvites burnt their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.] These were the same gods with Moloch; unto whom the same sacrifices were offered. The Jews, after their vain fancies, make one of them to have been in the form of a *peacock,* and the other of a *pheasant:* but in all probability they were but different names of Moloch, which was the sun, as is evident from xxiii. 10, 11.; and the addition of *Addir,* which signifies magnificent or potent, makes Adrammelech as much as the mighty Moloch; and of *Ana,* which signifies to answer, makes Anammelech as much as oracular Moloch. For Moloch, and Melech, and Milcom, are all the very same in the language of different people, signifying a *king:* the sun being by them accounted *the king,* as the moon *the queen of heaven.* And there is nothing more known than that the gentiles burnt their children in sacrifice to him. But whether these people did so, or only made them pass through the fire to purify them, may be questioned; though the words seem to import the former: which was the practice of the Phœnicians, Syrians, Tyrians, Carthaginians, Cretans, Arabians, and many other nations; and is still practised by the Americans, and other gentiles.

A learned writer of our own, Dr. Hyde, in the book beforementioned, had a quite different apprehension of these words: for he will have Adrammelech to signify *the king of the flock, Adre* being as much as *Greges;* and Anammelech he thinks is much of the same signification, *Ana* being as much as *Pecus,* in the Persian language: always signifying collectively in the plural number, the lesser cattle, sheep and goats. Of which he imagines these gods had the care, and were therefore worshipped; the riches of those people consisting much in cattle. They were also celestial constellations (as he there observes), which they imagined promoted the breeding and growth of cattle.

Ver. 32. *So they feared the Lord.*] Worshipped the Lord God of Israel.

And made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.] I suppose these sacrifices were offered to the God of Israel, but in high places, and by priests of their own making. As for their sacrifices to the gods of their several countries, no doubt they brought priests along with them, to perform the service belonging to them.

Ver. 33. *They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.*] That is, after the manner of the ten tribes, who worshipped the Lord, and the golden calves together with him, and sometimes Baal, and other gods, (ver. 16.)

Ver. 34. *Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the Lord, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel.*] These, and the following words, give an account of the children of Israel; who, being carried captive out of their own land (as hath been related), were not at all amended thereby; but still neglected all the laws which God had given them, and did not worship him alone; and therefore in truth *they feared not the Lord.*

Ver. 35. *With whom the Lord had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor save them, nor sacrifice to them.*] Whose sins he aggravates (and thereby justifies his severe proceedings against them) by representing them as a select people, who were in a strict and gracious covenant with him, obliging them not to shew the least respect to any other god but himself.

Ver. 36. *But the Lord, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power, and a stretched-out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.*] This was a benefit, one would think, that should never have been forgotten; but eternally engaged them to his service, who delivered them from so vile a slavery.

Ver. 37. *And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall*

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observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.] This is repeated again, being so very often mentioned in the book of the law, that they should worship no other god.

Ver. 38. *And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods.*] Which was the principal thing in the covenant.

Ver. 39. *But the Lord your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.*] As he did whensoever they renounced idolatry, and promised to worship him alone; as we read throughout their whole history in these holy books.

Ver. 40. *Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner.*] They soon revolted, when they solemnly protested to repent; and did just as they had done before, as the same books testify.

Ver. 41. *So those nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.*] Just thus did the nations who came in their room into the country of Samaria: they joined their own gods with the Lord God of Israel, and continued so to do, they and their posterity, unto the time this book was written, and long after. For, as Mr. Mede hath observed, this medley of religions lasted above three hundred years, till towards the end of the Persian monarchy. At which time Manasse, brother to Jadda the high-priest of the Jews (that were returned to their own land), married the daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria. And after his example, other Jews of the best rank having married strange wives, contrary to the law, and being loath to leave them, betook themselves thither also; whom Sanballat entertained, and made his son-in-law their priest. And when Alexander the Great subdued the Persian monarchy, he obtained leave of him to build a temple upon Mount Gerizim, where Manasseh exercised the office of high-priest. This was very prejudicial to the Jews, and the occasion of a schism; whilst those who were discontented or excommunicated at Jerusalem were wont to run hither. Yet by this means the Samaritans (having gotten one of the sons of Aaron for their priest, and so many Jews being mingled among them) were brought to throw away all their false gods, and worship the God of Israel only. Yet so, that though they seemed to themselves to be the true worshippers of God, they retained a smack of idolatry; worshipping God under a visible representation, *viz.* that of a *dove*. Just as their predecessors, the ten tribes, worshipped the same God under the similitude of a calf, (book i. discourse 13.) And indeed this inclination to have some sensible representation of God was so universal, that they who had none, were thought by the gentile world to worship nothing.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass, in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.*] The third year of those nine which are mentioned before, xvii. 1. (See there.)

Ver. 2. *Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem: his mother's name also was Abi, daughter of Zachariah.*] Unto this it is objected, that Ahaz lived but thirty and six years; (xvi. 2.) and therefore, according to this account, begat Hezekiah when he was but eleven years old, which seems incredible. To which Capellus in his Chronologia answers, that he reigned two or three years with his father; which is not likely, for the text saith he was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, after his father's death, which is beforementioned. And the solution of the Jews, mentioned by St. Jerome, is not much better, who say, he did not begin to reign presently after his father's death, but there was an interregnum for some years; because of a sedition that was in Jerusalem. But as there is no proof of this, so it is improbable that Hezekiah, who was a grown man, and beloved of the people, should not presently succeed his father. Calvisius's account is still worse, who will have Hezekiah to have been only the adopted son of Ahaz: which spoils the descent of our Saviour from David, as Bochartus observes: who therefore plainly admits that he did beget Hezekiah, when he was eleven or twelve years old. For so it may be understood, that he was but just entered upon the twenty-fifth year of his age, when he began his reign; and so but twenty-four complete. Therefore his father begat him about the twelfth year of his age. For if, from thirty-six years, four-and-twenty be taken, there remain twelve. And if we suppose, as we may very well, that Ahaz was near one-and-twenty years old when he began to reign, and near seventeen years older before he died (for the Scriptures, no more than other writers, do not take notice whether the year be perfect or imperfect), then he might be near fourteen years old when he begat Hezekiah. But take it according to the first account, that he was but eleven or twelve years old, Bochartus hath given a vast number of instances of persons that procreated children at that age. For ripeness for procreation is not to be precisely determined, either by physicians, philosophers, or lawyers (who have been pleased to fix the time); but consideration is to be had of the climate wherein men live, of the temper and constitution of their bodies, of their diet, and many other things; as he observes in an epistle to Nicol. Carbonellus, in his additions to the last edition of his Phaleg. p. 920.

Ver. 3. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did.*] A character which is not given, I think, to any of the kings of Judah, since the reign of Asa, (1 Kings xv. 11.)

Ver. 4. *He removed the high places.*] Which none of his predecessors had the courage to attempt. But the carrying of the ten tribes captive, I suppose, mightily awakened both him and all the people, for the present (while it was fresh before their eyes), to observe the law of God very strictly.

And brake the images, and cut down the groves.] Which his father Ahaz had multiplied, (xvi. 14. 2 Chron. xxviii. 2. 24, 25.)

And brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made.] Which had been piously preserved as a monument of God's wonderful mercy to them in the wilderness; as Gideon intended his *ephod* should be of another deliverance, (Judg. viii. 27.) But as they went a whoring after that, so they did after this, as the Jews phrase it in Avoda Zara: and therefore Hezekiah broke it in pieces; that is, as the Talmudists there explain it, ground it to powder, and then scattered it into the air, that nothing of it might

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remain to be worshipped as a relic by superstitious people. And yet there is a fable that some fragments of it did remain until Josiah's time; and at this day, as Sigonius relates in his history of the kingdom of Italy, they shew this brazen serpent entire at the church of St. Ambrose, in Milan. But the wiser Romanists are ashamed of it, and acknowledge it is not the serpent made by Moses (which being broken in pieces by Hezekiah, was never restored), but another made in imitation of it. (See Buxtorf. Histor. Serpentis Æneï, cap. 6.)

For unto this day the children of Israel had burnt incense to it.] When this superstition began, we are not told; but nobody gives a better account of it than David Kimchi, whose words are these:—From the time that the kings of Israel did evil, and the children of Israel followed idolatry, until the reign of Hezekiah, they offered incense to it. For it being written in the law of Moses, *whosoever looks upon it shall live*, they fancied they might obtain blessings by its mediation, and therefore thought it worthy to be worshipped. It had been kept from Moses's days in memory of a miracle, just as the pot of manna also was; and Asa and Jehoshaphat did not extirpate it when they rooted out idolatry, because in their reign they did not observe that the people worshipped this serpent, or burnt incense to it, and therefore they left it as a memorial. But Hezekiah thought fit to take it quite away, when he abolished other idolatry, because in the time of his father they worshipped it as an idol. And though pious people among them accounted it only to be a memorial of a wonderful work, yet he judged it better to abolish it, though the memory of the miracle were lost together with it, than suffer it to remain, and leave the Israelites in danger to commit idolatry hereafter with it.

And he called it Nehushtan.] Some think Hezekiah called it by this name; others, that the Israelites called it so; the words signifying indifferently *it was called Nehushtan, viz.* by way of contempt and scorn. For the letter *nun* at the end of a word, the Jews say, is added by way of diminution. And *nechosheth* signifying brass, this is as much as to say, this serpent was mere brass or copper, and had no power in it, no profit, no ability to help, no divinity; and therefore not to be worshipped with Divine honour. Thus Kimchi: It being called by this name signified as much as if Hezekiah had said, "How could it come into any man's heart to think that this serpent could do any thing, which is mere brass?" Or, as Ralbag expounds it, "This serpent hath no more virtue in it than the common brass in their houses." For he takes *an*, in the end of the word, to be the same with *am, ipsorum*. But there is a great and good man of our own, who, having endeavoured to shew that the destruction of the old serpent the devil was fore-shadowed by the lifting up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, concludes that Hezekiah was moved with the greater indignation against the worship of it, because in truth it never was a type of our Saviour and Redeemer, but a figure of his grand enemy. This made him express such detestation of it, as is imported, he thinks, in the word *Nehushtan*. The signification of which is not to be found in our lexicons: for though *nechosheth* signify no more than brass, yet *Nehushtan* imports no less than our English words, *foul fiend, the old dragon, or Satan*. (See Dr. Jackson, Humiliation of the Son of God, chap. 31. parag. 6.)

Ver. 5. *He trusted in the Lord God of Israel.*] And not in the help of foreign forces, as his father Ahaz did; (xvi. 7.) nay, which that good king Asa called in to his assistance, (1 Kings xv. 18, 19.)

So that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.] Since the time that the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were divided.

Ver. 6. *For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses.*] He continued to observe God's laws through the whole course of his reign, to the conclusion of it; and did not like some of his predecessors, who began well, but fell off in the end of their days, as Joash and Amaziah did, (xii. 2. xiv. 3. 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. 19. xxv. 14.)

Ver. 7. *And the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.*] His prosperous success in all his enterprises, which was a visible token of God's presence with him, emboldened him to throw off the yoke of the king of Assyria, to which Ahaz had basely submitted; (xvi. 7.) which was not properly rebellion in Hezekiah, for Ahaz could not subject his kingdom to the Assyrian monarch, but only for his own time: his son was not bound to be his slave. Therefore the meaning is, he owned not the authority of the Assyrian king over him, but looked upon himself as a free sovereign in his own kingdom, independent upon him. In this, perhaps, he was a little too forward, being very much lifted up by his victories; but it is plain he was not able to maintain himself free from all subjection to the king of Assyria, (ver. 14.)

Ver. 8. *He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.*] We had this phrase before, xvii. 19. (See there.) And these words seem to signify that he smote them all the country over, and recovered from them more than his father had lost, (2 Chron. xxviii. 18.) According to the prophecy of Isaiah, xiv. 18. where he bids the Philistines not to rejoice, because the rod that smote them was broken; (that is, Uzziah was dead, who had sorely afflicted them, 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7.) for out of his root should come another, that would more grievously gall them, which was Hezekiah.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass, in the fourth year of king Hezekiah (which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel), that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it.*] We had an account of the taking of Samaria before; and therefore the mentioning of it here again may seem needless. But, as now the year of Hezekiah's reign is set down wherein it was taken, so Abarbinel thinks the intention of the Divine writer was to connect these two histories together; the taking of Samaria, and the ascent of Sennacherib against Jerusalem; who, eight years after the destruction of the former, with great pride and confidence imagined he should do as much by the latter.

Ver. 10. *And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah (that is the ninth year of Hoshea), Samaria was taken.*

Ver. 11. *And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel into Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.*] As was before related, (chap. xvii. 6.) but could not be too often re-

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peated, to make posterity dread the judgments of God, that were fallen upon them for their sins; as it follows again in the next words.

Ver. 12. *Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.*] See xvii. 34, 35.

Ver. 13. *Now, in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria.*] He was the son of Shalmaneser, and succeeded him in his kingdom after his death; as we read in the book of Tobit, i. 15.

Come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.] That is, took a great many of them, (2 Chron. xxxii. 1.)

Ver. 14. *And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish.*] This shews he had not taken all the fenced cities, for Lachish was a city of Judah, (Josh. xv. 39.) which is mentioned before in this book, (xiv. 19.) and was not yet taken, though siege was laid to it. Which, when he had taken, he intended to go up against Jerusalem; (2 Chron. xxxii. 2.) which moved Hezekiah to divert him from his purpose, by begging his pardon, as it here follows, for what he had done in shaking off his yoke.

Saying, I have offended.] In denying to be subject to him, which no doubt was the reason of this invasion.

Return from me: that which thou puttest upon me I will bear.] Though he had made great provision against him, as we read 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4, &c. yet he durst not venture to abide a siege; but chose rather to divert him, by submitting to such conditions as he would impose upon him.

And the king of Assyria appointed to Hezekiah three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold.] This was a great burden, though it was not a yearly tribute, but only a present payment; which his weakness forced him to submit unto.

Ver. 15. *And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord.*] Which in public necessities they thought it was lawful to make use of, for their preservation. Yet the Talmudists reckon this one of the three ill things that Hezekiah did, in cutting off the golden plates, mentioned in the next verse. (See Selden, de Synedr. lib. ii. cap. 1. n. 4.)

And in the treasures of the king's house.] Which had been so exhausted before, that he was forced to raise the money by other means, as it follows, ver. 16.

Ver. 16. *At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.*] It is very probable, that when Ahaz defaced the temple, and shut up the doors of it, (xvi. 17. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 2. 4.) he cut off this gold; which Hezekiah took care to repair; but was now constrained to cut it off himself. Upon which words Procopius Gazæus seems to me to have very well observed; that Hezekiah, finding he had not sufficient treasure of his own, to answer the imposition laid upon him, was driven by necessity to make use of things sacred, lest the enemy should burn the city and the temple. But what was thus employed, pious kings were wont to restore, as soon as they were able, out of the spoils of war, when it was ended.

Ver. 17. *And the king of Assyria sent Tartan, and Rab-saris, and Rab-shakeh, from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem: and they went up and came to Jerusalem.*] Some of the Jews think that Sennacherib, having received the tribute from Hezekiah, went to his own land; but because Hezekiah did not continue to send it every year, after some time returned to Judea again, and besieged Jerusalem. But there is not a word of this, either in this book, or the Chronicles, or in the prophet Isaiah: therefore it is more probable, that, having received the money he demanded, he made his expedition into Egypt, of which Herodotus and others, and some think Isaiah also, speak, as Sir John Marsham observes, (Isa. x. 26. 28.) But as he was the first king of Assyria that invaded Egypt, so he went no further than to the entrance of it, to Pelusium, which he could not take, and so at his return broke his faith with Hezekiah; and notwithstanding his present, wherewith he pretended to be satisfied, laid siege to Jerusalem.

And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.] They took up their head-quarters, as we now speak, by the conduit or canal, into which water was derived from the upper fish-pond or pool; which was in the highway to the field, where the fullers, after they had washed their clothes in that pool, were wont to spread them.

Ver. 18. *And when they had called to the king.*] They were so bold as to demand audience of the king himself, that they might treat with him in person for a surrender.

There came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.] Though he would not vouchsafe to go himself, yet he sent his *major-domo*, as they now speak, and his *secretary*, or a principal doctor of the law, and the *master of the requests*. For since the king of Assyria sent three messengers, he thought fit to send as many. Isaiah, indeed, mentions only Rab-shakeh, as sent by the king of Assyria: which Seder Olam Rabba thinks is meant of the first legation; but in the second, when he besieged Libnah, (xix. 8.) he joined Tartan and Rabsaris with him. It is very uncertain what officer Shebna was; for he is said Isa. xxii. 15. to be *over the house*, and the LXX. sometimes make him *treasurer*, sometimes *scribe*, and Mr. Selden thinks he might be *præfectus prætorio*. (Lib. de Succes. in Pontif. p. 142.)

Ver. 19. *And Rab-shakeh said unto them.*] He was the chief speaker, being an eloquent man; and, as the Hebrew doctors will have it (whom Procopius follows), an apostate Jew. Which is not altogether improbable; both because he could speak readily in the Hebrew tongue, and when he blasphemed the Divine Majesty, the king and his nobles rent their clothes; which was not usual, unless he that uttered such blasphemous words was an Israelite. Some think his name imports that he was the principal *cupbearer* to the king of Assyria.

Speak ye now to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria.] He assumed to himself the style of the *great king*, because of his great conquests and large dominions.

What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?] As much as to say, it was the greatest folly to think any body could defend him from so great a king.

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Ver. 20. *Thou sayest (but they are but vain words), I have counsel and strength for the war.*] In reason, he thought Hezekiah should not stand out against his master, unless he had all things necessary for his defence: but he did delude his people, if he told them, that he wanted neither skill to manage war, nor power to execute good counsels.

Now, on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?] He derides him, as full of vain hopes; and upbraids him with his rebellion. Of which he was thought formerly to be guilty, but could not now be justly accused of it, when he had submitted to him with such a great present. These are therefore words of the highest pride and insolence.

Ver. 21. *Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt.*] He thought it probable he would seek for succour from Egypt, being a neighbouring country; which would be ready to assist him, that they might be revenged of the king of Assyria for his late invasion. But he represents Egypt as very weak, and utterly unable to help him; being sorely crushed, though not destroyed, by Sennacherib.

On which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.] He represents the power of Egypt to be as brittle as the cane or reeds that grow on the banks of the Nile (to which he seems to allude), on which if a man leaned, they brake, and the splinters run into his hand. Such is Pharaoh, saith he, a man gets no help, but mischief, by relying upon him; as he doth who takes one of those canes for his staff to support him.

Ver. 22. *But if ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord our God: is not that he whose high places and altars Hezekiah hath taken away; and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?*] This weak arguing proceeded from his ignorance of that God and his law, in whom Hezekiah trusted. Which made him call those crimes, which were his greatest virtues; in prohibiting their offering sacrifice in any other place but that which God appointed.

Ver. 23. *Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.*] He seems to challenge him to come out, and fight with his master: and, if he could give security to make that use of them, he would furnish him with two thousand horses, provided he was able to find so many men to sit upon them. Which are words of the highest contempt, and undervaluing of his power. Or, the meaning may be, he would lay a wager with him, he could not find men to sit upon so many horses; for few were good horsemen in Judea, where horses were scarce.

Ver. 24. *How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants.*] Much less stand before his whole army.

And put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and horsemen?] With which Egypt abounded above most other countries; who sometimes furnished the Israelites with horses, but none like Egypt. For which reason Moses forbids them to multiply horses, lest it should cause them to return to Egypt; (Deut. xvii. 16.) and the prophet reproves them severely for going to Egypt for help, and staying upon horses, &c. (Isa. xxxi. 1. 3.)

Ver. 25. *Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.*] If he had not been a Jew, yet he had learned the name of their God; and pretended his master was come up against Jerusalem, by a commission from him. Which were vain words; (as he calls Hezekiah's, ver. 20.) for there were none of his prophets among the Assyrians. But, perhaps, he concluded from what the Assyrian king had done to Samaria, God intended he should do so to Jerusalem.

Ver. 26. *Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, saying, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language (for we understand it); and speak not with us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.*] I suppose Eliakim perceived the people to be frighted with his big words, and therefore entreated him, in the name of the other commissioners sent to treat with him, to speak no longer in the Jews' language, but in his own: for he was not sent to treat with the people, but with them who understood the Syrian tongue very well.

Ver. 27. *But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?*] To make them know that he will reduce them to the greatest extremity, if they do not submit unto him? for it is an hyperbolical speech, importing such straits as were never known.

Ver. 28. *And Rab-shakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.*] He seems to have raised both himself and his voice higher, that he might be better heard by all.

Ver. 29. *Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you out of my hand.*] He repeats, with the greatest assurance, the power of his king, and the weakness of Hezekiah: representing from thence how they were deluded with empty promises, if he persuaded them he should be able to preserve them.

Ver. 30. *Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.*] This was the highest presumption to persuade them not to place their hope in God, as if his master was stronger than he.

Ver. 31. *Hearken not to Hezekiah: but make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern.*] Having represented to them the miseries unto which a siege would reduce them, he invites them to a surrender upon advantageous conditions.

Ver. 32. *Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land; a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil-olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not to Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The Lord will deliver us.*] If they would seek the favour of the king of Assyria, by making him a present, and delivering themselves up to his mercy, he promises they should be transported to a better country than that to which the Israelites were carried: and, in the meantime, every one enjoy his own possessions. But he was afraid Heze-

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kiah's avowed confidence in God would prevail with them, to trust to him for deliverance, which makes him so often desire them not to depend upon that.

Ver. 33. *Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?*] He argues very popularly and strongly, if his supposition had been true, That the God of Israel, the God of the whole earth (yea, of heaven and earth), was like those of all other nations, who presided only over one country or city.

Ver. 34. *Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arpad?*] Those were cities or countries, which the king of Assyria had conquered.

Where are the gods of Sepharvaim.] Mentioned before, xvii. 31.

Hena, and Ivah?] Some think these were the gods of Sepharvaim; which is confuted by the place beforenamed. They were rather cities, whose gods could not protect them.

Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?] That is, have the gods of Samaria been able to do more than the rest?

Ver. 35. *Who are they among all the gods of the countries that have delivered their country out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?*] He desires an instance of one god, that had been able to save his country when his master invaded it: and therefore it was best for them to yield their city up to him, since God himself could not preserve it, unless he could do more than any other had done, which he concluded was unlikely. It must be acknowledged that Rab-shakeh was an excellent orator, as well as a soldier, not inferior in eloquence to Julius Cæsar.

Ver. 36. *But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.*] This was a very wise order, because he might have made some advantage by a sudden answer; and it was no less pious: for Hezekiah believed God would answer for himself, not in words, but in such deeds as would demonstrate he was above all gods.

Ver. 37. *Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah, with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.*] It was the custom of the Jews to rend their clothes, when they heard a man blaspheme God's name: and if we will believe them, when the witnesses of a blasphemy did but repeat the words before the judges, they rent their clothes. Accordingly Hezekiah, when his commissioners gave an account of Rab-shakeh's words to him, he did so, (xix. 1.) But they have determined, that they were not bound to rend their clothes, unless he was an Israelite that blasphemed. Therefore they have resolved, as I said before, that Rab-shakeh was an apostate Israelite. And this custom was common to all nations (as appears from Homer, Herodotus, and Virgil), who expressed great grief in this manner.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes.*] See the last verse of the foregoing chapter.

And covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.] He fasted and mourned, and went into the temple to pray. Sometimes they put on sackcloth next to their skin, instead of a shirt: but here it seems to signify only, that he was clothed in this vile habit, in token of his great trouble and sorrow.

Ver. 2. *And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe.*] See xviii. 18.

And the elders of the priests.] The principal persons among the priests.

Covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.] In the same mournful habit to beg his prayers to God for them.

Ver. 3. *And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy.*] They represent to him the great straits in which they were, and the reproaches cast upon them: and (which was worst of all) the blasphemy they had heard against God.

For the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.] And the present danger wherein they were of perishing, unless speedily relieved: like that of a woman, whose child being fallen down, after many throes, to the place of birth, she was so spent that she had no strength left to bring it forth. Or, as Procopius Gazæus expounds it, "We are in pain to hear such blasphemous words, and have no power to punish those wicked wretches as they deserve."

Ver. 4. *It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rab-shakeh.*] So as to take notice of them, and punish him.

Whom the king of Assyria hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard.] Reprove him for the words (as the Targum expounds it), the which he had spoken against God. But Lud. de Dieu, following R. Solomon Jarchi, thinks that the word we translate *reprove*, signifies to prove, and, by arguments, to demonstrate. And so refers it to Rab-shakeh in this manner: "It may be the Lord will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria hath sent to reproach the living God: and that openly with a bold face, fearing nothing, because all things succeed according to their hearts' desire." And he saith, he shall wonder if this sense displease any body.

Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.] That Judah might not be carried captive, as Israel had been.

Ver. 5. *So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.*] And delivered the foregoing message to him.

Ver. 6. *And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.*

Ver. 7. *Behold, I will send a blast on him.*] A pestilential blast, which destroyed his army in one night: (ver. 35.) others translate it *a spirit;* which is the same. For God sent an angel, who smote them with that pestilence.

And he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land.] The report, perhaps, was renewed after that stroke, that Tirhakah (of whom he had heard before, ver. 9.) was coming against him; which made him haste away, with the small remains of his army, to his own country.

And I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.] Which was fulfilled, ver. 37.

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Ver. 8. *So Rab-shakeh returned.*] Not with the host that he brought with him, (xviii. 17.) but he himself returned to give his master an account of what he had done; and left Rabsaris to carry on the siege, and straiten the city, till he could come with the whole army against it.

And found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.] Being unable, I suppose, to make himself master of it.

Ver. 9. *And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come out to fight against thee.*] Whether he fought with Tirhakah or not, and what the success was, doth not appear. But it is to be noted, that there were two countries called Cush (which we translate Ethiopia); one in Africa beyond Egypt, the other in Arabia, which is the Ethiopia here meant. For the king of the other was far off, and must have marched through Egypt before he could come to fight with Sennacherib. But this was near, and was able to raise a powerful army, as appears by the vast forces which Zerah brought against Asa, (2 Chron. xiv. 9.) And thus 2 Chron. xxi. 16. as Bochartus observes, must necessarily be understood, where the Arabians, whom God stirred up against Jehoram, are said to be near to the Ethiopians, which cannot be true of those beyond Egypt. (See his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 2.)

He sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying.] Among which Rab-shakeh was the chief.

Ver. 10. *Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying.*] They could not come to the speech of him; but sent him a letter containing the words following, (ver. 14.)

Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.] He had heard, I suppose, that Hezekiah declared he trusted in the Lord, and had assurance from him, that he the king of Assyria should not prevail against him.

Ver. 11. *Behold, thou hast heard what the king of Assyria hath done to all lands, by destroying them utterly.*] This letter is of the same import with the former message, presuming the God of Israel was like the gods of other countries, and had no more power than they to preserve his worshippers.

And shalt thou be delivered?] Such questions imply a strong denial; and therefore it is as much as to say, Thou shalt be delivered no more than they were.

Ver. 12. *Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed.*] He argues from the long successes his ancestors had enjoyed: none of the gods, whose countries they had destroyed, making opposition to them for some ages.

As Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar?] These were places well known in those days; there was a Gozan and Hara in Media, as Bochartus observes, lib. iii. Phaleg. cap. 14. Where Rezeph was is uncertain; but Ptolemy mentions such a city in Syria, where St. Jerome places Thelasar: and there were more cities than one in those countries called Adana, which is the same with Eden.

Ver. 13. *Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?*] Places beforementioned, xviii. 34. Nothing can be further observed of this, but that the fury of Rab-shakeh increased: so that what he had uttered in words, he now more deliberately set down in writing: affirming boldly, that their God was a deceiver, if he promised them deliverance.

Ver. 14. *And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.*] He could approach no nearer than to the outward court of the temple: where, at the entrance of the priests' court, he looked towards the sanctuary, God's dwelling-place, and laid this letter before him.

Ver. 15. *And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.*] Here he directly thwarts the blasphemous opinion of the Assyrians beforementioned, (xvii. 27. xviii. 35.) that the God of Israel was but the particular Lord of that country; not the universal Sovereign, which Hezekiah acknowledged him to be, because the Creator of the whole world.

Ver. 16. *Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear; open, Lord, thine eyes, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.*] That is, sent Rab-shakeh. He speaks in such language as men use, when they earnestly beseech others not to neglect their supplication; but vouchsafe to attend, and to give a gracious answer to them.

Ver. 17. *Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands.*] Do not boast of more than they have done.

Ver. 18. *And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore have they destroyed them.*] They had prevailed, he acknowledges, over their gods, as well as over men; but it was because they were not so good as men, being mere wood and stone.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hands, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only.*] He beseeches him to distinguish himself upon those idols; by giving them such a deliverance as might demonstrate to all the world that he was *the living God* (as he is often called), superior to all others, who were not able to save their worshippers.

Ver. 20. *Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard*] He knew by the spirit of prophecy, that Hezekiah had represented his case to God in the temple; who bade Isaiah assure him his petition was granted.

Ver. 21. *This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.*] These words comprehend the whole city. For by *the daughter of Zion* he means the people that inhabited the upper part of the city, where the king's palace stood: and by the *daughter of Jerusalem*, the people of the lower part of the city; and all that was not comprehended under the name of Zion. They *shaked their heads at him;* which is the same with *despising*, and *laughing him to scorn.* For *shaking the head* is the posture of those that mock at others, (Psal. xxii. 7. Matt. xxvii. 39.) He calls Zion a *virgin*, because this

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fortress, since David conquered it, had remained inviolable, and had never been taken by any enemy. Joash, indeed, king of Israel, took Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of it; (xiv. 13, 14.) but I think the fort of Zion had never been taken.

Ver. 22. *Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice.*] So Rabshakeh did, xviii. 28.

And lifted up thine eyes on high?] As those do who have haughty thoughts of themselves; and overlook others with contempt and scorn, (Prov. xxi. 4.)

Even against the Holy One of Israel.] God is called *the Holy One*, with respect to his peerless perfections; and *the Holy One of Israel*, as having a peculiar respect to them above all people, who therefore should be defended by his almighty power.

Ver. 23. *By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir-trees thereof; and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.*] This is an admirable description of the boastings of a king puffed up with great success, and is as much as if he had said, What place is there into which I cannot make my way? when I have gone, even with my chariots in great number, to the top of high mountains; to Lebanon itself, through the most difficult passages, which I have opened and planed for them? Who shall hinder me from cutting down its tallest cedars and fir-trees (perhaps he means their princes and great men), and, when I have done, from marching and taking up my quarters in the extremest borders of the land, climbing up to the top of Carmel (which was towards the Mediterranean Sea), or entering into all the fruitful places of the country, by making an entire conquest of it? For so Carmel often signifies, not a mountain, but a fruitful field, in the language of this prophet, Isa. x. 18. xvi. 10.

Ver. 24. *I have digged and drunk strange waters.*] He brags that he had marched with his vast army through strange countries, and in the driest places, where it was thought his army would die with thirst; but he digged till he found water.

And with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.] This is commonly thought to signify, that he had gone dry-shod with his whole army over great rivers, whose streams he turned another way; and so had taken the strongest fortresses, surrounded with deep waters and great ramparts. But Bochartus hath made a plainer paraphrase upon these words, which he thus translates: *I have dried up the rivers of Egypt.* As much as to say, "I will enter as easily into Egypt, in which you confide, as if, when I come thither, all the rivers wherewith it is environed, should be dried up." (See his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. v. cap. 15.) For the Hebrew word *masor* (which we translate every where *besieged places*, or *defences*, or *fortresses*) should rather be taken for the singular of *Mesoraim*, which by contraction is called *Mitzraim*, that is, *Egypt*. And if this be allowed, the sense then here is, as I said before, *I have dried up all the rivers of Egypt:* which was the highest vaunt he could make of his power, and numerous forces. Thus Isa. xix. 6. *The brooks of defences shall be dried up*, is interpreted by Kimchi, *The rivers of Egypt shall be emptied and dried up.* And more plainly, Micah vii. 12. where *from the fortress to the river* is so obscure, that it is not to be understood; but *from Egypt to Euphrates* is such clear sense, that one cannot but think it should be so translated; for those were the bounds of the land of Canaan.

Ver. 25. *Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it?*] These are the words of God, in answer to those empty boasts:—But what is this to what I have done? Hast thou not heard how I brought my people dry-shod through the Red Sea? How in ancient times, I say, long before thou or thy ancestors were born, I did this by my own strength alone, without the help of nature or art? For so the word *jatzar*, which we translate *formed*, is used Gen. ii. 8. and other places.

Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.] And it is I that have now brought thee to do all these things of which thou braggedst. Thou couldest not have done one of them without my leave, who therefore permitted it, that I might punish those cities by thy hand, which I had devoted to destruction. (See Isa. x. 5, 6. 13—15.)

Ver. 26. *Therefore were their inhabitants of small power; they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the house-tops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.*] This was the reason, that the people of those cities whereof thou spakest (ver. 12, 13.) were so very feeble, and unable to oppose thee; because I delivered them into thy hand.

Ver. 27. *But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.*] As much as to say, There are none of thy motions hidden from me. For before thou camest from thy own country, I knew with what design thou marchedst out, and what thou hast done since wheresoever thou hast entered; and understand with what rage and fury thou art come up to destroy my dwelling-place.

Ver. 28. *Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into my ears.*] I have heard the noise thou makest with thy furious threatenings, and with thy great army which hath entered Judea.

Therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way that thou camest.] He compares his absolute power over him to that of a fisherman, who, let a fish tumble ever so much in the water, hath it fast by a hook he hath fixed in his nose; or to a man upon a horse or a mule, whom he can turn which way he pleases, when he hath a curb in their mouths. Even so, saith God, will I do with thee: draw thee back, press thou ever so much to compass thy designs, into thy own country, without any success.

Ver. 29. *And this shall be a sign unto thee.*] This is spoken to Hezekiah.

Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.] This was not a sign of the truth of his prophecy, because it was to come after that was fulfilled; but a token of God's extraordinary favour and love to them, when Sennacherib was gone; and they were in fear of another enemy, *viz.* a grievous famine. For though he had trodden

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down or eaten up all the corn with his army, yet they should find sufficient left to maintain them this year, which was the fourteenth of Hezekiah. And though the next was the sabbatical year, in which they were to let the land rest, and neither sow nor reap, yet he promises enough should grow up of itself to sustain them, without any culture, out of the corn scattered in the former year. And then, in the sixteenth year, God assures them of liberty to till their land as they were wont, and that they should sow and reap as in a time of peace, when no enemy appeared, nor there was any fear of any. But until the corn sprung up and was ripe that year, they lived upon what grew of itself in the sabbatical year, without tillage. Which demonstrates the wonderful providence of God over this people, in taking care they should want nothing in those years, without any care of their own, if they believed in his word. See Lev. xxv. where the precept about this sabbatical year is delivered; and was observed by this people, from the first conquest and division of the land of Canaan, forty-seven years after the coming out of Egypt. (See Dr. Alix, Reflections on the Old Testament, par. ii. chap. 1.)

Ver. 30. *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.*] He pursues the metaphor from corn that is sown in the ground; signifying, that they should have firm possession of their own country; and therein increase, and multiply, and flourish exceedingly.

Ver. 31. *For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of Mount Zion.*] For they who were now shut up in Jerusalem should be at liberty: and they who escaped the enemy's fury in the country, and fled thither for refuge, should go out of Mount Zion to their own possessions.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.] His great love to his own honour, and to his people, shall do these wonders; to vindicate his glory from that contempt which was cast upon it by Sennacherib.

Ver. 32. *Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with a shield, nor cast a bank against it.*] He promises the king of Assyria should be so far from possessing himself of the city at this time, that he should not assault it, by shooting so much as an arrow in it: no, nor appear with his army against it, or raise bulwarks to besiege it. Or, as the Hebrews understand it, they should not cast a stone out of their engines against it. Rabsaris, I observed ver. 8. continued the siege; but whatsoever he did before, after this message of Isaiah he made no attempt upon them.

Ver. 33. *By the way that he came, by the same way he shall return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord.*] He confirms what he said before, (ver. 28.)

Ver. 34. *For I will defend this city to save it.*] To preserve it from destruction.

For my own sake, and for my servant David's sake.] Upon which account he had formerly spared them, when they deserved to be punished, (1 Kings xi. 12, 13.)

Ver. 35. *And it came to pass that night.*] The Jews in the Gemara Sanhedrin, (cap. 11. n. 20.) say, that in the very night after they set down before Jerusalem, and were so weary that they made no attempt upon the city, this which follows fell out. Others think it was the same night that Hezekiah received Sennacherib's railing letter; which is more probable than the opinion of our Dr. Jackson, who will have it that it was the same night, about two years after. (See upon the Attributes, sect. 3. chap. 26.) However it was, the blow was the more remarkable, because it was given in that very night, wherein he had lifted up himself against the God of heaven; as Belshazzar afterward did, and had his fatal stroke given him in like manner. (See Dan. v. 30.)

That the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand men: and when they arose in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.] By *a pestilential disease*, as Josephus calls it, λοιμικὸν νόσον, such a vast number were suddenly cut off. It is a question, whether this destruction was made in the army that besieged Libnah, or in that host which Rab-shakeh brought up against Jerusalem. Josephus thinks the latter; for it is probable Rab-shakeh was come with his whole host against Jerusalem, which before was straitened by Rabsaris; and κατὰ τὴν πρώτην τῆς πολιορκίας νύκτα, *the first night after they had begirt the city* (as the Jews say, I observed, in Sanhedrin), the angel of the Lord made this great slaughter among them: lib. x. Antiq. cap. 2. where a little before, in the end of the first chapter, he takes notice of a horrible lie which Herodotus reports from the Egyptians: who say their king, being also a priest, by his prayers to his god, brought this destruction upon the Assyrians, as they lay before Pelusium: a great army of rats coming in the night, and gnawing all their bowstrings in pieces, so that they could not fight. So studious they were to pervert the truth, and corrupt the sacred story.

Ver. 36. *So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.*] Being afraid that Tirhakah should come and destroy the remainders of his broken army, (ver. 9.)

Ver. 37. *And it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god.*] The LXX. here call this god Nesorach; and upon Isaiah, where this story is again told, Asarach. But what any of these names signify, Mr. Selden acknowledges he cannot tell, having in all his reading never met with any thing that might explain it. But Kircher adventures to say it was the image of a *ship*, representing the ark of Noah: the relics of which, Josephus tells us, some reported were, in his time, in the neighbouring mountains of Armenia. And a later writer, Beyerus (in his additions to Selden, de Diis Syris), thinks it signifies as much as the *bird of Noah*, that is, a dove, which was worshipped by the Assyrians: or, as others conjecture (for they can do no more), this word is derived from *nes*, which in Chaldee signifies a province, and *rac*, which signifies a king; that is, Jupiter the king, and conservator of that province.

That Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword.] Which they might the more easily do, when he suspected no danger. The reason of it was, because (in his danger, we may suppose) he had vowed that he would offer them up unto his god: therefore they sacrificed him, to prevent being sacrificed themselves. One of them seems to have been called after the name of a god worshipped in those countries, (xv. 11. 31.)

And they escaped into the land of Armenia.] Which was not far off; and where there were mountains of very difficult ascent, and inhabited by a warlike people.

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And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.] Who was the king that sent a colony to people the country of Samaria, (as I observed before from Ezra iv. 2.) and the rather, because he feared Hezekiah might have taken possession of it, after such a defeat as his father Sennacherib had received. His name is curtailed several ways: for in the book of Tobit he is called Sar-chedon, (i. 21.) the first syllable of his name being cut off; and the LXX. cut off the next, calling him Aser-dan; and Isaiah cuts off both, calling him Sargon, (xx. 1.)

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *IN those days was Hezekiah sick unto death.*] This is set down after the death of Sennacherib; but with this general note only of the time, wherein this sickness fell out, *in those days*. Which, as primate Usher observes in his Annals, doth not relate to what went just before (to the time when the king of Assyria invaded the land), as is evident from ver. 6. of this chapter; where he promises to add fifteen years to his life, and also to deliver him from the king of Assyria. Which deliverance, therefore, was after this sickness, which was in the latter end of his fourteenth year; to which if we add fifteen, they make up the whole twenty-nine years of his reign.

And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.] That is, his disease was, in its own nature, mortal, and could not be cured by any human remedy: therefore he wished him to settle his estate, and, as we speak, to make his will; how all things in his house should be disposed when he was dead.

Ver. 2. *Then he turned his face unto the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying.*] That is, towards the wall of the sanctuary, as the Targum expounds it. (See Dr. Hammond upon Acts x. annot. *b*.) He thought, as it was not beyond the power of God to restore him, so he had not peremptorily decreed that he should die: but there was a tacit condition in the message, (as in other cases, Jonah iii. 4.) otherwise he would not have prayed to be spared.

Ver. 3. *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.*] He was not conscious to himself that he had omitted any thing which was to be done for the restoring the true worship of God. In which he had been so exact, as to take away the high places, which had continued ever since the time of David, and none durst remove them: and therefore he presumed to beg that he might live, to settle and establish what he had begun to do.

And Hezekiah wept sore.] One reason was, as many think, that he had not yet a son to succeed him on the throne. For he lived after this fifteen years; and when he died Manasseh was but twelve years old, who therefore was born after this sickness.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came unto him, saying.*] It is doubtful whether we are to understand the middle of the court *of the king's house*, or the middle of *the city*; for the one is in the text, the other in the margin of the Hebrew Bibles. But it is not material which we follow; for the meaning is, that he was not gone far before he was ordered to go back, and carry a new message that his prayer was heard.

Ver. 5. *Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, The God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, and seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up into the house of the Lord.*] Recover his strength so fast, as to be able in three days' time to go to the temple, and give God thanks for his cure; which appears by this to have been miraculous.

Ver. 6. *And I will add unto thy days fifteen years.*] More than he could have lived according to the course of nature.

And I will deliver this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake.] For this sickness was that year when he threatened to destroy it. (See upon ver. 1.) It was a great encouragement to faithful obedience, that God so often mentions David's services with such a kind remembrance of them.

Ver. 7. *And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs: and they took and laid it on the bile, and he recovered.*] There might be some natural virtue in this cataplasm, to soften and ripen a hard humour, as this seems to have been (some think a plague-sore), but it was a supernatural power which made so speedy a cure; of which God used this as a sign.

Ver. 8. *And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day?*] He did believe, no doubt, what the prophet said, otherwise he would have been sharply reproved. But he made bold to desire a confirmation of his faith, as good men had done in other cases: particularly Gideon, who threw down the altar of Baal, and cut down the grove at God's command, and blew the trumpet, and gathered an army, which were arguments of a strong faith; and yet, after all this, desired a sign from God, that God would deliver Israel by his hand. (Judg. vi. 25. 34. 36, 37, &c.)

Ver. 9. *And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken; Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or back ten degrees?*] Sometimes God, who is a free agent, intending to convince men by great wonders that he is to be believed, is so graciously condescending, as to give them leave to choose what they would have him do, or when, that his power may be the more notorious, and no room left for doubting. So he did with Pharaoh, Exod. viii. 9, 10. and with Ahaz, Isa. vii. 11. and here with his son Hezekiah.

Ver. 10. *And Hezekiah said, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.*] It was comparatively small, because to go forward was the natural course of it; but to return back was a miracle, both in the thing and in the manner of it.

Ver. 11. *And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord; and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.*] It is observed by many modern interpreters, that there is not a word here spoken concerning the sun's going back; but only of the shadow upon the dial, which might by the power of God go either forward or backward, the sun still holding its course, as it

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was wont to do. And the *degrees* or *lines* in the dial may signify either hours, or half hours, or, as some think, quarters. (See Vossius, de Orig. et Progressu Idol. lib. ii. cap. 9.) Now the going back being three times mentioned in this chapter, and always spoken of the shadow, therefore they conclude the miracle was wrought upon the dial only, not upon the very body of the sun. It is said, indeed, in Isa. xxxviii. 8. *So the sun returned ten degrees;* but they think that may be meant of the *shadow of the sun* (as it goes before), God so disposing the rays of the sun, and ordering the light, that no shadow should be projected, but where the prophet foretold. This I thought fit to represent; but must add, that the ancient Jews, and Christians too, took the words of Isaiah to signify that the sun itself went back, and not merely the shadow. Whom primate Usher in his Annals follows, whose words are these: *The sun and all the heavenly bodies went back; and as much was detracted from the next night as was added to this day.* (A. M. 4001.) Which was done, I suppose, on a sudden, by the power of God, and lasted not long before all was restored again to their usual place; so that no change was made in the state of the heavenly bodies. But, that there was some change for the present, was observed both in the northern part of the world at Babylon, (from whence Merodach-Baladan sent to inquire about this wonder, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.) and also in the southern, in the land of Egypt. As we may gather from a remarkable passage in Herodotus, who tells us in his Euterpe, cap. i. 42. that the Egyptians had observed strange alterations in the motions of the sun; so that it had risen four times, ἐξ ἠθέων, *out of its usual course,* ἐντεῦθεν νῦν δὶς καταδύεται, ἐντεῦθεν δὶς ἐπαντείλαι, &c. *it rising twice where it now sets, and setting twice where it now rises;* and yet, οὐδὲν τῶν κατ' Αἰγυπτίων ὑπὸ ταῦτα ἑτεροιωθῆναι; *and yet no change at all made among the Egyptians by these things,* neither in the earth, nor the river, nor any thing else. This is a plain evidence that their neighbours (and many others, it is like) had heard of the unusual motions of the sun (though without any alteration in the heavenly bodies, which were soon returned to their former station), but had not a perfect knowledge of them, or had corrupted their knowledge; for to those two mentioned in Scripture, in the time of Joshua and Hezekiah, the Egyptians added two more, and make them to have been near the same time. But the Jews themselves have been thus fabulous, who say in the chapter *Chelek,* that the day on which Ahaz died was but two hours long; but now when Hezekiah's life was prolonged, God restored those ten hours which were then wanting, and so brought time even. (See Schickard, in his Bechinah Happeruschim, p. 122.) They also believe this miracle was wrought a little before sun-set; but that excellent person, whom I have often mentioned, Dr. Alix, thinks it evident it was before noon, about our ten of the clock.

Ver. 12. *At that time Berodach-Baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon.*] Who is called Merodach-Baladan in Isa. xxxix. 1. Merodach was the name of an idol among the Babylonians, as Baal or Bel was another; together with Adan or Adonis, as Sir J. Marsham observes. Josephus calls him Βαλάδας, and so doth Berosus. He was but a tributary to the king of Assyria, till Nebuchadnezzar came to reign, who cast off the yoke of Assyria, and made that monarchy subject to him.

Sent letters.] Some think to make a league with him against the king of Assyria: and, it is likely, to inquire about the wonder done in the land, (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.)

And a present unto Hezekiah.] As the manner was when they sought any one's friendship.

For he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.] And therefore in these letters, I suppose, he also congratulated his happy recovery to health.

Ver. 13. *And Hezekiah hearkened unto them.*] He gave them a friendly and benign audience (as Abarbinel explains it), being glad at their coming, as Isaiah tells us, (xxxix. 2.) because he knew them to be enemies to Sennacherib. And the words seem to import that they came about some weighty business, to which he consented.

And shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures.] He was so pleased, or rather transported with joy, at the honour the king of Babylon had done him, that he not only gave them a gracious audience, as was said before, but ordered his officers to shew them all the rarities he had in his treasures. For though his country had been lamentably harassed by the king of Assyria, and he had endeavoured to appease him with great gifts, (xviii. 14, 15.) yet there were many good things remaining in Jerusalem; and great presents had been made to Hezekiah, since the stroke from heaven upon Sennacherib's army, (2 Chron. xxxii. 23.) The precious ointment here mentioned, is called, by Kimchi and other Hebrew doctors, *apharsemon;* which they say was the true balsam; not to be found any where, but near to Jericho.

There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominions, that Hezekiah shewed them not.] There were other valuable things in other parts of the realm, besides those in his own palace at Jerusalem, which he thought worth their seeing, and therefore ordered his officers to shew them to these ambassadors.

Ver. 14. *Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.*] He answers to the last part of Isaiah's question, but not a word of the first, what their business with him was? and he calls that a far country from whence they came (though it was not very remote), to express the great honour that was done him, by a prince at such a distance from him.

Ver. 15. *And he said, What have they seen in thy house?*] He knew well enough what they had seen; but had a mind to hear whether Hezekiah would confess the truth, or excuse his folly.

And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in my house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.] He honestly relates the truth; being insensible of how dangerous a piece of vanity he had been guilty; in shewing strangers those treasures, which he might well think would invite them to endeavour to make themselves masters of them.

Ver. 16. *And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord.*] How he resents this action. Which was the more blameable, because he had lately received such great benefits from God, and seen such an astonishing wonder as he wrought for the confirmation of his faith; whereby he

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should have been moved not to glory in any thing but the goodness of God to him, nor confide in the friendship of great princes, but only in the power of the Almighty.

Ver. 17. *Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up unto this day.*] There had been several great kings in Judah who had overcome many enemies, and got great spoils, some remainders of which were still in their stores: but Isaiah foretells all should be carried away to that very place, from whence he had been complimented by those ambassadors.

Shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.] The most pertinent observation that I can make upon these words, is that of Dr. Jackson (in his Answer to John's Question), where he saith, that whosoever will consider the state of things in this time, and the small power which the Babylonians now had, in respect of their mighty neighbour the king of Assyria (whom the Jews had reason to fear above all other princes); the accomplishment of this prophecy of Isaiah was, according to human conjecture, far more unlikely and improbable, than if a man should in the last age have taken upon him to foretell, that the duke of Saxony, or some such prince in Germany, should conquer France and Spain, and lead them captive to Dresden. But the word of the Lord stands fast for ever; and Isaiah was proved a hundred and twenty-five years after to be a true prophet.

Ver. 18. *And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away.*] That is, his posterity descended from him.

And they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.] Wait upon him as his servants, (xxiv. 15.) This was partly fulfilled in Daniel and his companions, (Dan. i. 1.)

Ver. 19. *Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?*] As if he had said, Thanks be to God it is no worse; let him do his pleasure. Have I not reason to be thankful, if, according to his promise, he deliver me from the king of Assyria, (ver. 6.) and not only prolong my days, but let me enjoy firm peace and true religion as long as I live? Some take this to be a careless speech, as if he did not concern himself what became of his posterity, so he himself did live happily. But this is inconsistent with such a pious mind as he had; which, no doubt, was sensible of the vanity and pride for which the prophet reproved him; and submitted to the punishment of it, which might have been immediately inflicted, if God had not been very merciful unto him.

Ver. 20. *And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city.*] If he brought water into the city by private passages, whereby the enemy was deprived of the benefit of it, while the city enjoyed it (as Grotius understands it), it was certainly a work of admirable contrivance. (See 2 Chron. xxxii. 3.)

Are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?] The same great person here observes, that the book of the Chronicles spoken of here, and in other places, were journals, as these books were annals. Out of which journals Ezra took many more passages in his book of the Chronicles, not omitting what he had written in these annals.

Ver. 21. *And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.*] Here is no mention of his burial with his fathers in the city of David: but Ezra, in 2 Chron. xxxii. 33. tells us they buried him "in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David," and that all the people "did him honour at his death."

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *MANASSEH was twelve years old when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Hephzi-bah.*] The years wherein he was captive in Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.) must be comprehended in this number.

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.*] He set up the gentile worship again: for being young, he was easily drawn aside by the princes and nobles, who never heartily joined in Hezekiah's reformation; but were in all probability displeased at it; and so revolted as soon as he was dead. For one cannot conceive how such a sudden change should be made in religion, and such gross idolatry restored, but from the general corruption of the great men, who had the management of this young king.

Ver. 3. *For he built up the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed, and he reared up the altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel, and worshipped all the hosts of heaven, and served them.*] The sun, the moon, and the stars, as Procopius Gazæus explains it.

Ver. 4. *And he built altars.*] To the gods of the neighbouring nations.

In the house of the Lord.] In the very sanctuary itself; for the outward courts are mentioned in the next verse.

Of which the Lord said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.] Where God appointed, that he himself alone should be worshipped, (2 Sam. vii. 13.)

Ver. 5. *And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.*] The inner court, which was that of the priests, and the outward, which was that of the people, were profaned, together with the sanctuary.

Ver. 6. *And he made his son pass through the fire.*] In 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6. it is said he caused *his children* to pass through the fire; which was a most abominable practice, strictly forbidden by Moses upon pain of death, (Lev. xviii. 21. xx. 2, 3.)

And observed times, and used enchantments.] See Lev. xix. 21. Deut. xviii. 10, 11.

And dealt with familiar spirits, and wizards.] See Lev. xix. 31.

He wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.] For there were none before him who committed such things as these; which were the highest provocations of God's displeasure.

Ver. 7. *And he set a graven image of the grove which he had made in the house.*] The Hebrew words in this place are *Pesel haasherah*, which our Selden hath well resolved (by comparing this with other texts) signify a wooden image of Ashtaroth, or Astarte. (Syntagm. ii. de Diis Sy-

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ris, cap. 2.) For Baal and Astarte were chief gods of the Sidonians, whose worship was introduced by Ahab; whom Manasseh imitated, (ver. 3.)

Of which the Lord said unto David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever.] I observed before what God said to David, and what he said to Solomon is recorded, 1 Kings viii. 29. ix. 3. But Manasseh endeavoured to make the name of the God of Israel to be forgotten; by placing other gods in his house.

Ver. 8. *Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.*] This promise was included in the choice God made of Jerusalem to fix his dwelling-place there: which was a security to them against all their enemies, if they proved obedient to him.

Ver. 9. *But they hearkened not.*] They had always been a rebellious people.

And Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.] But in his reign their wickedness was grown to such a height, that it exceeded all that the people of Canaan had done; whom God expelled to make room for the Israelites. For he broke all the laws of Moses, and worshipped more idols than they did. We never read of horses consecrated to the sun till his time, (see xxiii. 11.) who in all probability brought in that idolatry.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord spake by his servants the prophets, saying.*] Abarbinel makes account that Hosea, Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk, all prophesied in his days. And some think Obadiah also, and Isaiah: who, as the Jews say, was sawn asunder by him.

Ver. 11. *Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him.*] The whole people of Canaan are comprehended under the name of Amorites; who were most eminent of all the seven nations. (See Gen. xv. 16.)

And hath made Judah also to sin with his idols.] They were too much inclined to idolatry, by the long corruptions that had been among them; but he made them far worse than otherwise they would have been. For, as Jeremiah charges them, in the next reign but one, "according to the number of their cities were their gods, and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem, they set up altars to that shameful thing, to burn incense to Baal." (Jer. xi. 13.)

Ver. 12. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.*] The report of it shall strike terror and horror into men, as Procopius Gazæus expounds it. (See 1 Sam. iii. 11.)

Ver. 13. *And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria.*] A metaphor from those who set out men's lots and portions, by drawing a line to divide them: and is as much as to say, he would give to Jerusalem the same measure that he had done to Samaria; that is, pull it down to the ground; consume some of them by famine, others by the sword, and carry the rest into captivity, as the same Procopius glosses.

And the plummet of the house of Ahab.] As they imitated his sin, so they should have his punishment; whose house was utterly destroyed. It seems to be a metaphor from builders, who measure with a line and a plummet what part of a building shall stand, and what be demolished.

And I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.] That is, leave no more people in it than you see any thing in a dish after it is emptied, and wiped, and turned upside down; as the manner is when it is perfectly cleansed. So the meaning is, I will cleanse her of all her inhabitants, and leave none remaining. The Hebrew word which we translate *dish*, the LXX. translate ὁ ἀλάβαστρος, *an alabaster box* of precious ointment, as the Chaldee translates it *selucta*, in which the Greek word λήκυθος lurks, (as the illustrious Spanhemius observes upon Callimachus's hymn in Palad. ver. 13.) signifying that Jerusalem was once in high esteem with God, like a precious ointment; but having lost its savour, he would reject her as a man doth such ointment when it is nothing worth.

Ver. 14. *And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance.*] That is, Judah, who alone was left when the ten tribes were gone.

And deliver them into the hands of their enemies, and they shall become a prey, and a spoil unto all their enemies.] As their brethren, the children of Israel, had been.

Ver. 15. *Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger from the day that their fathers came out of Egypt, even unto this day.*] God now intended to punish them for all their former rebellions, ever since they were a people; which Manasseh had completed, whose sin was so great, that it is sometimes mentioned as the sole cause of their captivity. (See Jer. xv. 4.)

Ver. 16. *Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much.*] Upon which words Procopius Gazæus thus glosses: "He chiefly destroyed those who opposed themselves to his impiety, and denounced the Divine anger against him (that is, the prophets). They say he caused the prophet Isaiah to be sawed in sunder." So the Jews say in the Babylonian Talmud, in the treatise Jebamoth, and Justin Martyr in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, and St. Jerome upon Isa. xx. 27. Nay, the words of the apostle, Heb. xi. 37. ἐπρίσθησαν are commonly referred to this, as primate Usher observes in his Annals, ad A. M. 3306.

Till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another.] Top-full, as we speak. For it is a metaphor from measures wet or dry, when they are filled up to the brim.

Besides his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.] That is, besides his abominable idolatry.

Ver. 17. *Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] All that he did in his captivity, and after, was written in the journals, from whence Ezra took what we find in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, &c.

Ver. 18. *And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.*] Some think this was the place where Uzziah was buried, (2 Chron. xxvi. 23.) and that he chose to be buried here, as unworthy, because of his manifold sins (of which he repented), to be laid in the common sepulchre of the kings of Judah.

Ver. 19. *Amon was twenty and two years old when he*

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began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem.] Which is the number of years to which the sons of those kings arrived, who provoked God to anger; as some of the Jews observe in the son of Jeroboam, the son of Baasha, and the son of Ahab. (1 Kings xv. 25. xvi. 8. xxii. 51.)

And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

Ver. 20. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh did.*] He imitated him in all things but in his repentance, as is observed, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 23.

Ver. 21. *And he walked in all the ways that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them.*] For he was bred up in idolatry, and solemnly consecrated by his father to the service of Moloch, (ver. 6.)

Ver. 22. *And he forsook the God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the Lord.*] As Hezekiah, and Jotham, and others of his pious ancestors had done. There are two doctors also in the chapter *Chelek*, the one of which saith, he burnt the book of the law; the other, that he lay with his own mother.

Ver. 23. *And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew him in his own house.*] As he forsook God, whose servant he ought to have been; so his servants forsook him, and murdered him in his own palace.

Ver. 24. *And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon.*] It was a thing of such pernicious example to kill their king, though very bad, that the people would not suffer it to go unpunished.

And the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.] The common people seem to have been better disposed than the great men; who, it is probable, were engaged in the conspiracy against Amon. But it is not likely that the common people took upon them to constitute a king, but their elders and great men met, together with the people, upon such occasions as this, to declare to whom the right of succession belonged. Therefore, by the *people of the land*, must be meant the people assembled in the common council of the nation.

Ver. 25. *Now, the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] There is nothing said here of him, but that he was a gross idolater: which was not the ground of the conspiracy against him; but it is likely was related in the book here mentioned.

Ver. 26. *And he was buried in his sepulchre, in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.*] He was buried either in his father's sepulchre, or in one that he made for himself in the same place.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *JOSIAH was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.*] Who it is likely was a good woman, and took care to instil early good principles into him.

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand, or to the left.*] In him was verified the words of Solomon, (Prov. xx. 11.) "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." For when he had reigned eight years, *while he was yet young*, as Ezra observes, he began to reform all abuses in religion, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, &c.)

Ver. 3. *And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam the scribe, to the house of the Lord, saying.*] This was in the eighteenth year of his reign, not of his age, as we are told, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8.

Ver. 4. *Go up to Hilkiah the high-priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the Lord.*] He ordered him to give him an exact account of what money had been offered by pious people, for the reparation of the house of the Lord; as had been done in the reign of Jehoash, (xii. 4, &c.)

Which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people.] They were the Levites, as we learn from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9.

Ver. 5. *And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the Lord, to repair the breaches of the house.*] They entrusted certain persons with the money, who were to oversee the work, (whose names are recorded in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12.) and they delivered it to the workmen to buy materials for the reparation of the house, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 6. *Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.*] *Builders* (as distinguished from *carpenters* and *masons*) were such as laid the timber and the stone together, which the other had prepared.

Ver. 7. *Howbeit, there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.*] They were men of such approved honesty (like those in the days of Jehoash, xii. 15.) that there was no need to call them to an account how they laid out the money.

Ver. 8. *And Hilkiah the high-priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord: and Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.*] The book of Deuteronomy, saith Procopius Gazæus. But it was rather the whole book of the law written by Moses; that authentic copy which by God's command was laid up in the most holy place, (Deut. xxxi. 24, &c.) About which the Hebrew doctors made great difficulties in their explication of this place, particularly R. Lipman in his Nitzacon, out of which Hottinger hath alleged a long passage concerning this matter, in his Historica Ecclesiastica, N. T. sect. 16. par. iv. p. 137. where he justly thinks it a wonder that Josiah should so early fear God, and begin to reform religion, if he had never seen the book of the law before this time. And how should the people have kept such a Passover, and the priests been so well instructed in the rites of it this very year? (2 Chron. xxxiv. 19.) For the copies of the book now found could not be so soon made and dispersed every where as to teach them these things. It is most likely therefore, nay certain, that though this was the original book, yet the Jews had many copies of the law among them, though some of them perhaps imperfect or corrupted. For they report that Manasseh blotted the name of Jehovah out of all the books he could find. Hil-

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kiah, therefore, rejoiced that he had found the original, by which all might be corrected. Which had been hid, it is probable, from the impious fury of their idolatrous kings, in some secret place of the temple, where it was now found when they were about to repair it: and the finding it at this very time, when Josiah was making a reformation of religion, could not but be looked upon as a remarkable providence, which very much affected him, as we read afterward.

Ver. 9. *And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, saying, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord.*] He gives him an account that he had executed his commands, given him ver. 4—6.

Ver. 10. *And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book: and Shaphan read it before the king.*] Some part of it. It is said, indeed, in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30. that "they read in the ears of the people all the book of the law." But that was done afterward, and was done by parcels, not all at one time. And so it follows here, xxiii. 2. that Josiah read, that is, caused some by his order to read, all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord, in the ears of all the people.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.*] Being very much affrighted when he heard the dreadful threatenings against the transgressor of the law, read out of the book of Deuteronomy. At which the book opened, either bythe special providence of God, or by the design of Shaphan, who had read the book before he brought it to the king, (ver. 8.) The Jerusalem Talmud, and from thence Abarbinel, saith, that he happened to read the place where the punishment of their king is denounced, (Deut. xxviii. 36.) or, that he observed the time drew near, when the punishments God threatened would be inflicted, for their long offences against this law. According to what the king himself here saith, ver. 13. "Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us," &c. By all which it is plain, the king had not written a copy of the law with his own hand, according to the command, Deut. xvii. 8. Disuse often cancels the most excellent laws. For it is too probable they had a long time neglected also to read the law publicly every seventh year, (Deut. xxxiv. 9, 10.)

Ver. 12. *And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying.*] Shaphan was a servant of the king, being secretary, or some such officer; but Asaiah, I suppose, was one that waited on his person, and was always about him.

Ver. 13. *Go ye and inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people.*] Of Jerusalem.

And for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according to all that which is written concerning us.] I suppose he sent them to inquire whether there were any hopes his anger might be appeased, and by what means.

Ver. 14. *So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harha, keeper of the wardrobe.*] It is certain that both Jeremiah and Zephaniah prophesied in the reign of Josiah; therefore it may seem strange that they did not resort to one of them. Of which Abarbinel gives this account, That Jeremiah was at this time absent from Jerusalem, being gone to convert the ten tribes; or rather, being at his own house in Anathoth. And the same he supposes of Zephaniah, that he was not near at hand; and therefore they went to Huldah, who lived at Jerusalem; and the rather, as some suppose, because women are more inclined to pity and compassion than men. But this is an absurd reason, as Abarbinel well observes: for the prophets did not speak according to their own inclinations, but as God dictated to them. The Jews have a tradition in Massecheth Megillah, that eight prophets descended from Rahab, whereof Huldah was one. And Kimchi upon this place saith, Our doctors write, that three prophesied in the days of Josiah; *viz.* Jeremiah in the streets or villages, Zephaniah in the synagogues, and Huldah among the women.

Now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college, and they communed with her.] The Hebrew word *mishneh*, which we translate *college* (and which the Targum takes to signify a *school*), is, in the margin of our Bibles, translated *the second part*. For there were three walls about Jerusalem, as Abarbinel observes. Within the *first* of which lived artificers, and the common people; within the *second*, the better sort, the wise men, prophets, and prophetesses, lived; and within the *third*, was the mountain of the Lord, as they speak. Now of the middle part of Jerusalem they think the holy writer here speaks, in which Huldah dwelt.

Ver. 15. *And she said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you unto me.*] He speaks in the prophetical style, and with great boldness tells him the plain truth.

Ver. 16. *Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read.*] All the plagues threatened in Deut. xxviii. and other places.

Ver. 17. *Because they have forsaken me, and have burnt incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands: therefore, my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.*] This was the answer to the king's inquiry; that the decree of God was peremptory and irresistible, against Judah and Jerusalem, for their extirpation; and he adds the reason thereof.

Ver. 18. *But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard.*] As far as they concerned his person.

Ver. 19. *Because thy heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and went before me: I also have heard thee, saith the Lord.*] Here are *four* tokens, as some observe, of a true repentance and conversion unto God. First, softness of heart; which is opposed to that hardness which arises from unbelief of God's threatenings; because faith makes men tenderly affected with them. Secondly, great

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humility, arising from a sense of his unworthiness of any mercy. These two were inward: the other were outward tokens of this inward sense; which were rending his clothes, and weeping for his own, and for the public offences; which moved God to take some pity upon him, though he resolved to destroy the nation.

Ver. 20. *Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers.*] The time hasting for their utter destruction, God would let him live but a short time; which was a mercy to him, that he might not see the miseries that were coming upon them.

And thou shalt go unto thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.] Though he was slain in battle, (xxiii. 29.) yet *he went to his grave in peace;* because, as the next words explain it, he did not live to see the calamities which were inevitably threatened to come upon the nation; but left his kingdom in a peaceable condition. For the Egyptians, who slew him, gave them no long disturbance, and the Babylonians were not yet ready to come up against them.

And they brought the king word again.] Who immediately set himself to do all the good he could for his time; though he could not prevent the evil that was coming.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *AND the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.*] Whom he acquainted with what he intended to do; and, I suppose, had their consent, which gave the greater authority to what follows.

Ver. 2. *And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the prophets.*] Jeremiah and Zephaniah were the principal prophets; and, it is likely, there were many more who are not mentioned.

And all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant.] He ordered some to read (xxii. 10.) in several places, so that all might hear; for it is not likely that one man's voice could reach so great a multitude.

Which was found in the house of the Lord.] And, some of the Jews say, was found lying open at that very place, where those words presented themselves, (Deut. xxviii. 36.) which awakened the king to cause all the law of God to be read to them.

Ver. 3. *And the king stood by a pillar.*] Unto which his throne adjoined; wherein the king was placed when he came to the temple, as the Hebrew doctors will have it. The king's seat, saith Jacob Juda Leo, was in the court of the Israelites, at the entrance into the court of the priests, by a marble pillar. There he sat when he came into the temple to worship God: there Joash was made king by Jehoiada: (xi. 14.) there Hezekiah read before the Lord the blasphemous letter which the king of Assyria sent him; (xix. 14.) and there Josiah now made a covenant with God that he would serve him. (See Vitringa Proleg. ad lib. de Synag. Veteri. cap. 4.)

And made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes.] That is, all his laws of all sorts.

With all their heart, and with all their soul.] He made this covenant in his own name, and in the name of all the people, whom he engaged faithfully to God's service.

To perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book: and all the people stood to the covenant.] They gave their consent to the covenant; standing before the Lord as he did, and not stirring from the place where he propounded it unto them.

Ver. 4. *And the king commanded Hilkiah the high-priest.*] It was very proper to commit the reformation of the house of God to the high-priest; and those who ministered under him. Some will have Hilkiah to be the father of Jeremiah, as is asserted by Greg. Abulfaragius, in his Histor. Dynastarum, p. 68. Which is an error; for Jeremiah was a priest of Anathoth, whither Abiathar was banished, of the seed of Ithamar, from whom it is likely he was descended, (1 Kings ii. 26.)

And the priests of the second order.] They that were under the high-priest; especially the sagan (as the Targum here hath it), who was the vicar of the high-priest, and stood at his right hand when he officiated, as the Jews tell us in Joma, where they say a man could not be made a high-priest unless he had been first a sagan.

And the keepers of the door.] Whom the Jews call *amarcelim;* which word we find xii. 10. where the Targum expounds it, *priests that were treasurers:* that is, such Levites as had the custody of the sacred money, which was for the repair of the temple. And the Hebrew phrase is not much different, *the keepers of the thresholds;* that is, the entrance into those chambers (as Hottinger thinks) wherein were kept such things as were of public use in the temple. Of which there were seven; wherein the priests' garments were laid up, and other such-like things.

To bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal.] The word we translate *vessels*, or *instruments*, signifies all the various furniture belonging to Baal, and the rest of the false gods, which served either for offering of incense, or sacrifices, or the vestments of the priests, &c.

For Baal.] Who was the principal idol, whose worship Ahab first introduced, and Manasseh restored after Jehu had abolished it, as was said before, xxi. 3.

And for the grove.] I observed before, that by a *grove* is meant the *image* or *idol of the grove;* which Ahab had brought in also. (See there, xxi. 3. 7. and here below, ver. 6.)

And for all the host of heaven.] That is, the planets, and the rest of the stars, which the Sabæans, and Chaldeans, and other eastern people, worshipped. Whom the Jews impiously imitated, though they had been taught, in the very beginning of their law, that the sun, the moon, and all the stars, were all created by their God.

And he burnt them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them into Beth-el.] Which place (where, as Kimchi speaks, was the very foundation of idolatry) he polluted and profaned, by casting this filth there; that they who were wont to worship the calves in that place might avoid it, and not come near it.

Ver. 5. *And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem.*] These idolatrous priests are called *chemarim*

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in the Hebrew, because they were clothed in black garments: (as Kimchi gives the reason, both upon this place and upon Zephan. i. 4.) whereas the priests of the Most High were clothed in white; especially those whose genealogy was not questioned. They, indeed, who could not make out their descent, were clothed in a black habit, to distinguish them from undoubted priests: and so were they who had any defect or blemish in their body, as appears from the Talmud in Middoth. And indeed it is certain, that they among the heathens, who sacrificed to the infernal gods, were clothed with such vestments, as appears by Canidia in Horace, lib. i. sat. 8. and Medea in Apollonius Rhodius, lib. iii. ver. 861.; from whence some think they had the name of μελανηφόροι, which we find in some ancient inscriptions. And thus the Egyptians bewailed Osiris, all which was suitable to their mighty sacrifices; wherein they were sad for the absence of the sun, who was meant by Osiris, as Gilbertus Cuperus observes in his Harpocrates, p. 129. And here now we have found the original of these *chemarim*, priests clothed in black. For it was a black ox which represented Osiris among the Egyptians, and it was covered ἱματίῳ μέλανι βυσσίνῳ, *with a black silk garment;* from whence, in all likelihood, the priests came to be so clothed.

Them also that burnt incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon.] Here Baal is distinguished from the sun; and therefore signifies the same with Belus, who was a deified king: and indeed it is highly probable, that not only Baal, but Moloch and Adonis, were the names only of some very potent kings, who were adored when they were dead, and in time were thought to be real gods.

And to the planets, and to all the hosts of heaven.] The Hebrew word *Mazaloth*, which the LXX. pronounce *Mazuroth*, is thought by Procopius Gazæus to be the name of a star, and most likely the evening star: which others take to signify a constellation, as we translate it in the margin; or all the twelve signs. For the Jewish astronomers call the zodiac, *ophan-hamazaloth*, the circle of the signs.

Ver. 6. *And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron.*] By the *grove*, as I have observed before, is meant the *image of the grove*, or, in plainer words, *Ashtaroth:* for so Procopius Gazæus saith, that where the LXX. translate this word the *grove*, others render it Ἀσήρωθ, or Ἀστάρωθ; that is, Ἀστάρτη, or *Venus*. For τῆς Ἀφροδίτης τὸ ξόανον ἔνδον ἑστησαν ἐν τῷ θείῳ νεῷ, *they had set up the statue of Venus in the temple of God.* (See Selden, Syntag. ii. de Diis Syris, cap. 2.)

And burnt it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.] Which by the law were impure and unclean; and such he declared these ashes to be, and actually made them to be unclean, that none might touch them; much less gather them up as sacred relics. And so Kimchi expounds this place, He brought forth the wooden statue of Diana, which Manasseh had placed there, (xxi. 7.) and having burnt it and stamped it to powder, scattered the ashes on the graves of the idolaters, in detestation and contempt of their idolatry.

Ver. 7. *And he brake down the houses of the Sodomites, which were by the house of the Lord.*] From this some gather they were come to such a height of wickedness, that there were those among them who exposed their bodies to be abused contrary to nature, in honour of those filthy deities which they worshipped. For these public houses were near the temple of the Lord; and therefore these were persons consecrated to impurity, contrary to Deut. xxiii. 17. (See 1 Kings xiv. 24.) And so the ancient interpreters here understand corporal filthiness: only the Chaldee translates it, *the houses of things consecrated to idols.* R. Solomon Jarchi thinks it probable, that among those who worshipped the statues of the moon, or Venus, there were those who prostituted themselves to filthy mixtures. But Mr. Selden, by *Kedeschim* (which we translate *Sodomites*), understands the priests of Astarte, whom St. Jerome, upon Hosea iv. calls *exsectos*, upon pretence of greater purity, depriving themselves of those parts that serve for procreation of children.

Where the women wove hangings for the grove.] For Asherah, or Astarte, beforementioned; as Selden expounds it in the forenamed place. These hangings, or curtains, encompassed the image, and made a kind of *house* for it, as the Hebrew word imports, which the Greeks called καίσκους and ναΐδια, *little temples* or *habitations*. Into those tents the worshippers went, and there committed all manner of lewdness; for they had not arrived to such a degree of impudence, as not to seek for privacy in their filthiness.

Ver. 8. *And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah.*] Would not suffer them to dwell there, to corrupt the people.

And defiled the high places where priests had burnt incense.] He made them, saith Kimchi, receptacles of impurity, by casting dead carcasses there, and other such-like unclean things; that so he might remove out of the people's hearts all idolatry: for where sweet odours were wont before to be, there was nothing but stench.

From Geba to Beer-sheba.] That is, throughout the whole country; for Geba was in the northern parts, and Beer-sheba in the southern. (See 1 Kings xv. 22. Judg. xx. 1.)

And brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua, the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.] The high places of the gates seem to have been erected there, to offer incense to those tutelar gods, unto whom their idolatrous kings had committed the protection of their city. And Kimchi thinks that the governor of the city had his private household god, and a portable altar whereon he offered to his domestic idol. Which Josiah did not spare: but let the greatest men see his impartial zeal against all idolatry.

Ver. 9. *Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.*] He mixed mercy together with severity. For though he did not suffer those priests, who had offered incense in those high places, (directly contrary to the law, Deut. xii. 11.) to offer sacrifices at God's altar; because they had defiled themselves with that sinful worship, though to the true God; yet he permitted them to partake of the bread of the priests, which comprehends all those parts of any sacrifice that were the priest's portion. He mentions, indeed, only the meat-offering, which was to be of *unleavened bread;* (Lev. ii. 4, 5. 11.) but that is put by a synecdoche for all other offerings belonging to the priests. So that they were put into the con-

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dition of those priests that had any blemish; who might not *offer the bread of their God:* (Lev. xxi. 17—21.) but they *might eat the bread of their God, both of the holy and most holy,* (Lev. xxi. 22. Ezek. xliv. 10.)

Ver. 10. *And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom.*] By throwing all manner of filth into it, as well as by throwing down the altars on which they sacrificed their children, as the Syriac and Arabic seem to understand it.

That no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Moloch.] Though a great number of the Hebrew doctors think that their *passing their children through the fire,* was nothing more than making them pass between two fires, whereby they were consecrated to that idol; yet it is certain, as I have shewn before, (xvi. 3.) that they offered their children sometimes as burnt-sacrifices to idols; which was a thing so horrid, that perhaps they invented this instead of it, to make them pass through two fires: or, perhaps, the opinion of Maimonides may be true, that they did not burn their children to Moloch, as they did to other idols; but the entire worship of Moloch was absolved, by making children only pass through the fire to him; as his words are in his book of Idolatry, cap. 6. sect. 5.; which may be confirmed from Jer. xix. 5. where he saith, *they burnt their sons with fire unto Baal* in Topheth. (See Selden, Syntag. i. de Diis Syris, cap. 6. where he largely treats of this.)

Ver. 11. *And he took away.*] That is, he destroyed, as the Hebrew word signifies, ver. 5. where we translate it, *he put down the chemarim;* that is, destroyed or slew those priests, as Bochartus interprets it. So Lev. xxvi. 6. we translate the same word, *I will rid evil beasts out of the land;* that is, destroy them. The LXX. here translate it κατέκαυσε, *he burnt* the horses; as before, κατέκαυσε χωμήριμ, *he burnt the priests.* Though, perhaps, in both places it should be κατέπαυσε, *he made to cease,* as the Hebrew word literally signifies.

The horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun.] That is, had consecrated to the sun; as Lev. xx. 2. they are said to give their children to Moloch. A great number of authors tell us, that among several nations these animals were sacred to the sun (as hawks and some other creatures were), because of their swiftness in their course. But it is uncertain whether they were kept to be sacrificed to the sun (as they were among the Massagetæ, Persians, Armenians, and other people mentioned by Bochartus), or only to be led forth in pomp (as some of the Jews speak) every morning to meet the rising sun. Or, as others take it, the worshippers of the sun got upon these horses early in the morning, and rode out to adore the sun at its rising. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. xi. cap. 10.)

At the entering in of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain.] Or, the eunuch, who was some great officer in the court.

Which was in the suburbs.] So the Targum interprets the word *Parvarim;* which most translations retain as the name of a place, unto which the street in which these horses were kept reached; from the chamber of Nathan-melech. He was the principal officer, perhaps, that looked after them; and had the oversight of all those stables which were built from the temple gate to Parvarim. And perhaps he rode out himself every morning upon one of them, to salute the rising sun in the king's name.

And burnt the chariots of the sun with fire.] The ancients fancied the sun itself was carried about in a chariot (as Bochart observes in the place abovementioned), and therefore chariots as well as horses were dedicated to it. Which he makes an argument, that they were not mere brazen, silver, or golden statues of horses that are here meant; but real living horses to draw those chariots. (See Vossius, de Orig. et Prog. Idol. lib. xi. cap. 4.) Some of those who think they were only "imagines equorum et quadrigarum," (as Selden speaks, Syntag. ii. de Diis Syris, cap. 8.) *images of horses and chariots,* made of some metal or other, imagine they were represented in the shape of griffins, as the famous M. Spoon thought. (See Dr. Hyde, de Relig. Vet. Pers. p. 117.)

Ver. 12. *And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made.*] They were not satisfied with the public altars they had made, in a vast number of high places: but the roofs of their houses being flat, they made altars there, (see Jer. xix. 13. xxxii. 29. Zephan. i. 5.) and particularly upon the king's palace, where they worshipped the sun, moon, and stars. But this could not privilege them from destruction, that they were on the top of the king's house.

And the altars that Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.] It is said in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13. that when Manasseh repented, he *took away all the altars he had made in the mountain of the house of the Lord:* and I suppose those in the courts of the priests and of the people were then removed. But Amon set them up again in the very place where Manasseh had erected them; and so they are here called his altars.

Ver. 13. *And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of Corruption.*] That is, Mount Olivet, (1 Kings xi. 2.) which was anciently called *Harmischah,* the *mount of Unction;* because of the olives that grew there in great plenty; but, by way of contempt and scorn, was called by the prophets *Harmaschith,* the *mount of Corruption,* because of the idols that were placed there, whereby the people were corrupted in their religion.

Which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon.] It is not to be doubted but these detestable idols had been taken away by such religious kings as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah; but they were restored again by their impious successors, in the very same place, and the same figure with those ancient ones; and so are here called those that Solomon made, because he was the first author of them, or at least permitted them to be made by his wives, and connived at their worship, as R. Levi thinks.

Did the king defile.] By dead men's bones, and other unclean things, which he threw into those places.

Ver. 14. *And he brake down the images, and cut down the groves.*] Wherein the images were.

And filled their places with the bones of men.] Which he

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caused to be digged out of their graves, and burnt; being the bones of idolatrous priests, (ver. 16.)

Ver. 15. *Moreover, the altar that was at Beth-el.*] For this city and the territories thereof had been under the power of Judah, ever since the reign of Ahijah, (2 Chron. xiii. 19, 20.)

And the high places which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place, he brake down, and burnt the high place, and stamped it small as powder, and burnt the grove.] That is, he burnt the golden calf, as Mr. Selden thinks; for Asherah commonly signifies some image, as he shews in his discourse about Astarte, whose image it is likely this was; for the golden calf, as the Jews think, was carried away before this. But that is not certain: and Selden's opinion is probable, that the golden calves were made of wood gilded over, and thence called golden, which were easily burnt. (Syntag. i. de Diis Syris, cap. 4.)

Ver. 16. *And as Josiah turned himself.*] Looking round about him; being resolved to trust no man's eyes but his own, in discovering the monuments of idolatry.

He spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount.] It is not said whose sepulchres they were; but it is probable of the idolatrous priests (for in the Chronicles he is said to have burnt their bones), and of the prophets and great men, who had been instruments to promote Jeroboam's idolatry.

And sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt them upon the altar, and polluted it.] For nothing was more unclean than that which had touched dead men's bones.

According to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.] Who foretold three hundred and sixty years ago these very things should be done by a king called Josiah, (1 Kings xiii. 2.)

Ver. 17. *Then he said, What title is that that I see?*] There was one stone, or pillar, I suppose, more eminent than the rest, with the name of the persons buried under it; and therefore called a *title*, because there was an inscription engraven upon it, according to the custom among the Jews (as now among us), to preserve thereby the memory of those they loved.

And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el.] The king was the more curious (as Rasi, and Kimchi also, tell the story out of the Midrasch) to know whose grave that was; because on one side of it he saw nettles and thistles grow, and on the other side myrtles and other odoriferous plants; signifying that there lay a true prophet and a false. For which there is no ground, but their fabulous fancy.

Ver. 18. *And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones.*] It is pertinently observed by Joh. Wolfius, that if pious persons in those days had had the same opinion about relics which now is in the church of Rome, the king would not merely have ordered his bones to lie quiet and undisturbed, but put them into golden boxes, and carried them to Jerusalem, to be there religiously worshipped by the people.

And they let his bones alone, and the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.] That is, out of the country of Samaria.

Ver. 19. *And all the houses also of the high places.*] What these houses were, whether places for worship, or for the habitation of the priests of the high places (mentioned in the next verse), is uncertain. It is most likely the former; because they provoked God to anger.

That were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger.] In such cities of Samaria as were in the possession of the king of Judah; for upon the fall of the Assyrian empire, many of the cities, no doubt, became subject to their old masters.

Josiah took away, and did unto them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el.] That is, he brake them down, and burnt them, and stamped them to powder. (ver. 15.)

Ver. 20. *And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars.*] There were some priests of the high places (of whom we read before, ver. 8, 9.) that he did not kill; for they were such as sacrificed only unto God in the high places. But those whom he slew, were either the priests of Jeroboam who worshipped the calves, and had no right to the priesthood, (but had invaded it by the favour of their king), or such priests of the order of Aaron as sacrificed to Baal, or other false gods.

And burnt men's bones upon them.] Which was the highest pollution of those altars, (ver. 13, 14.)

And returned to Jerusalem.] Having made a progress through all the country, to abolish idolatrous worship where it was practised; he returned to Jerusalem, there to restore the solemnities of true religion.

Ver. 21. *And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the Passover unto the Lord your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant.*] Which he had bound them and himself to observe, (ver. 3.) and now tried them whether they would *stand to the covenant*, as they promised, by making a proclamation through the whole kingdom that they should keep this feast, which was a commemoration of the greatest benefit God ever bestowed on them, before the giving them the law, for it made them a free nation.

Ver. 22. *Surely there was not held such a Passover, from the days of the judges, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, and of the kings of Judah.*] Since the time of the prophet Samuel, the last of their judges, there had never been such a great concourse of people at any Passover, nor such a multitude of sacrifices offered; nor such an exact observation of the rites and ceremonies belonging to this feast. For in the time of Hezekiah many were absent; and many had not purified themselves as they ought: but now, as Ralbag expounds it, they were all turned to the Lord; and there were no idolaters nor apostates among them. (See Selden, lib. i. de Syned. cap. 12. p. 478.)

Ver. 23. *But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this Passover was held unto the Lord in Jerusalem.*] In the same year that he took care to have the temple repaired, (xxii. 3.) and to purge it from all idols, (xxiii. 4.) he restored the true worship of God to such purity, as it had not been in for some ages.

Ver. 24. *Moreover, the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards.*] Of which see what I have noted upon Lev. xix. 31. xx. 6.

And the images.] In the Hebrew the *teraphim*, which were very ancient among idolaters, as I have observed upon the book of Genesis, xxxi. 19.

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And the idols.] Of which there were many sorts, that are all comprehended in this word.

And all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah, and in Jerusalem.] What these abominations were is not certain, but it is likely they were such as Ezekiel saw and describes in aftertimes; when God shewed him what odious things they committed secretly. (See Ezek. viii. 6. 9, 10. 13. 15, &c.)

Did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law, which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord.] He had his spies, it is probable, to discover all secret idolatry, as well as public, which, being found out, he abolished, as abominable unto God.

Ver. 25. *And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.*] He doth not compare him with David and Hezekiah (as Procopius Gazæus here notes), but with other pious kings, such as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Jotham; who were far inferior to him in piety. And Hezekiah himself was not so exact, and did not make such a thorough search as he did, after all idolatrous practices. The nation also was so much corrupted since his days, by his son Manasseh, who reigned a long time, that it made the work of reformation more difficult in the timo of Josiah. Yet in some regard Hezekiah excelled him; and therefore the same character is given of him xviii. 5. which is here given of Josiah; because of his trust in God, in the time of his greatest distress, for which he was very eminent. But as to repentance, Josiah was most exemplary.

Ver. 26. *Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.*] Though Josiah was most sincere in what he did, and omitted nothing to restore the purity of God's worship among them; yet he could not procure the preservation of the nation from destruction, but only a forbearance of it for a time. For the people were so corrupted by Manasseh, that they rather complied with Josiah in his reformation, than heartily desired it, out of an inward affection to it. The innocent blood also shed by Manasseh was unpardonable, (xxiv. 3, 4.) Of which the people it is likely approved, and so fell under an irreversible sentence of destruction. (See Ezek. xxiv. 6.)

Ver. 27. *And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem, which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.*] He peremptorily decreed that they should be carried away captive, as the ten tribes had been; and that his Divine presence among them should not save them; but he would abandon his own dwelling-place, and, removing from them, leave them a prey to their enemies: which we find livelily represented in Ezek. x. 18, 19. where the prophet saw the glory of the Lord departing from his house, and carried away by the cherubims.

This may seem strange, as Abarbinel observes, that God should thus visit the sins of Manasseh, of which he had repented; and not be reconciled after Josiah had abolished all monuments of idolatry, and the Israelites had kept such a Passover, as is beforementioned: unto which he answers, that though it be said Manasseh repented, yet it is not said he turned to God with all his heart, and with all his soul, as Josiah did. For Manasseh repented only when he was in great distress; and though he repented, the people did not; but fell to their idolatrous practices as soon as he was dead, following his wicked son Amon. Nay, he thinks in the days of Josiah they were little better, as he gathers from the eleventh and twelfth of Jeremiah. To which may be added what we read in the prophet Zephaniah, who lived in the days of Josiah, and threatened in the name of God, "I will utterly consume all things from off the land, and consume both man and beast," (Zeph. i. 2, 3.) For they were still private idolaters, though they complied with the public reformation; swearing by the Lord, and by Malcom; and when the high places were taken away, worshipping the host of heaven upon the house-tops, (ver. 5.)

Ver. 28. *Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

Ver. 29. *In his days Pharaoh-Nechoh king of Egypt.*] Whom Herodotus, in his second book, calls Νεκὼς, and mentions the fight which he had with the Syrians, ἐν Μαγδόλῳ. (See Usher's Annals, ad A. M. 3394.)

Went up against the king of Assyria.] Who was then king of Babylon; for he had subdued the Assyrians, and brought them under his empire. There are those, indeed, who think this happened before that time, and that this king of Egypt went to revenge the injuries done them by Sennacherib; and he hoped for the better success, because he was much weakened by that slaughter the angel had made of his army; and because the Medes and Babylonians had rebelled against the Assyrians. But why Josiah should go to help the Assyrians no account can be given. Our forementioned primate hath better expounded it, that as the king of Persia, having subdued Babylon and Assyria, is called the king of Assyria; (Ezra vi. 22.) so here the king of Babylon, having subdued Assyria, is called king of Assyria. Besides that, Babylon was anciently accounted a part of Assyria; and the land of the Chaldeans is said to be founded by the Assyrians, (Isa. xxiii. 13.) And thus Josephus expressly saith, (lib. x. Antiq. cap. 6.) Μήδους πολεμῶν καὶ τοὺς Βαβυλωνίους, οἱ τὴν Ἀσσύριον κατέλυσαν ἀρχήν. *The king of Egypt came to fight the Medes and Babylonians, who had overturned the Assyrian empire.*

To the river Euphrates.] To besiege Carchemish, which lap upon that river, as we read 2 Chron. xxxv. 20. which city was possessed by the Assyrians in the time of Sennacherib; (Isa. x. 9.) but their empire being overthrown, it returned under the power of the Babylonians.

And king Josiah went against him.] Being afraid he intended to invade his country in his passage; or to divert him from his expedition against the Babylonians, with whom he was in league. It is likely the latter was the reason; for the king of Egypt assured him he had no quarrel with him, and yet he would fight him, (2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22.)

And he slew him in Megiddo.] Gave him a mortal wound; of which he died, not till he came to Jerusalem, (2 Chron. xxxv. 24.)

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When he had seen him.] At the first brunt, as soon as they had joined battle. (See xiv. 8.)

Ver. 30. *And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo.*] Mortally wounded (as I said before), which befel him, the Jews think, because he did not ask counsel of the Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah.

And brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre.] With such lamentations, as we no where read were made for any other king, (2 Chron. xxxv. 25.) which continued so long that it became a proverb, (Zech. xii. 11.)

And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.] He is called Shallum, Jer. xxii. 11. and was younger than Jehoiakim, as appears by this, that he was but twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and reigned but three months: after which Jehoiakim being made king, was twenty-five years old, (ver. 31. 36.) But the people preferred Jehoahaz before him, because perhaps he was the more warlike person. And they *anointed* him, as Abarbinel thinks, because, perhaps, he was not the first-born, and his title questionable. For they anointed persons only when there was a controversy about the succession. Ralbag, also, is of opinion, that the people by force made him a king against his will; which he will have to be the import of that phrase, *they took Jehoahaz*, &c.

Ver. 31. *Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.*] His father Josiah had four sons, and this was the youngest of them, as appears from 2 Chron. iii. 15. where he is called Shallum, as he is by the prophet Jeremiah. Which name our great primate thinks seemed to the people to be of an ill omen (for Shallum king of Israel reigned but one month), which made them change it into Jehoahaz; which proved not much more fortunate to him, for he reigned but three months, ad A. M. 3371.

Ver. 32. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.*] After the example of Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, and such-like wicked kings; his mother, perhaps, having infused ill principles into him.

Ver. 33. *And Pharaoh-Nechoh put him in bands at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem.*] When he returned from his expedition against the Babylonians, he deposed this prince, as an usurper; or hearing that he intended to be revenged of him for his father's death; or that he was of a turbulent spirit, and so put it out of his power to give him any disturbance.

And put the land to a tribute of a hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.] In token of their subjection to him.

Ver. 34. *And Pharaoh-Nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father.*] For the eldest son Johanan, in all likelihood, was dead.

And turned his name to Jehoiakim.] As the manner of conquerors was, to change the names of those whom they had subdued, in token of their absolute power over them. (See Dan. i. 7.) And the forenamed primate thinks he gave him this name, that he might testify he ascribed his victory over the Babylonians to Jehovah, the God of Israel; who, he said, excited him to that expedition, (2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22.)

And he took Jehoahaz away, and he came to Egypt, and died there.] According to the prophecy of Jeremiah, whom God sent to call this new king and the people to repentance, (xxii. 1—3.) "Weep ye not for the dead (*i. e.* for Josiah), neither bemoan him, but weep sorely for him that goeth away (that is, for Shallum), for he shall return no more, nor see his native country, &c. but he shall die in the place whither they shall lead him captive," &c. (Jer. xxii. 10—12.)

Ver. 35. *And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money, according to the commandment of Pharaoh.*] For the treasures of the Lord's house, and of the king's, it seems were empty.

He exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it to Pharaoh-Nechoh.] Proportionable to every man's estate.

Ver. 36. *Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.*] In the very beginning of his reign Jeremiah was sent to him with a message from God, to bring him to repentance, Jer. xxvi. 1—3. xxvii. where he seems (ver. 12.) to have told his brother Zedekiah that he should be king, if Jehoiakim was disobedient; and exhorts him not to be so.

Ver. 37. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.*] See ver. 32. For he killed the prophet Urijah, and was at the charge to fetch him out of Egypt, whither he fled to save his life, (Jer. xxvi. 20, 21, &c.) And if it had not been for Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, who had been a great man in his father Josiah's court, he had served Jeremiah in the same manner, ver. 24.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *IN his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up.*] He is called by heathen writers, Nabo-col-assar: and, as primate Usher thinks, Nebopolassar was his father. He begun his reign in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, as Jeremiah tells us; (xxv. 1.) when, having smote the army of Pharaoh-Nechoh, at Carchemish, near Euphrates, (Jer. xlvi. 2.) he came up to make the Jews tributaries to him, as they had been to Pharaoh.

And Jehoiakim became his servant three years; and he turned and rebelled against him.] He omits his being bound in chains, and carried to Babylon, which was in the fifth year of king Nebuchadnezzar, and the eighth of Jehoiakim, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. where, having been kept awhile, and promising fidelity to Nebuchadnezzar, he restored him to his kingdom, in which he served him three years; and then in his ninth year rebelled against him, by the instigation, it is probable, of Pharaoh, who began to gather strength again. But this proved fatal to him, for Pharaoh was not able to help him, (ver. 7.)

Ver. 2. *And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it.*] These were all subject to Nebuchadnezzar, whom he sent to chastise Jehoiakim, before he came himself, and besieged Jerusalem, and carried away part of the vessels of the house of the Lord, &c. For this

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was the third year mentioned by Daniel, after he was restored to his kingdom, (Dan. i. 1, 2.) when he, Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah, were carried captive to Babylon, (ver. 6.)

According to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets.] By the prophet Isaiah, xx. 17, 18. of this book, and by Huldah, xxii. 16. and Jeremiah, in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters.

Ver. 3. *Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did.*] By God's special order those people came up against Judah (therefore, in the verse before he is said to *send them*), because they were incurable. For Manasseh had so corrupted the whole body of the people, that Josiah's reformation could not recover them; but immediately upon his death, his son relapsed to the old idolatry.

Ver. 4. *And also for the innocent blood that he shed (for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood), which the Lord would not pardon.*] See xxi. 16. Upon the repentance of Manasseh, and the reformation made by Josiah, God deferred their punishment; but he resolved not to grant them an absolute pardon of their iniquity; which provoked him to decree their extirpation.

Ver. 5. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

Ver. 6. *So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers.*] It appears by this, that to sleep with one's fathers, signifies no more than to die, as they did. For Jehoiakim was not buried with them, nor died in his bed; but being taken by the Chaldeans, he died as they led him out of Jerusalem, and, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, (xxii. 18, 19.) they cast him out of the gates, and he had the burial of an ass; that is, lay upon the ground unburied. Abarbinel thinks he died in the way to Babylon; and his body was left in the highway, without any care taken to inter it; but it lay exposed to the sun by day, and to the frost by night. (Jer. xxxvi. 30.)

And Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.] Who is called also Jechoniah, 1 Chron. iii. 16. and more briefly Choniah (by way of contempt, as some think), Jer. xxii. 24.

Ver. 7. *And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken, from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt.*] After the fight at Carchemish, (which I mentioned ver. 1.) Nebuchadnezzar conquered all the places that the king of Egypt held, between that and the river of Egypt; concerning which, see my notes on Gen. xv. 18. So that he durst not stir out of the limits of his own country, which was bounded by that river, till the reign of Zedekiah, when the king of Egypt adventured to come up to help him, but in vain; for he was forced to return to his own land, (Jer. xxxvii. 7, 8.)

Ver. 8. *Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign.*] That is, when he began to reign alone after his father's death: but his father when he was but eight years old made him his associate in the kingdom, (2 Chron. xxxvi. 9.) that he might continue the kingdom in his family, and there might be no contention among his sons about it. Thus this account and that in the Chronicles are easily reconciled. When his father had reigned one year, he took him to reign with him; and so he came to reign ten years with his father, and three months alone. Now here Ezra mentions only the time he reigned alone, but there he speaks of all the years he reigned with his father and alone. Abarbinel gives another account of this difficulty, with which I shall not trouble the reader; it seeming to me a little more forced than this solution of it. And the plainest way is to acknowledge an error in the transcriber of the book of Chronicles.

And he reigned in Jerusalem three months, &c.] *And ten days,* as it is explained 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9. but such small numbers are wont to be omitted in greater sums. (See 1 Kings xvi. 18.)

Ver. 9. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done.*] A wonderful thing, that he should not be moved to do better, by the sad example of his father, and his predecessor.

Ver. 10. *At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.*] It is likely that Nebuchadnezzar heard he was entered into a confederacy with the king of Egypt, as his successor did; and therefore sent an army against him in the very beginning of his reign, to lay siege to Jerusalem, against which he intended to come himself. Some of the Jews say, that the counsellors of Nebuchadnezzar represented to him how unadvisedly he had acted in making him king, whose father had been in rebellion against him; using this proverb, "From an ill dog never comes a good whelp." Whereupon he resolved to depose him, and make Zedekiah king.

Ver. 11. *And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.*] He first sent an army under his great commanders, and then came in person, and found they had obeyed his orders, and invested the city.

Ver. 12. *And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers.*] He made a surrender of the city into the hands of the king of Babylon; by the counsel of Jeremiah, perhaps, who advised the same to his successor more than once. (Jer. xxi. 9. xxvii. 17. xxxviii. 2.) And happy was it for him that he obeyed, and gave up himself to the king of Babylon; for God declared by the figure of good and bad figs, that he had sent them into the land of the Chaldeans for their good; whereas they that remained in the land should be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their hurt. (See Jer. xxiv. 5—8, &c.)

And the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.] That is, in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign; for he began to reign in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, who reigned seven more after that, which was the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar.

Ver. 13. *And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and all the treasures of the king's house.*] There being no mention of the carrying away of the ark, either here, or in the book of the Chronicles, or in Jeremiah, among the holy things of the temple, it is probable that it was burnt, together with the temple, in the next reign, when the remaining holy things were carried away, but nothing said of this. For what the Jews say of its being hidden by the prophet Jeremiah in a certain cave

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in Mount Nebo is a mere fable; there being no ark in the second temple, as they confess; which there might have been, if it had been only hidden till the temple was restored.

And cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon the king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord.] That is, all in a manner, but not absolutely all; for some were remaining, or else renewed again (which is not likely), xxvi. 14, 15. And by *cutting in pieces* must be meant no more than their being cut off from the temple; which was deprived of a principal part of its treasure; for these vessels were preserved entire, and not cut in pieces, as appears from Dan. v. 2.

As the Lord had said.] By the prophet Isaiah unto Hezekiah, (xx. 17.) As for the pillars, and the sea, and the bases, and the residue of the vessels that were not now taken away, they were only reserved till the next reign; when Jeremiah prophesied they should be carried away also, (Jer. xxvii. 19—22.)

Ver. 14. *And he carried away all Jerusalem.*] He explains what he means by the following words; which restrain it to the principal persons.

And all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives.] Among whom was Ezekiel; who began his prophecy from this captivity, (Ezek. i. 2, 3.) and calls it *our captivity*, (xl. 1.) Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin, was carried away at this time, (Esther ii. 5—7.) if we believe the Jews.

And all the craftsmen and smiths.] By craftsmen, some understand carpenters; who were artificers, as the smiths were.

None remained, save the poorest people of the land.] Who were so numerous, that Zedekiah was tempted to rebel, and that against his oath of fidelity to the king of Babylon.

Ver. 15. *And he carried Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and the officers, and the mighty men of the land; those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.*] All that belonged to the court, or that were of any quality in the country. (See Jer. xxiv. 1. xxix. 1, 2. Ezek. xvii. 12, 13.)

Ver. 16. *And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand; all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.*] This, and the foregoing verses, Abarbinel explains in this manner:—By the ten thousand mentioned ver. 14. are meant in general the whole number of Judah and Benjamin, that were now carried captive. Then here he comes to shew how this number was made up; (ver. 15, 16.) Jehoiachin, and all his court and great men, were seven thousand, the craftsmen and smiths a thousand. The rest were not mighty men, nor such tradesmen, but ministers and servants of the court, and other considerable men in the country, who made up two thousand more, and completed the ten thousand. Jeremiah computes them to have been but a little above three thousand that were now carried away to Babylon: but he reckons only those that were carried from Jerusalem; whereas here is an account of those that were carried from other cities, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, which were seven thousand. There was another captivity before this, in the last year of king Nebupolazzar, (Dan. i. 1—3.) but then only a few select persons were carried away to wait upon the king of Babylon; and therefore are not mentioned, either by Jeremiah, or by this Divine writer. But a very learned friend of mine, (in his late Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 49.) thinks that the first captivity was the greatest of all; those words, (xxiv. 3.) *This came upon Judah to remove them out of God's sight*, implying (in his opinion) that not only some of the seed-royal, with some others, but the body of the people were led into captivity. And therefore he dates the seventy years' captivity from that time; *viz.* the fourth year of Jehoiakim, in the beginning of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. (See Jer. xxv. 1. 11, 12.)

Ver. 17. *And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.*] Which signifies *the justice of God:* and seems to have been given him, to put him in mind of the just judgment of God, which would fall upon him, if he broke the oath of fidelity which he took to the king of Babylon, (2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. Ezek. xvii. 13, 14. 18.)

Ver. 18. *And Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem,* &c.] In the end of which he was carried captive, (Jer. i. 3.)

Ver. 19. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.*] Not regarding what Jeremiah said unto him, but shut him up in prison, &c. (Jer. xxxiii. 1, 2. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12.) And his servants, and the people of the land, were as bad as himself, (Jer. xxxvii. 1, 2.)

Ver. 20. *For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Judah and Jerusalem, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.*] God was so highly displeased with this wicked people, that he permitted Zedekiah to break his faith with Nebuchadnezzar, and to rebel against him, forgetting for what cause he changed his name. Unto his revolt, it is probable, he was persuaded by the ambassadors which the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon, sent unto him, to solicit him to throw off the yoke of the king of Babylon, (Jer. xxvii. 2—4, &c.) Which was the greater crime, because he had *made him swear by God* he would be true to him, (Chron. xxxvi. 13.) The king of Egypt also, it is likely, promised him help, as I noted before, (ver. 7. and see Ezek. xvii. 15.) And Hananiah a false prophet assured him God would in two years' time break the yoke of the king of Babylon, and bring back all the vessels of the house of God, with Jehoiachin and all the captives. (See Jer. xxviii. 1—4, &c.) Jeremiah, indeed, proved that he had made them trust in a lie, by predicting his death that very year, which accordingly fell out, (ver. 15—17.) But they still persisted in their vain hopes, there being other deceivers, that *prophesied falsely in God's name,* (Jer. xxix. 8, 9.) And they most of all deceived themselves with proud conceits that they were the true seed of Abraham, who had a right to that land, (Ezek. xxxiii. 24.)

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem.*] See Jer. xxxix. 1. lii. 4.

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And pitched against it.] Encamped themselves before it.

And they built forts against it round about.] On which to place their batteries, and keep any relief from coming to them.

Ver. 2. *And the city was besieged to the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.*] There was another siege began before this; *viz.* in the third year of Zedekiah; but during this second siege, the king of Egypt came to help Zedekiah: which made the Chaldeans raise the siege for a time, (Jerem. xxxvii. 12.) And then Jeremiah endeavoured to get out of the city, but was hindered; and bade them not flatter themselves, for the Chaldeans should return and burn the city with fire; as he had told Zedekiah before, (xxxiv. 1, 2, &c.)

Ver. 3. *And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.*] Who had fled thither out of the country to secure themselves and their families. This famine is described as very terrible, in the book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, iv. 10.

Ver. 4. *And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate, between two walls, which is by the king's garden (now the Chaldeans were against the city round about); and the king went the way towards the plain.*] It is a hard matter to understand how they made their escape, since the Chaldeans had begirt the city round about; unless we suppose they kept strong guards only at the gates of the city; but the Chaldeans having made a breach in the wall, they got away privately between the wall and the outworks, in a passage which the Chaldeans did not suspect: and the king ran into the champaigne country, with some of his forces attending him. The Jews think there were subterranean conduits from the royal garden into the plain, through which Zedekiah went out: but this is without any ground.

Ver. 5. *And the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army was scattered from him.*] Every man shifting away, and endeavouring to save himself in such places as he could flee unto.

Ver. 6. *So they took the king, and brought him to the king of Babylon to Riblah.*] Where he lay to attend the success of the siege, and to send them supplies, and intercept any relief that might come to them.

And they gave judgment upon him.] A great council, I suppose, was called; who passed a solemn sentence upon him, in condemning him as a rebellious subject. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, that he should see the king of Babylon, and speak with him, (Jer. xxxii. 4. xxxiv. 3.)

Ver. 7. *And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes.*] See Jer. lii. 11.

And put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.] Thus two famous prophecies were fulfilled, which seemed to contradict one the other (whereby Zedekiah, perhaps, was tempted not to believe them): one of Jeremiah, that he should be carried to Babylon; (xxxii. 5. xxxiv. 3.) and the other of Ezekiel, that he should not see Babylon, (xii. 13.) The event made good both; for he was carried thither blind.

Ver. 8. *And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (which is the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem.*] It is said in Jer. lii. 12. that he came on the tenth day of this month; that is, he came from Riblah upon the seventh, and arrived at Jerusalem on the tenth. Or, if he came to Jerusalem on the seventh, he did not burn the temple till the tenth; but spent the eighth and ninth days, as the Jews say, in eating, drinking, and making merry. Nebuchadnezzar did not come himself to Jerusalem, but he sent this great man to execute his commands; who, the Jews say, became a proselyte.

Ver. 9. *And he burnt the house of the Lord.*] After it had stood four hundred years, as Sir John Marsham computes it. But primate Usher makes account it was burnt four hundred twenty-four years, three months, and eight days, after it began first to be built by Solomon. But neither of these accounts are true, if we believe all the learned Jews, (Kimchi, Ralbag, Abarbinel, &c.) who agree that it stood four hundred and thirty years. Josephus stands amazed at this, that the second temple was burnt by the Romans, in this very month, and the same day of the month, (lib. vi. de Bello Judaico, cap. 27.) And so we read in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 30. that the Levites were in their desks singing the very same song in both destructions, which was this: *He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness: yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off,* (Psal. xciv. 23.)

And the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.] By *col beth gadol,* which signify *every great house,* the Talmudists understand all the synagogues. But Kimchi, Ralbag, and Abarbinel, interpret the words as we do. And so the Targum; yea, Jarchi himself, who is the most tenacious of the Talmudical interpreters, after he had said, *The houses of the synagogues, where the law and prayers were read,* adds these words, *and the palaces of the princes;* not daring (as Vitringa observes) to vouch the former for a literal interpretation, (lib. de Synag. par. ii. cap. 11.)

Ver. 10. *And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.*] That they who were left there might not be able to make any resistance hereafter; and that it might no longer be looked upon as a city, but as an open village.

Ver. 11. *Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude.*] That is, all that escaped the sword and the famine; and all that fled to the king of Babylon, and put themselves under his protection.

Did Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, carry away.] Who were in all eight hundred thirty and two persons; as we read in Jer. lii. 29. where he saith, in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar (that is, in the end of it, and the beginning of his nineteenth year), he carried away this number.

Ver. 12. *But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen.*] What should move the Talmudists by the Hebrew word *ceremim* to understand *gatherers of balsam;* and by *jogebim, fishers for purple,* is hard to understand (though Bochartus hath attempted some account of it); when Jeremiah tells us ex-

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pressly that he gave these poor people vineyards and fields; which shews what they were, (Jer. xxxix. 10.)

Ver. 13. *And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the Lord, and the bases, and the brazen sea that was in the house of the Lord, did the Chaldeans break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.*] They were too cumbersome to be carried away whole, therefore he brake them in pieces, and so transported the brass of which they were made.

Ver. 14. *And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass, wherewith they ministered, took they away.*

Ver. 15. *And the fire-pans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.*] He did not alter these, but carried them away as he found them; that he might give a punctual account of them to his master. And the singular providence of God herein appeared, that these vessels were not embezzled, nor employed to any common use, but put into the house of the king of Babylon's god, *viz.* Belus, where they were preserved to be restored, in God's appointed time, by Cyrus. So we read they were, Ezra i. 7, 8, &c.

Ver. 16. *And the two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the Lord: the brass of all these vessels was without weight.*] So we read they were, when they were first made, (1 Kings vii. 47.)

Ver. 17. *And the height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapiter upon it was brass; and the height of the chapiter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapiter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.*] These two pillars are more fully described in 1 Kings vii. 15, &c. and in Jer. lii. 21, &c.

Ver. 18. *And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest.*] Whom the Jews call the sagan; who was the deputy of the high-priest, in case of sickness, or any incapacity to officiate.

And the three keepers of the door.] Of the vessels of the temple, saith Kimchi; or of the treasury.

Ver. 19. *And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence.*] Who constantly attended the king's person wheresoever he was.

Which were in the city.] Where at first they found but five of them: but afterward seven, (Jer. lii. 26.)

And the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land.] The muster-master-general, as we speak, or some such great officer.

And threescore people of the land that were found in the city.] These were some eminent persons who had concealed themselves in some private place; but, before Nebuzar-adan left Jerusalem, were discovered. And the Jews will have it that they were the men of the great Sanhedrin; whose whole number of seventy-one persons they make a shift to find here; *viz.* the three keepers of the door, and the seven near attendants upon the king, and the scribe; which with these threescore, make seventy-one. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedriis, cap. 16. p. 671.)

Ver. 20. *And Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.*] That he might dispose of them as he thought fit; they being not vulgar persons, like those whom he had ordered to be carried captive, or left in the land.

Ver. 21. *And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah, in the land of Hamath.*] Passed the sentence of death upon them; which was forthwith executed: because he looked upon them, it is likely, as the king's principal counsellors, who advised him to rebel against him. And the judgment of God, Strigelius here observes, was remarkable upon impious priests, whom he suffered not to live, because they had been great instruments in promoting idolatry.

So Judah was carried away out of their land.] Four hundred sixty and eight years after the beginning of the reign of David; three hundred eighty and eight years since the division of the ten tribes from Judah and Benjamin; and a hundred thirty-four years since the destruction of the ten tribes; as our primate of Ireland makes account.

Ver. 22. *And for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left.*] Ver. 12.

Even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.] His father Ahikam was a great friend of Jeremiah's, (Jer. xxvi. 14.) and therefore Gedaliah may be presumed to have been so likewise; and by his advice, it is likely, was one of those that went out to the king of Babylon, (ver. 11.)

Ver. 23. *And when the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor.*] That is, such as fled away with Zedekiah, (ver. 5.) and those that fled perhaps before the siege to the Moabites, and Ammonites, and Edomites, and other neighbouring countries. (See Jer. xl. 7. 11, 12.)

There came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.] He reckons up the principal persons that came in to him, with those under their command. Jeremiah also himself put himself under his protection, (Jer. xl. 5, 6.)

Ver. 24. *And Gedaliah sware unto them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.*] He was so well assured of the king of Babylon's favour to him, that he secured them by an oath, they should be safe under his government; provided they would serve the king of Babylon, which it was their interest to do.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass in the seventh month.*] After he had been governor about two months.

That Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed-royal.] His pride (being of the seed-royal) tempted him to conspire against Gedaliah; though he had no power to maintain any authority in the country; but was forced presently to flee away. Nor was the king of Moab, who instigated him to this villany, (Jer. xl. 14.) able to support him.

Came, and ten men with him.] These ten men were commanders, no doubt, of some forces under them; for so few were not sufficient to make a slaughter of Gedaliah, and all the Jews and Chaldeans that were with him. (See Jer. xli. 1—3.)

And he smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and

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the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.] This story is told more largely in the fortieth and forty-first of Jeremiah; where we read that Gedaliah was admonished of this intended conspiracy against him; but, like other good men, who are commonly void of suspicion, because they have no design to hurt others, he did not believe what was told him.

Ver. 26. *And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldees.*] Contrary to the persuasion of Jeremiah (by whom they pretended they would be advised), who assured them that they should be safe if they would stay in the land of Judah, but should perish if they went into Egypt. (See Jer. xlii. 9, 10, &c.) Thus this populous and fertile country was laid waste and desolate; part of the people being carried captive to Babylon, part of those that were left in the land being slain with Gedaliah, the remainder flying into Egypt. So that it was left to be overrun with briers and thorns, and to be inhabited by wild beasts. Only some of the neighbouring nations seem to have settled themselves in some parts of it. (See Jer. xii. 14. Ezek. xxxvi. 4, 5.)

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven-and-twentieth day of the month.*] It was resolved on the twenty-fifth day of the month, and executed two days after. So this place is easily reconciled with Jer. lii. 35.

In the year he began to reign, did Evil-Merodach lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison.] Raised him from his dejected condition; for in affliction men hang down their heads. By this it appears that Nebuchadnezzar reigned five-and-forty years; for Jechoniah was carried captive in the eighth year of his reign, (xxiv. 12.) and now had been prisoner thirty-seven years, when Nebuchadnezzar was newly dead. Which two sums put together make forty-five. This is the account of the Jews; but, according to the canon of Ptolemy, he reigned but three-and-forty years: and therefore primate Usher makes him to have reigned two years with his father.

Ver. 28. *And he spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon.*] He had the kings of several countries with him in Babylon, whom his father had taken captive, and made prisoners: unto whom he not only left the name and titles of kings, but now gave them some liberty, and bestowed a royal seat upon them. But he preferred Jehoiachin above them all; either because of the great fame of his royal ancestors David and Solomon, from whom he was descended; or, as the Jews say, because he had made a friendship in prison with Evil-Merodach, who was thrown into it by his father Nebuchadnezzar for his maleadministration of the government, during the seven years that he was moped.

Ver. 29. *And changed his prison-garments.*] Bestowed on him royal apparel; that he might be fit to keep him company.

And he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.] Was frequently invited to his own table, as Crœsus was to that of Cyrus. Victorinus Strigelius thinks it not unlikely that he had learned the doctrine of the true God from the prophet Daniel, as Nebuchadnezzar his father had done; who in a public edict professed as much: and upon this account he shewed such great kindness to Jechoniah. For which cause he got the name of Evil-Merodach among impious princes; that is, *Foolish Merodach.*

Ver. 30. *And his allowance was a constant allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.*] The meaning may be, that when he did not eat with the king, he lived upon a pension, that was duly paid him every day for meat, drink, clothing, lodging, and other expenses. Or if the word *continually* (in the foregoing verse) be understood literally, that he always ate with the king: then this allowance was made for his family and attendants; as in the case of Mephibosheth, (2 Sam. ix. 10.) Jeremiah, in the conclusion of his book, gives the same account of the king's extraordinary kindness to him; which continued, he saith, to the day of his death.

THE

FIRST BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES.

IT is the common opinion of the Jews that these books were written by Ezra: which is the more probable, because the book of Ezra begins with the same words (without the least variation) wherewith these books end: which argues one and the same person to have written both; who, to connect his history together, makes use of his own words, as Grotius observes other ancient authors have done. Howsoever, it appears from hence, that these books were written after the captivity, since they mention their restoration by Cyrus: and it is also evident from 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. that they were written after the time of the prophet Jeremiah.

Huetius, in his learned work, Demonstratio Evangelica, thus far agrees with this opinion of the Jews, that he thinks Ezra digested these books; and added to them the first six chapters of the book which bears his name, which afterward he continued: but Nehemiah, he thinks, had some hand in this work: which was gathered not only out of the public journals, but of the writings of the prophets, Shimeah, Iddo, Jehu, Nathan, Abijah, Isaiah, and others; and, it is likely, out of some genealogies (R. Solomon saith, upon the seventh chapter, that after their return he found three), and out of the other books of Holy Scripture before published, as Kimchi adds: and thus Procopius Gazæus,

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"Hæc ex multis prophetarum scriptis collegit;" *he gathered these out of many writings of the prophets.*

That which confirms this opinion, is what we read in the second book, chap. v. 9. where it is said of the ark and its staves, which Solomon brought into his temple, *there they are to this day.* Which words are so far (as Huetius observes) from proving that these books were written before the captivity (after which the ark was no more heard of), that Ezra took this passage, and that in 1 Kings viii. 8. where are almost the same words, out of some other ancient book, and set them down word for word as he found them there. For having wrote the books of the Kings in the time of the captivity, he found at their return more ancient registers, containing larger accounts of several transactions; which he thought good to add to what he had before written, to make the history more complete: which Dr. Alix (in his Reflections upon the Books of the Old Testament, vol. ii. chap. 1.) thinks was done about six-and-twenty years after the writing of the books of the Kings, in the eighteenth year after the captivity was ended.

This seems to be implied in the Hebrew title of these books, which is *Dibre hajamim,* signifying they contain such things as were contained in the *diaries* or *day-books,* wherein the passages of those times were recorded, if any thing memorable happened every day. The word *Jamim* also signifying *years,* these books may be called *Annals:* which the Greeks call Παραλειπόμενα: as much as to say, those things are here supplied which were omitted in other books of Holy Scripture, especially in the books of the Kings, as other things are here amplified and enlarged: others explained and made more clear. For instance, in the conclusion of this first book, he gives an account of the things which David did in his old age: in ordering the courses of the priests, and of the Levites, the singers, and musicians; and in making vast preparations for the building of the temple by his son; none of which had been mentioned in the foregoing books. Thus Xenophon (Strigelius observes) wrote *Paralipomena* of the Peloponnesian war, which had been written before by Thucydides.

He begins these books with a genealogy from the beginning of the world to his own time, which had not been done in any book of Scripture before: but was necessary to be done now, that a distinction between their tribes and families being preserved (which was in danger to be lost by their dispersion in the captivity), it might clearly appear, the Messiah sprung out of that tribe and family, from which he was to descend, according to the ancient prophecies. For, as Procopius Gazæus observes, from these books it is that we learn, among other things, that Nathan, from whom St. Luke derives the genealogy of our Saviour, was the brother of Solomon by David and Bath-sheba.

To conclude this preface, it may be noted, that no book in the world shews the original propagation of mankind, but only the Holy Scriptures. They who were ignorant of them having nothing of true antiquity, devised senseless fables of their descent, they knew not how, nor from whom. The Arcadians fancied that they were before the moon: the people of Thessaly, that they sprung from stones. The Athenians took themselves to be αὐτόχθονες, who sprung up out of the ground; and affirmed, they were more ancient than Japetus; who, in truth, was the father of the Greeks; Javan, from whom came the Iones, being the son of Japheth, as these holy books shew. See upon 2 Chron. xxix. 21. a little additional proof that these books were written by Ezra.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *ADAM, Sheth, Enosh.*] He mentions only their names briefly: but the meaning is, that Adam begat Sheth, and Sheth begat Enosh: and so the rest are to be understood. Adam, indeed, had two sons before he begat Sheth: but one of them was murdered without issue, and the other was accursed; so that all who descended from him perished in the flood: therefore these only that came from Sheth are remembered.

This may seem to be sufficiently recorded, as much of that which follows is, in the book of Genesis: so that there was no need, some may imagine, to repeat it here: but there being a genealogy to be drawn of the several families of the Jews, it was fit to begin it with an account of the honour they had to be the select people of God, whose original and descent was manifest and plain from the very first man, who was the son of God. This was the peculiar glory of the Jewish nation, that they alone were able to derive their pedigree from the first man that God created; of which no other nation could boast, or make a shadow of pretence. Besides, by the recital of this, the Divine writer of this book designed to keep up the belief that the world was not eternal, but had a beginning, as is recorded in the book of Genesis.

Ver. 2. *Kenan.*] We translate it Cainan, Gen. v. 9.

Mahalaleel, Jered.] See Gen. v. 12. 15.

Ver. 3. *Henoch, Methuselah, Lamech.*] See concerning these, Gen. v. 18. 21. 25.

Ver. 4. *Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*] These were the three sons of Noah: among whom Japheth was the eldest, (Gen. x. 21.) and therefore his genealogy is first mentioned. But Shem being the person in whose posterity true religion was preserved, and from whom the promised seed was to come, is first named both here and in Gen. v. 31. x. 1.

Ver. 5. *The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.*] Thus they were reckoned up in the same order, Gen. x. 2. where see concerning them.

Ver. 6. *The sons of Gomer; Ashchenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.*] The same account we have in Gen. x. 3.

Ver. 7. *And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.*] The same we read, Gen. x. 4. And neither there nor here is any mention of the rest of Japheth's posterity, but only of Gomer and Javan. (See Gen. x. 5. in the latter end of my annotations on that verse.)

Ver. 8. *The sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.*] In this place, and in this order, they are mentioned in Gen. x. 6. And the reason, I suppose, why his genealogy is mentioned before Shem's, is, because from Shem the genealogy of Abraham and the Jewish nation was to be derived: which it was thought fit to set down without any interruption.

Ver. 9. *And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raamah, and Sabtecha. And the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.*] See Gen. x. 7. where an account is given of the sons of Cush, and of his two grandsons by one of them.

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Ver. 10. *And Cush begat Nimrod.*] He mentions him alone by himself, because he was the most eminent among all his sons. (See upon Gen. x. 8. where I have given an account of the next words.)

He began to be mighty upon the earth.] That is, was the first that raised a great kingdom.

Ver. 11. *And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim.*] The very same account we have in Gen. x. 13. where I have shewn in what parts of the world their posterity settled.

Ver. 12. *And Pathrusim, and Casluhim.*] See Gen. x. 14.

(Of whom came the Philistines).] Who were a colony from the Casluhim.

And Caphthorim.] See Gen. x. 14.

Ver. 13. *And Canaan begat Zidon his first-born, and Heth.*] See Gen. x. 15.

Ver. 14. *The Jebusite also, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite,*

Ver. 15. *The Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,*

Ver. 16. *And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.*] In this very order they are set down by Moses, in Gen. x. 16—18. (See what I have noted there.)

Ver. 17. *The sons of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.*] Thus they are set down in Gen. x. 22. and Arphaxad is mentioned after Elam and Asshur, just as Aaron is after Moses in Exod. vi. 27. though he was the elder brother. For, as the Jews often note, the Scripture doth not strictly observe the order of time.

And Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Meshech.] These were not the sons of Shem, but his grandsons by Aram his youngest son: as appears from Gen. x. 22. But nothing is more usual in Scripture, than to call grandsons by the name of sons. As Laban is called the son of Nahor, Gen. xxix. 5. being his grandchild by Beth-el. And Mephibosheth is called the son of Saul, 2 Sam. xix. 24. because he was descended from him by his son Jonathan. Meshech had two names; for he is called Mash, Gen. x. 23. and possessed the mountain of Masins in Mesopotamia; as Bochart thinks in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 11. Though Mash may very well be thought not to be another name, but only the contraction of Meshech: who some think was the father of the Cappadocians.

Ver. 18. *And Arphaxad begat Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber.*] He follows Moses exactly; who gives no account of the posterity of the two sons of Shem first mentioned, but only of the third, Arphaxad: that he might the sooner come to him from whom the Israelites descended. Here the LXX. interpose Cainan between Arphaxad and Shelah: but it is not in the Greek Muscovite translation; as is observed by primate Usher, in his Letters, ccxcvi. (And see Bochart, in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 13.)

Ver. 19. *And unto Eber were born two sons.*] Gen. x. 25.

The name of one was Peleg (because in his days the earth was divided).] That is, the inhabitants of the earth were divided, and dispersed; according to the division of their languages. (See my annotations there.)

And his brother's name was Joktan.] Who had a more numerous issue than any hitherto mentioned.

Ver. 20. *And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah.*] See concerning these, Gen. x. 26.

Ver. 21. *Hadoram also, and Uzal, and Diklah.*] See Gen. x. 27.

Ver. 22. *And Ebal, and Abimael, and Sheba.*] See Gen. x. 28. where the first of these is called Obal: from whence some have argued, that the name in this place is corrupted. As if, in process of time, there might not be a variation in the vowel: Moses pronouncing the name as they spake it in his time, and this author as they spake in his.

Ver. 23. *And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan.*] Who were thirteen in all: and all but one settled their habitation in Arabia. (See Gen. x. 29.)

Ver. 24. *Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah.*] These are repeated from ver. 17, 18. to shew how Abraham was descended from Shem: who was the most eminent of all Noah's sons; whom he solemnly blessed: the Messiah being to spring from him, (Gen. ix. 36.) For from Adam the promise of the Messiah was translated to Seth; and from Seth to Shem; from Shem to Eber; from whom the Hebrew nation, some think, derived their name; and had this precious promise committed to their trust, above all other nations in the world.

Ver. 25. *Eber, Peleg, Reu,*

Ver. 26. *Serug, Nahor, and Terah.*] This genealogy from Eber, is recorded by Moses in Gen. xi. 16—18, &c.

Ver. 27. *Abram, the same is Abraham.*] God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, when he established his covenant with him, (Gen. xvii. 5, &c.) and made him the father of many nations.

Ver. 28. *The sons of Abraham; Isaac, and Ishmael.*] Isaac is first mentioned, being the son of a free-woman, and the heir of the promise: though Ishmael was elder than he, but born of a bond-woman.

Ver. 29. *These are their generations: The first-born of Ishmael, Nebaioth.*] To shew how God made Abraham the father of many nations, he reckons up twelve great persons descended from his son Ishmael; the first of which was Nebaioth: concerning whom, and the rest that follow, see Gen. xxv. 13, 14, &c.

Then Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam.] I shall only observe here, that as from Nebaioth came the people called Nabatæi; so from Kedar came the Cedreni, whom geographers call Cedrei, and Cedranitæ, as Bochart observes.

Ver. 30. *Mishma, and Duma, Massa, Hadad, and Tema,*

Ver. 31. *Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael.*] In what country they dwelt, see Gen. xxv. 18.

Ver. 32. *Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine.*] After the death of Sarah, Abraham married Keturah: and having many children by her, this holy writer names them, to shew how faithfully God made good the name he gave him, by making Abraham the father of many more nations.

She bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.] See Gen. xxv. 2.

The sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan.] There were four Shebas, as I there observed; and one more of the name of Dedan: and this man's sons are there mentioned, though here omitted.

Ver. 33. *And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Henoch, and Abida, and Eldaah.*] See Gen. xxv. 4. The first of these, as Bochart thinks, was the same with the Greek Hippos, a mountain and a village of which name Ptolemy describes on the same shore, a little below Madian, which he calls Modiana, in his Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 3.

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All these are the sons of Keturah.] Her sons or grandsons.

Ver. 34. *And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac; Esau, and Israel.*

Ver. 35. *The sons of Esau; Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.*] These were by several wives, as we read Gen. xxxvi. 10. 14.

Ver. 36. *The sons of Eliphaz; Teman, and Omar, Zephi, and Gatam, Kenaz, and Timnah, and Amalek.*] It is plain from Gen. xxxvi. 12. that Timnah was not one of his sons, but his concubine; by whom he begat Amalek. This therefore is a short form of speech, as much as if he had said, *Of Timnah Amalek.* Who was not equal to the rest of his sons, and therefore he mentions his mother's name. Kimchi hath expressed this so well, that it may be for the reader's use to transcribe some of his words: which may serve for a rule in such-like cases. "In my judgment (saith he) the Scripture uses here a concise and compendious way of speaking: for there was no need that Ezra should recount all these things exactly and accurately, which had been done before in the law (he means in the book of Genesis), therefore he describes these genealogies briefly." Thus he doth in the seventeenth verse of this chapter, mentioning Uz and Hul after Aram: who were not his sons but his grandsons. R. Solomon hath the same observation. (See Buxtorf's Anticritica, par. ii. cap. 2.)

Ver. 37. *The sons of Reuel; Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.*] Who are called *dukes,* as the sons of Eliphaz also are; (see Gen. xxxvi. 15. 17.) that is, rulers, or governors of the country, but not with kingly authority.

Ver. 38. *And the sons of Seir; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezar, and Dishan.*] This Seir was not Esau, nor of his posterity, but the ancient lord of this country, from whom it had its name, (see Gen. xxxvi. 20.) whose genealogy is here set down, that it may be understood from whom Timnah and Amalek sprung.

Ver. 39. *And the sons of Lotan; Hori, and Homam: and Timnah was Lotan's sister.*] This woman was Eliphaz's concubine, and bare him Amalek, (ver. 36.) who, by his mother's side, was Seir's grandson.

Ver. 40. *And of the sons of Shobal; Alian* (or *Abian*), *and Manahath, and Ebal, Shephi, and Onam.*] See Gen. xxxvi. 23.

And the sons of Zibeon; Aiah, and Anah.] The latter of which was a person of great note. (See Gen. xxxvi. 24.)

Ver. 41. *The sons of Anah; Dishon. And the sons of Dishon; Amram, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.*] The first-born of these was otherwise called Hemdan, Gen. xxxvi. 26. which was the name, it is possible, whereby he was known among Esau's posterity: though anciently his name was Amram.

Ver. 42. *The sons of Ezer; Bilhan, and Zavan, and Jakan. The sons of Dishan; Uz, and Aran.*] Among all these persons descended from Seir, seven of them were dukes: who reigned perhaps at the same time in several parts of the country, (Gen. xxxvi. 29, 30.) By which it appears, that this was the ancient form of government before Esau conquered this country: which his posterity at the first followed, but afterward was changed into kingly, as it here follows.

Ver. 43. *Now these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel.*] See this explained in Gen. xxxvi. 31.

Bela the son of Beor.] This Beor was not Balaam's father, for he was a Mesopotamian, not an Edomite; but one of the same name, as Aben Ezra well observes.

And the name of his city was Dinhabah.] Of which he was governor, perhaps, before he was made king: and therefore therein he reigned, and made it the seat of his kingdom.

Ver. 44. *And when Bela was dead, Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, reigned in his stead.*] See concerning this succession, Gen. xxxvi. 33. Bozrah was a city in Edom, as three prophets plainly describe it, (Isa. xxxiv. 6. Jer. xlix. 13. Amos i. 12.) And one of these represents it also as a city of Moab: because, as some think, it was in the confines of both countries: or rather, in the opinion of Bochartus, there were two Bozrahs; the one in Idumea, the other in Moab.

Ver. 45. *And when Jobab was dead, Husham, of the land of the Temanites, reigned in his stead.*] We know nothing of Husham; but he seems not to have been the son of Jobab, but one of another family, in another part of the country. Some take this Jobab to have been Job: which opinion is exploded by Aben Ezra.

Ver. 46. *And when Husham was dead, Hadad the son of Bedad (which smote Midian in the field of Moab) reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith.*] See Gen. xxxvi. 35. where R. Solomon saith, the Midianites making war against the Moabites, this king of Edom came to help the Moabites.

Ver. 47. *And when Hadad was dead, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead.*

Ver. 48. *And when Samlah was dead, Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead.*] See Gen. xxxvi. 37.

Ver. 49. *And when Shaul was dead, Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead.*

Ver. 50. *And when Baal-hanan was dead, Hadad* (or *Hadar*) *reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pai* (or *Pau*); *and his wife's name Mehetabel.*] See Gen. xxxvi. 39.

The daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.] Some of the Jews fancy this Mezahab to have been a very ingenious woman, being the first that found out the art of drawing gold out into wires or threads: for *zahab* signifies *gold* in Hebrew. But the LXX. take this for the name of a man, and translate it υἱοῦ Μαζοώβ.

Ver. 51. *Hadad died also. And the dukes of Edom were; duke Timnah, duke Aliah, duke Jetheth.*

Ver. 52. *Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon.*

Ver. 53. *Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar.*

Ver. 54. *Duke Magdiel, duke Iram. These are the dukes of Edom.*] After the death of Hadad, the form of government was altered again: for there were no more kings for a long time; but they returned to the first constitution, which they found, when they conquered the country; which was governed by dukes. (See Gen. xxxvi. 40.) And thus it was in Israel, after they came into the land of Canaan. They were first governed by judges, who had not kingly power. After which, from the time of Saul, they were governed by kings till their captivity. At their return, they had no more kings, but only such governors as Zerubbabel was. Some have imagined that Esau was the first king of this country: but in all likelihood, if he was, he would have left his son Eliphaz in the same authority; who was but a duke, (Gen. xxxvi. 15, 16.) Therefore Esau contented

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himself with that form of government which he found among the Horites: which continued till Bela made himself king, (ver. 43.) The difference between their kings and dukes was (as Esthius observes), that the former ruled absolutely, according to their pleasure: the power of the other was limited and bounded by certain prescribed laws.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *THESE are the sons of Israel; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun,*

Ver. 2. *Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.*] He reckons up his first four sons in the order wherein they were born, (Gen. xxix. 32, &c.) and next to them their two brethren by the same mother, Leah, (Gen. xxx. 18. 20.) Afterward, I can give no reason why Dan and Naphtali (the two sons of Bilhah) are not mentioned together, and Joseph and Benjamin, the two sons of Rachel, and Gad and Asher, the two sons of Zelpah.

Ver. 3. *The sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah.*] There is a plain reason why the genealogy of Judah is set down in the first place; because this tribe had obtained a superiority and pre-eminence among the rest, before the time of David; ever since the prophecy of Jacob, in the blessing he pronounced upon him, (Gen. xlix. 10.) For Judah, when they came into the wilderness, was ordered to march first; (Numb. ii. 3.) and accordingly we find they did, when they removed from Mount Sinai, (Numb. x. 14.) And when the princes of the tribes offered at the dedication of the altar, the prince of the tribe of Judah offered on the first day, (Numb. vii. 12.) When they came into Canaan, they obtained of Joshua a portion for Caleb without casting of any lot, as there was in the dividing of the land, (Josh. xiv. 6.) And when Joshua was dead, they were appointed by God to go up first against the Canaanites, to take from them what remained unconquered, (Judg. i. 2.) From David's time, every one knows, till the captivity of Babylon, a kingly power continued in this tribe: and Zerubbabel was of the same, who was their leader when they returned to their own land.

Which were born unto him of the daughter of Shua the Canaanitess.] See an account of this in Gen. xxxviii. 2.

And Er, the first-born of Judah, was evil in the sight of the Lord, and he slew him.] See ver. 7. of the same chapter. His second son also, though he be not represented under so bad a character, yet displeased God so much, that he slew him also, (ver. 9, 10.)

Ver. 4. *And Tamar his daughter-in-law bare him Pharez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah were five.*] See there, ver. 29. 50.

Ver. 5. *And the sons of Pharez; Hezron, and Hamul.*] Who were born unto him before they went into Egypt, (Gen. xlvi. 12.)

Ver. 6. *And the sons of Zerah; Zimri, and Ethan, and Heman, and Calcol, and Dara: five of them in all.*] These were born after they came into Egypt; for there is no mention of them in the book of Genesis. And the Jews in Seder Olam Rabba, and in Jalkut, say, these men prophesied when they were in Egypt: for they suppose them to be the same with those mentioned 1 Kings iv. 31. If they were, then Zerah had two names, and was also called Mahol: but there is great reason to think they were not the same, as I have shewn in my annotations there.

Ver. 7. *The sons of Carmi.*] This man was the son of Zimri: who, in Josh. vii. 18. is called Zabdi; for by length of time his name might easily be thus altered. And, indeed, in copying proper names, one might easily mistake.

Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing accursed.] He who is there called Achan, is here elegantly called *Achar;* which signifies *troubler:* because he had brought Israel into great danger, by the sin he committed in the accursed thing. The remembrance of this some thought fit he should carry in his name: which in process of time was changed, by common use and custom, from Achan into Achar. Which is more likely, than that there should be an error here in the transcriber. (See Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 31.)

Ver. 8. *And the sons of Ethan; Azariah.*] Here is but one son mentioned: but it is usual in Scripture to speak of a singular person in the plural number, (Gen. xlvi. 23.) to include all his descendants.

Ver. 9. *The sons of Hezron, that were born unto him; Jerahmeel, and Ram, and Chelubai.*] This Ram is mentioned in the genealogy of our Saviour, (Matt. i. 3, 4.) and called Aram.

Ver. 10. *And Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Nahshon, the prince of the children of Judah.*] When they came out of Egypt, and pitched under their several standards, (Numb. ii. 3.)

Ver. 11. *And Nahshon begat Salma, and Salma begat Boaz,*

Ver. 12. *And Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse.*] These three are the principal persons in all this genealogy, as Pellicanus observes; being put into the genealogy of our Saviour, who was descended from David by these three great ancestors.

Ver. 13. *And Jesse begat his first-born Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimma the third,*

Ver. 14. *Nethaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth,*

Ver. 15. *Ozem the sixth, David the seventh.*] It is manifest from 1 Sam. xvi. 10, 11. that Jesse had eight sons: but some think one of them was only an adopted son, and therefore not here mentioned: and they gather from 2 Sam. xxi. 2. that his name was Jonathan, by a mistake; for that Jonathan was David's nephew by his brother Shamma. The truest account therefore is, that one of Jesse's sons was dead, before David came to the kingdom. So Rasi.

Ver. 16. *Whose sisters were Zeruiah, and Abigail.*] Who were the sisters of David last mentioned.

And the sons of Zeruiah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three.] Who were all eminent commanders under David.

Ver. 17. *And Abigail bare Amasa.*] Another valiant man, who was murdered by Joab.

And the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmeelite.] He was an Ishmeelite by birth, but by religion an Israelite: or, as others will have it, he was born an Israelite, but bred so long among the Ishmeelites, that many called him by that name. (See 2 Sam. xvii. 25.) The father of Abishai, Joab, and Asahel, is no where mentioned; being not eminent, it seems, as this Jether was; but their glory was by their mother's side.

Ver. 18. *And Caleb the son of Hezron begat children.*] It

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is plain this is not Caleb, whom Moses sent to search out the land of Canaan; for he was the son of Jephunneh, of whom he gives an account below, (iv. 15.) This man is called Chelubai, ver. 9. of this chapter.

Of Azubah his wife.] It is an ungrounded fancy of the Talmudists, in Sota, who say she was called Azubah (which signifies *forsaken*) because Caleb married her for the love of God, when nobody would have her.

And of Jerioth.] This is understood by Conradus Pellicanus, as if he had said, that *of his wife Azubah he begat Jerioth:* for there is nothing in the Hebrew that answers to the word *children.*

Her sons are these; Jesher, and Shobab, and Ardon.] That is, these were the sons of Jerioth.

Ver. 19. *And when Azubah was dead, Caleb took unto him Ephrath, which bare him Hur.*] This was a very continent man, who had but one wife at a time; and loved Azubah so well, that he married no other while she lived. His second wife also was of such note, that gave name to a place in the country of Judah,(ver. 24.)

Ver. 20. *And Hur begat Uri, und Uri begat Bezaleel.*

Ver. 21. *And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir.*] After the death of Ephrath, I suppose, he married another woman of an eminent family.

The father of Gilead.] The prince of the country of Gilead; as the word *father* often signifies.

Whom he married when he was sixty years old, and she bare him Segub.

Ver. 22. *And Segub begat Jair.*] Who is called the son of Manasseh in Numb. xxxii. 41. because his grandmother was of that tribe, the daughter of Machir, the son of Manasseh, (Numb. xx. 29.)

Who had three-and-twenty cities in the land of Gilead.] In the right of his wife, as the common opinion of the Jewish doctors is: who observe in Scripture two instances of husbands that inherited the estate of their wives, though in another tribe. The first is in Josh. xxiv. 33. and the other in this place; where Kimchi notes, that this Jair, "the son of Segub, took a wife in the land of Gilead, unto whom he succeeded as her heir in her possessions, when she was dead: these twenty-three cities being her inheritance." (See Selden, de Successionibus ad Leges Hebr. cap. 18.)

Ver. 23. *And he took Geshur, and Aram, with the towns of Jair, from them.*] They were afterward called by his name, who conquered them, and took them from the neighbouring Geshurites and Syrians.

With Kenath and the towns thereof, even threescore cities.] The metropolis of which was Kenath: in the taking of which he employed a great commander, called Nobah, Numb. xxxii. 42. who, I suppose, was of the same tribe and family.

All these belonged to the sons of Machir, the father of Gilead.] His posterity possessed these towns.

Ver. 24. *And after that Hezron was dead in Caleb-Ephratah.*] This city was called after the name of both husband and wife, (ver. 19.) they being both famous persons. And it was also called Beth-lehem, from the fruitfulness of the place.

Then Abiah, Hezron's wife, bare him Ashur.] He married her when he was very old, (for he was threescore when he took his former wife, ver. 21.) and died before the child was born, whom he begat of her. The Jews look upon his marrying when he was so old, as proceeding from a great desire of posterity in the family of Pharez, from whom the Messiah was to descend. The same we see in Boaz, who married Ruth when he was old.

The father of Tekoa.] Who gave name to a famous town in this country, (2 Sam. xiv. 2. Jer. iii. 6.)

Ver. 25. *And the sons of Jerahmeel, the first-born of Hezron, were Ram the first-born, and Bunah, and Oren, and Ozem, and Ahijah.*

Ver. 26. *Jerahmeel had also another wife, whose name was Atarah: she was the mother of Onam.*] There being (according to our translation of the foregoing verse) mention of his former wife, it seems not to be unreasonable to take Ahijah to have been the mother of Ram, and the rest, which he had by Ahijah. So the words may be understood, supposing the particle *mem* to be wanting before Ahijah.

Ver. 27. *And the sons of Ram, the first-born of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, and Jamin, and Eker.*

Ver. 28. *And the sons of Onam were Shammai, and Jada. And the sons of Shammai, Nadab, and Abishur.*] He sets not down the names of the children of Jerahmeel's eldest son, by his first wife; but of both those he had by his second. The rest, perhaps, had no children, as is noted afterward of one of his grandsons, ver. 30.

Ver. 29. *And the name of the wife of Abishur was Abihail, and she bare him Ahban, and Molid.*] This, though the second son, it seems married first; and therefore his children are mentioned before the other.

Ver. 30. *And the sons of Nadab; Seled, and Appaim; but Seled died without children.*

Ver. 31. *And the sons of Appaim; Ishi.*] The plural number is often used when one son or daughter only is spoken of, (as I observed ver. 8.) for in that one all the posterity are comprehended. The next words are another example of this.

And the sons of Ishi; Sheshan. And the children of Sheshan; Ahlai.] It is plain from ver. 34, 35. that this Ahlai was not a son, but a daughter.

Ver. 32. *And the sons of Jada, the brother of Shammai.*] Mentioned in ver. 28.

Jether, and Jonathan: and Jether died without children.] He had neither son nor daughter.

Ver. 33. *And the sons of Jonathan; Peleth, and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel.*] Whose male line he carries no farther; because, perhaps, it failed in these last named.

Ver. 34. *Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters.*] We read of no more than one daughter that he had; but he speaks in the plural number, as before, ver. 31.

And Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha.] Who being a proselyte, it is probable, to the Jewish religion, and a faithful servant to his master, he gave him his freedom, and married his daughter to him.

Ver. 35. *And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife, and she bare him Attai.*] This servant was very dear to him, and perhaps ruler of his house, as Eliezer of Damascus was to Abraham; who, if he had not had a son, he looked upon as his heir to all his estate, (Gen. xv. 23.)

Ver. 36. *And Attai begat Nathan, and Nathan begat Zabad.*

Ver. 37. *And Zabad begat Ephlal, and Ephlal begat Obed.*

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Ver. 38. *And Obed begat Jehu, and Jehu begat Azariah.*

Ver. 39. *And Azariah begat Helez, and Helez begat Eleasah.*

Ver. 40. *And Eleasah begat Sisamai, and Sisamai begat Shallum.*

Ver 41. *And Shallum begat Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begat Elishama.*] We cannot now understand why so long a genealogy should be inserted here of the descendants of Sheshan's daughter by an Egyptian. The Jews imagine it is the genealogy of Ishmael (who slew Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon left the governor of the land after he had taken Jerusalem), who they fancy was *the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama,* last mentioned, (as Jeremiah describes him, chap. xli. 1.) which we might have believed, if this genealogy had so concluded: in which, as there is no mention of Nethaniah, as the son of Elishama (but the genealogy ends with Elishama, and goes no further), so it is not probable, that the descent of so infamous a person, though of the seed-royal, should be deduced thus largely.

Ver. 42. *Now the sons of Caleb.*] Called Chelubai, ver. 9.

The brother of Jerahmeel.] This is added to shew he speaks of the same Caleb there mentioned, and ver. 18.

Were Mesha his first-born.] By a third wife; for his children by Azubah and Ephrath are named before.

The father of Ziph.] The prince of Ziph, as some understand it. There were two places of this name, in the tribe of Judah. (See Josh. xv. 24, 25.)

And the sons of Mareshah, the father of Hebron.] Hebron here is the name of a man, not of a place: for his posterity is immediately mentioned: but Kimchi makes this to be the sense of these and the foregoing words: *The sons of Ziph were Mareshah, the father of Hebron.* Which is very natural.

Ver. 43. *The sons of Hebron; Korah, and Tappuah, and Rekem, and Shema.*

Ver. 44. *And Shema begat Raham, the father of Jorkoam; and Rekem begat Shammai.*

Ver. 45. *And the son of Shammai was Maon: and Maon was the father of Beth-zur.*] Who gave name to a place in the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xv. 58.) Which Josephus saith was in the mountainous part of it, as the word imports. Maon also is a well-known name to a wilderness in this tribe.

Ver. 46. *And Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bare Haran, and Moza, and Gazez.*] Besides his forenamed wives, he married a concubine: which was an inferior sort of wife, as I have shewn upon Gen. xxv. 6.

And Haran begat Gazez.] This is another Gazez; to whom Haran gave the name of his younger brother.

Ver. 47. *And the sons of Jahdai; Regem, and Jotham, and Geshan, and Pelet, and Ephah, and Shaaph.*] We read nothing of Jahdai in the foregoing genealogy: but the Jews take him for one of the sons of Ephah beforenamed; and most probably Moza, next brother to Haran: whose posterity is here set down, as Haran's was before. Moza therefore had two names; which was not unusual among the Jews.

Ver. 48. *And Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bare Sheber, and Tirhanah.*] This Caleb was a great man, and could maintain many wives; which he took, and had a numerous issue by them.

Ver. 49. *She bare also Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah, and the father of Gibea.*] By the word *father* in this verse, in all likelihood, is meant the prince or ruler of these places. For Gibea was a city in the tribe of Judah; and so was Madmannah, (Josh. xv. 31. 57.)

And the daughter of Caleb was Achsa.] Who is mentioned in the books of Joshua and Judges: but it is not said by what wife he had her. She was married to a great man, Othniel, (Josh. xv. 17. Judg. i. 12.)

Ver. 50. *These were the sons of Caleb the son of Hur, the first-born of Ephratah.*] This was another Caleb, descended from the foregoing, by Hur his son by Ephrath, (ver. 19.) who had this son, whom he called Caleb, after the name of his grandfather.

Shobal the father of Kirjath-jearim.] The Targum translates it *the prince of Kirjath-jearim:* which is a place, as Beth-lehem, and Beth-gader were, of which two other persons are presently after said to be the father. But Kimchi takes the word *father* in the proper sense, and thinks Shobal's posterity possessed the city of Kirjath-jearim.

Ver. 51. *Salma the father of Beth-lehem, and Hareph the father of Beth-gader.*] It is not material which way we understand this; either as the Targum or as Kimchi expounds the word *father* in the foregoing verse.

Ver. 52. *Shobal, the father of Kirjath-jearim, had sons; Haroeh, and half of the Manahethites.*] The Hebrew words being *Haroeh, Hatzi, Hammenioth,* the LXX. expound them, as if Shobal had three sons, Araa, and Aisi, and Ammanith. But Kimchi takes the last word for the name of a place; which is evident from ver. 54. where the other half of it is mentioned: and of one half he thinks Haroeh was the lord and governor. But Jacchiades follows the LXX. and leaves Kimchi's explication.

Ver. 53. *And the families of Kirjath-jearim; the Ithrites, and the Puhites, and the Shumathites, and the Mishraites.*] The inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim were divided into several families (as Kimchi interprets it), and these here mentioned were the heads of families, denominated from Ithra or Jether, and Puhah, &c. as from Jimna came the family of the Jimnites, and from Beriah the family of the Berites, in Numb. xxvi. 44.

Of them came the Zareathites, and the Eshtaulites.] The same Kimchi observes, that Zarah and Eshtaol were two cities in the tribe of Judah; which were built by two of Kirjath-jearim of this name. Who inhabited these places, and left two great families, who were from them called Zareathites, and Eshtaulites.

Ver. 54. *And the sons of Salma; Beth-lehem, and the Netophathites, Ataroth, the house of Joab, and half of the Manahethites, and the Zorites.*] This Salma, the son of Caleb the younger, (ver. 51.) had a numerous posterity. For from him descended the inhabitants of Beth-lehem (so we are to understand this word, for Beth-lehem was the name of a place, not of a man), the Netophathites, and those of Ataroth, and Beth-Joab (so these words we translate *the house of Joab* should be rendered; for he is not speaking of Joab's family, but of Caleb's), and half of the Manahethites, and the Zorites, who were a people possessed of a town called Zorah: where the other half dwelt.

Ver. 55. *And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez.*] This place, Kimchi thinks, might possibly be built by Jabez, (an honourable person, mentioned chap. iv. 9.) in

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which some doctors of the law dwelt, who were of the family of Salma; for of these he is still speaking.

The Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.] These Kenites, as R. Solomon thinks, were the inhabitants of a place called Cani, in the tribe of Judah: (Josh. xv. 57.) though it must be acknowledged also, some of the Kenites, the posterity of Jethro, did settle in the same tribe, (Judg. i. 16.) of whom, some think, Ezra here speaks. And then Hemath descended from Jethro, who was the father, that is, the prince, of Beth-Rechab; so the last words may be understood. There were other Kenites, descended from Heber, who dwelt in the tribe of Naphtali, or Manasseh, (Judg. iv. 11.)

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *NOW these were the sons of David.*] Having given a large account of the posterity of Hezron, he returns to David beforementioned, chap. ii. 15.

Which were born unto him in Hebron.] Before he was king of all Israel.

The first-born Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second, Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess.] This second son is called Chileab in 2 Sam. iii. 3. where I have given an account of it. And here it may be noted, once for all, that it was a frequent thing among the Jews for men to have two names; especially when they lived sometimes in one country and sometimes in another. This appears from a famous case mentioned in the Gemara of Codex Gittin, where it is resolved, that if a man have two wives, one in Judea, and another in Galilee, and he gave a bill of divorce to her in Judea, subscribing to it his name whereby he is known in Galilee, the bill is void. And in like manner, if he write his name whereby he goes in Judea, unto a bill of divorce to his wife in Galilee, it is of no effect.

Ver. 2. *The third, Absalom, the son of Maachah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah, the son of Haggith.*

Ver. 3. *The fifth, Shephatiah of Abital; the sixth, Ithream, of Eglah his wife.*] This Eglah is generally thought by the Jews to be Michal daughter of Saul, (see my notes upon 2 Sam. iii. 5.) who, some think, is peculiarly called *his wife*, because she was his only legal wife, according to the Divine institution: all the rest he took by custom then reigning.

Ver. 4. *These six were born to him in Hebron; and there he reigned seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years.*] This hath been explained in 2 Sam. v.

Ver. 5. *And these were born to him in Jerusalem; Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, four, of Bath-shua daughter of Ammiel.*] In 2 Sam. xi. 3. she is called *Bath-sheba* (as she is through the whole Scripture), and her father Eliam. But I observed just now, it was usual among the Jews to have two names: though there is no great difference in this first of these, no more than there is between Shammah and Shimea; the vowels being only changed, not the consonants, of which the names consist. Solomon was the eldest of these four sons; but he is mentioned last, because the discourse was to return to his genealogy, (ver. 10.)

Ver. 6. *Ibhar also, and Elishama, and Eliphelet.*] There is a small difference in the name of the second of these, as he is mentioned 2 Sam. v. 15. where he is called Elishua.

Ver. 7. *And Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia.*

Ver. 8. *And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet.*] Two of these names are mentioned before; who, it is supposed, died in their infancy: and therefore he preserved their memory, by giving their names unto two others, who were born afterward, and lived longer. So Kimchi.

Nine.] Besides the four born of Bath-sheba; (ver. 5.) but there are only *seven* mentioned in 2 Sam. v. 16. those two who died early being there omitted. (See my notes on that place.)

Ver. 9. *These were all the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines.*] Who are not mentioned, either here or in Samuel.

And Tamar their sister.] See 2 Sam. xiii. 1.

Ver. 10. *And Solomon's son was Rehoboam, Abia his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son.*

Ver. 11. *Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son.*

Ver. 12. *Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son.*

Ver. 13. *Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son.*

Ver. 14. *Amon his son, Josiah his son.*

Ver. 15. *And the sons of Josiah were, the first-born Johanan.*] There is nothing needs explaining in the foregoing genealogy down from Solomon to this time: but here is some difficulty: for this Johanan is thought by many to be the same with Jehoahaz, who succeeded Josiah in the throne. But he was not his first-born; being but twenty-three years old when the people made him king, and after three months' time, his brother, being put in his place, is said to be twenty-five years old, (2 Kings xxiii. 31. 36.) Petavius hath said a great deal about this in his annotations upon Epiphanius ad Hæres. Epicur. p. 18. But, after all, I take the truth to be, that Johanan was his eldest son, but died before his father: and therefore is not mentioned in the book of the Kings: as Jehoahaz is not mentioned here, being made king by the people of the land, and presently dethroned.

The second Jehoiakim.] Who was next to him, to whom by right of succession the kingdom belonged: he being the eldest now Johanan was dead. He was called by his father Eliakim: but had this other name imposed on him by the king of Egypt, (2 Kings xxiii. 34.)

The third Zedekiah.] Who was the youngest of all Josiah's sons, as appears by his age, when he was made king after Jehoiakim was carried captive. The same Petavius thinks there were two Zedekiahs: one the son of Josiah, who was their last king; the other the son of Jeconiah (mentioned in the next verse), who never came to be king.

The fourth Shallum.] This was the next son to Jehoiakim, and the same with Jehoahaz, as is plain from Jer. xxii. 11. (See my notes upon 2 Kings xxiii. 30, 31.) He is put last, because he was not at all considerable; being made king by a popular faction; and in three months' time thrust out of his throne by the king of Egypt, who carried him thither, and there he died.

Ver. 16. *And the sons of Jehoiakim; Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son.*] The posterity of Jeconiah is set down in the next verse; and therefore here by the word *son* we must understand his successor in the kingdom. Thus Se-

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neca makes Atreus and Tantalus to be descendants of Inachus; because they succeeded him in the kingdom of Argos. And in like manner Jacobus Capellus here observes, (in his Histor. Sacra et Exotica, ad A. M. 3424.) that "Multi filii dicuntur, qui legaliter tantum erant filii, id est, hæredes;" *many are called sons, who were only sons legally, that is, heirs.* Of which he makes Zedekiah an example, who is here called the son of Jeconiah (who was his uncle, 2 Kings xxiv. 17.) because he succeeded him.

Ver. 17. *And the sons of Jeconiah, Assir; Salathiel his son.*] Some think Assir is not the name of his son, but signifies *captive;* to denote that his son Salathiel was born when he was a captive in Babylon, as St. Matthew notes, (chap. i. 12.) which doth not contradict the prophecy of Jeremiah, who said he should die childless; (Jer. xxii. 30.) for his meaning is no more, but that he should have no child sitting on the throne after him. But Jacobus Capellus, in the place forenamed, makes Salathiel another instance of an heir being called a *son.* For he thinks he succeeded Jeconiah in the dignity to which he was restored by Evil-Merodach; but was the son of Neri, who sprung from Nathan.

Ver. 18. *Malchiram also, and Pedaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.*] These were not all the immediate sons of Jeconiah, but the sons of Salathiel; as may be gathered from hence: that in the next verse Zerubbabel is said to be the son of Pedaiah, and in St. Matthew (chap. i. 12.) to be the son of Salathiel; that is, his grandson. So there is something to be supplied, to make out the sense of this verse, *viz. The sons also of Salathiel were Malchiram, and Pedaiah,* &c. But Grotius (on Matt. i. 23.) thinks, that Zerubbabel here mentioned is not he, who was the leader of God's people when they returned from their captivity in Babylon; with whom Huetius also agrees. But others think, this may better be solved by supposing, that Salathiel dying without children, Pedaiah raised up seed to his brother, as the Scripture speaks, and begat Zerubbabel of Salathiel's wife. Who therefore was the son of Pedaiah, because begotten by him; and yet the son of Salathiel, because begotten of his wife; who had no son by Salathiel, but by Pedaiah; who begat him not to be his heir, but the heir of his brother who was dead.

Ver. 19. *And the sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel, and Shimei: and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister.*] That is, sister to the two sons beforenamed; she having the same father and mother that they had: which the other five mentioned in the next verse, it is supposed, had not; but were by another mother, though they had the same father.

Ver. 20. *And Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed, five.*] Upon this they ground their opinion, who think the Zerubbabel here mentioned is not he that was the governor of the people after the captivity; for his son's name was Rhesa, (Luke iii. 27.) who is not found among the eight children that are here reckoned up.

Ver. 21. *And the sons of Hananiah; Pelatiah, and Jesaiah.*] These are the sons of the second son of Zerubbabel, (ver. 19.)

The sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shecaniah.] These four (and their sons) seem to have been likewise the children of Hananiah.

Ver. 22. *And the sons of Shecaniah; Shemaiah: and the sons of Shemaiah; Hattush, and Igeal, and Bariah, and Neariah, and Shaphat, six.*] Here are but five sons of Shemaiah; and therefore the Hebrew word *Shishah* (which we translate *six*) is rather the name of his last son; who might possibly be so called, because he was his sixth son.

Ver. 23. *And the sons of Neariah; Elioenai, and Hezekiah, and Azrikam, three.*] The rest of Shemaiah's sons had no issue.

Ver. 24. *And the sons of Elioenai were Hodaiah, and Eliashib, and Pelaiah, and Akkub, and Johanan, and Dalaiah, and Anani, seven.*] The Targum here hath a very strange observation: for after the word Anani, he saith, "He is the king Messiah, who is to be revealed." The reason of which is given in the famous book Tanchuma (as Beckius here notes), because it is said in Dan. vii. 13. He saw in a vision, and, behold, one like the Son of Man, *im anani (in the clouds);* which certainly was a vision of the Messiah, as Saadis Gaon acknowledges. And this use is to be made of this passage, that their minds were always full of the thoughts of the Messiah, and that they expected he should be revealed (as they speak) so many generations after Zerubbabel: which is an argument he came long ago. St. Matthew, indeed, counts more generations from Zerubbabel to our Saviour's birth than are here mentioned, and hath quite different names in this succession: which is another argument that this Zerubbabel in the Chronicles is not the same with him in St. Matthew. And, indeed, though some persons in Scripture have two names, yet it is not likely that so many persons as are reckoned in this succession, should all have quite different names. Therefore St. Matthew's genealogy is not here recorded: but he had it out of the public tables, which were kept by the priests of all the great families of Judah: particularly that of David's, out of whose family they expected the Messiah should come, would not fail to keep a punctual account of his successors in every generation.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *THE sons of Judah; Pharez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.*] By the sons of Judah are meant his posterity: for here is only one of his sons mentioned in this place; *viz.* Pharez: whose son Hezron begat Carmi, (the same with Chelubai and Caleb, chap. ii. 9. 18.) whose sons were Hur and Shobab: who is the same, I suppose, with Shobal; of whose posterity he intends here to give an account.

Ver. 2. *And Reaiah the son of Shobal begat Jahath, and Jahath begat Ahumai, and Lahad. These are the families of the Zorathites.*] Zora is not the name of a man, but of a place in the tribe of Judah: where several families of that tribe settled themselves, who were descended from Jahath, Shumai, and Lahad, the sons and grandsons of Shobal, by whom this city was built and inhabited. Thus Kimchi explains this place.

Ver. 3. *And these were of the father of Etam.*] Descended from the lord of a place called Etam: which was in this tribe, (ver. 32.)

Jezreel, and Ishma, and Idbash.] These were the sons of the lord of Etam: whose name is not here recorded.

And the name of their sister was Hazelelponi.] Who, it is

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likely, was a very eminent woman: and therefore her name is remembered; though now we are ignorant of the particular reason there was then for it.

Ver. 4. *And Penuel the father of Gedor.*] In the eighteenth verse of this chapter, Jered is said to be the father, that is, the lord, of Gedor. But there might be then two lords of the same city; as there are now among us several lordships in the same town.

And Ezer the father of Hushah. These are the sons of Hur.] By some other wife than her, by whom he had the children mentioned chap. ii. ver. 20.

The first-born of Ephratah.] See there, ver. 19.

The father of Beth-lehem.] In the second chapter, ver. 52. Salma is said to be the father of Beth-lehem; but that doth not contradict this: for they might both be lords of the same place, especially one being the grandfather, the other the son.

Ver. 5. *And Ashur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah.*] See chap. ii. ver. 24.

Ver. 6. *And Naarah bare him Ahuzam, and Hepher, and Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah.*] His first wife being barren for some time, it moved him to take another; who bare him these sons.

Ver. 7. *And the sons of Helah were Zereth, and Jezoar, and Ethnan.*] Afterward his first wife grew fruitful, and bare him as many sons as the other. For it is probable that Coz (mentioned in the next words) was her son.

Ver. 8. *And Coz begat Anub, and Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum.*] I suppose several families sprung from Aharhel, who was the son of Coz by his wife Harum.

Ver. 9. *And Jabez.*] It is very uncertain who Jabez was: perhaps the founder of one of the families of Aharhel. But the Targum both here and upon chap. ii. 55. saith, he was the same with Othniel. But this is a Jewish fancy, confuted by ver. 13.

Was more honourable than his brethren.] Wiser in the law, as the Targum expounds it: who had respect, it is likely, to his piety and devotion, expressed in the next verse. Others think he was a person of greater courage and valour, for which Othniel was famous.

And his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.] She had a very hard labour, when she was in travail with him.

Ver. 10. *And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast.*] He prayed for the help of God, to drive out the Canaanites, and make room for his family; that they might dwell more commodiously.

And that thy hand might be with me.] As it was with Othniel, to enable him to take Kirjath-sepher, as we read in the first chapter of Judges.

And that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!] Preserve him in health, and prosper him, when he had enlarged his border: that he might not live in such misery, as that wherewith his mother brought him forth. For in the word *grieve*, most think he alludes to the pains of his mother in her travail.

And God granted him that which he requested.] And the rather, because he had hereby greater leisure for the study of the law, and instructing others in piety, as many understand it. For the Jews think this Jabez was an eminent doctor of the law, and left behind him a great many disciples, who are mentioned, they suppose, in the last verse of the second chapter of this book; where we read of *the family of the scribes that dwelt at Jabez.*

Ver. 11. *And Chelub, the brother of Shuah, begat Mehir, which was the father of Eshton.*

Ver. 12. *And Eshton begat Beth-rapha, and Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Ir-nahash. These are the men of Rechah.*] The persons whose posterity possessed the city of Rechah: of which we have no mention elsewhere.

Ver. 13. *The sons of Kenaz.*] It is not said whose son he was: it is likely of Chelub, mentioned ver. 11.

Othniel, and Seraiah: and the sons of Othniel; Hathath.] And likewise Meonothai, mentioned in the next verse: for after his sons follow the sons of Othniel's younger brother.

Ver. 14. *And Meonothai begat Ophrah: and Seraiah begat Joab, the father of the valley of Charashim.*] Or, of those that dwelt in Gecharashim: which was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, mentioned in Nehem. xi. 35.

For they were craftsmen.] The smiths that dwelt and wrought there gave it the name of Charashim: by which word some understand *carpenters.* For in this catalogue several such-like sort of persons are mentioned: such as potters, and weavers, and gardeners, (ver. 21. 23.) For societies cannot consist only of one sort of persons; but must be composed of men of different and various employments. As Strigelius observes out of Aristotle, "A city is not composed of physicians and physicians; but of physicians and ploughmen." So the son of Sirach discourses, that though such kind of men are not fit to be admitted to counsel, "yet they maintain the state of the world," (Ecclus. xxxviii. 34.) When Solomon, indeed, began to reign, there were not many craftsmen in Israel, but afterward they increased: and such honour was paid unto arts, that they took care to preserve the memory of such persons and families as applied themselves that way; as appears by this very verse, and ver. 21. 23. of this chapter. Whence the prophet Isaiah foretells this as a judgment God would send upon them, that he would take away their *artificers*, (chap. iii. 5.) And when Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians, it is said, they carried away all the *craftsmen*, (2 Kings xxiv. 14.)

Ver. 15. *And the sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh; Iru, Elah, and Naam.*] Some take this Jephunneh to be the same with Hezron, whose son Caleb was: and had this son by a different wife from her mentioned chap. ii. 18.

And the sons of Elah, even Kenaz.] Or rather Uknaz was the son of Elah: as some of the Jews understand it.

Ver. 16. *And the sons of Jehaleleel.*] Who was the son of Uknaz last mentioned.

Ziph, and Ziphah, Tiria, and Asareel.

Ver. 17. *And the sons of Ezra.*] Who was the son of Asareel last named.

Were Jether, and Mered, and Epher, and Jalon: and she bare.] That is, Bithiah the wife of Mered (mentioned in the next verse) bare the sons following.

Miriam, and Shammai.] Miriam was the name of a man, as well as of a woman: and there are several such instances in Scripture, as Kimchi observes on this place.

And Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa.] It is uncertain whether Eshtemoa be the name of a person, or of a place whereof he was lord.

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Ver. 18. *And his wife Jehudijah bare Jered.*] Mered had this son by another wife called Jehudijah.

The father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Socho, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah.] The Targum, and Jarchi, with others, by *father*, in all these three instances, understand the lord or ruler of those cities, which were in the tribe of Judah. (See Josh. xv. 34, 35.)

And these are the sons of Bithiah.] Mentioned in the foregoing verse.

The daughter of Pharaoh, which Mered took.] That is, married. But it is not likely he married the daughter of the king of Egypt, unless some natural daughter: but rather of some other person, called by the name of Pharaoh; who might be an Israelite as well as an Egyptian: names being, upon several occasions, given from other countries.

Ver. 19. *And the sons of his wife Hodiah.*] This was his third wife.

The sister of Naham.] It seems to me more reasonable to translate it Achotnaam: who was his son by Hodiah.

The father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maachathite.] These were his grandsons, who are frequently in Scripture called sons.

Ver. 20. *And the sons of Shimon.*] Who is supposed to be another son of Mered by his last wife.

Were Amnon, and Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon.

And the sons of Ishi.] Who is thought to be the son of Tilon last mentioned.

Were Zoheth, and Ben-zoheth.

Ver. 21. *The sons of Shelah the son of Judah were Er.*] Having given an account of those descended from Pharez the eldest son of Judah, and Zerah, whom Judah had by Tamar, (chap. ii. 4, 5.) he now relates the posterity of Shelah, whom he had by his wife Shuah, (Gen. xxxviii. 5.)

The father of Lecah.] This was a city in the tribe of Judah, of which Er was the lord.

And Laadah, the father of Mareshah.] Another city in the same tribe.

And the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen.] From him came all those families that were famous for this sort of workmanship in fine linen: wherewith their kings and priests were clothed, as the Targum notes.

Of the house of Ashbea.] The principal of which, I suppose, were those of this man's posterity.

Ver. 22. *And Jokim.*] This was either a person or a family descended from Shelah.

And the men of Chozeba.] They were another family sprung from the same root: who settled in this place.

And Joash, and Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab.] Conquered several places there, in the time of David: or had the government of them given by him. The Targum takes the Hebrew word *Baalu*, as if it signified that they married wives in the country of Moab.

And Jashubi-lehem.] Or rather, *the inhabitants of Lehem:* a place where some of Shelah's posterity settled.

And these are ancient things.] That is, these things which have been related concerning Joash and Saraph (as Kimchi interprets it), who had dominion in Moab, shew that they were long ago: but now, as it follows, their condition was altered.

Ver. 23. *These were the potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges.*] Or rather, *these now are potters,* &c. being fallen from the glory and splendour wherein they formerly lived, to common and mean employments.

There they dwelt with the king for his work.] This is commonly understood, as if they stayed in Babylon (for there was no king now in Judea) to be vine-dressers, gardeners, and husbandmen, under that monarch: whose service they liked so well, that they chose to continue in it, rather than return to Jerusalem.

Ver. 24. *The sons of Simeon were Nemuel, and Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul.*] This tribe is mentioned next to Judah, because they were neighbours to them: part of their possessions being taken out of the tribe of Judah, (Josh. xix. 1, &c.) But the names of some of Simeon's sons were much altered, by length of time, from what they were when they went down into Egypt, (Gen. xlvi. 10.) And Ohad, there mentioned, is not here remembered: because, it is likely, he had no issue.

Ver. 25. *Shallum his son.*] That is, he was the son of Shaul, last mentioned.

Mibsam his son, Mishma his son.

Ver. 26. *And the sons of Mishma; Hamuel his son, Zacchur his son, Shimei his son.*] It seems Mibsam had no son.

Ver. 27. *And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters.*] The posterity of his eldest sons are not taken notice of: but only, as it follows, that they had not many.

But his brethren had not many children, neither did all their family multiply like to the children of Judah.] Which evidently appears by the number that was taken of them at their first muster, Numb. i. 23. where we find that they were but fifty-nine thousand and three hundred: when the children of Judah were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred, (ver. 26.) And at the next muster there was a far greater inequality, (Numb. xxvi. 14. 22.)

Ver. 28. *And they dwelt at Beer-sheba, and Moladah, and Hazar-Shual.*] These places are mentioned in Josh. xix. 2, 3.

Ver. 29. *And at Bilhah.*] Called Balah, in the place abovenamed.

And at Ezem, and at Tolad.] These are called Azem, and Eltolad, the former part of names being often cut off; as Hermon for Baal-Hermon, (Judg. iii. 3.) Shittim, (Numb. xxv. 1.) for Abel-Shittim, (Numb. xxxiii. 49, &c.)

Ver. 30. *And at Bethuel, and at Hormah, and at Ziklag.*] See Josh. xix. 4, 5.

Ver. 31. *And at Beth-marcaboth, and at Hazar-susim.*] Called there, Josh. xix. 5. Hazar-susah.

And at Beth-birei, and at Shaaraim.] The names are different in Josh. xix. 6.

These were their cities unto the reign of David.] Who, the Jews fancy, took these cities from them, and gave them again to Judah. Which is not likely, nor doth the word *unto* denote that they held them no longer, than till the reign of David: but that when he came to the crown their families dwelt here; though Ziklag had been in the possession of the Philistines, who gave it to David, as his own town.

Ver. 32. *And their villages were Etam, and Ain, Rimmon, and Tochen, and Ashan.*] Here is one place mentioned, more than is in Josh. xix. 7. which they had some way acquired since his days.

Ver. 33. *And all their villages that were round about the same cities, unto Baal.*] Called Baalath-beer, Josh. xix. 8.

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These were their habitations, and their genealogy.] Or, as it is in the margin, *they divided themselves by nations among them; i. e.* among these places.

Ver. 34. *And Meshobab, and Jamlech, and Joshah, the son of Amaziah.*] These, and the rest that follow, seem to have been very eminent persons in this tribe: by whose valour these great things were performed, which are mentioned ver. 38, 39, &c. There is so great a resemblance in the name, that some fancy the name Ἰάμβλιχος among the Greeks came from this name Jamlech.

Ver. 35. *And Joel, and Jehu the son of Josibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel.*

Ver. 36. *And Elioenai, and Jaakobah, and Jeshohaiah, and Asaiah, and Adiel, and Jesimiel, and Benaiah.*

Ver. 37. *And Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah.*

Ver. 38. *These mentioned by their names.*] Whose names are mentioned in the four foregoing verses.

Were princes in their families.] Great persons of chief authority in their several families.

And the house of their fathers increased exceedingly.] By their valour they enlarged their habitations, which were too strait for them.

Ver. 39. *And they went to the entrance of Gedor.*] There was a place of this name belonging unto Judah, (Josh. xv. 58.) and another called Gederah, appertaining to the same tribe, (ver. 36.) out of which perhaps Judah had not driven the old inhabitants: and therefore the Simeonites wanting room, went thither, and by dispossessing them enlarged their border. But see the next verse, which places Gedor elsewhere.

Even unto the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks.] For their sheep and their goats: which are properly meant by *flocks.*

Ver. 40. *And they found fat pasture and good, and the land was wide, and quiet, and peaceable.*] So that they might feed their flocks securely.

For they of Ham had dwelt there of old.] This had inclined Bochart to think, that Gedor was some place in Arabia, where some of the posterity of Ham settled, as he hath demonstrated. And the Arabians being wholly addicted to pasturage, sought out the best ground they could find for the feeding their flocks. Whose country the Simeonites made no scruple to invade; the posterity of Ham being accursed by Noah. (See his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 1.)

Ver. 41. *And these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah.*] Their names are set down before, ver. 34—37. now the time is recorded wherein they performed such memorable exploits, which was in the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah. That is, as some take it, a little before the ten tribes were carried captive: or rather, some time after it, when these Simeonites, who were mixed with Judah, finding themselves very much straitened, made this expedition.

And smote their tents, and the habitations that were found there.] If they smote their tents, then it was sufficiently evident they smote their habitations; for they dwelt in tents. Therefore the word *Meunim*, I have shewn upon Judg. x. 12. (see my notes there), doth not signify *habitations*, but a people in Arabia, who dwelt in tents: which the Simeonites smote, as it here follows, and settled themselves in their place.

And destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their rooms.] There were none remained to attempt the recovery of their country any more: but the Simeonites possessed it when this book was written, after the captivity of Babylon.

Because there was pasture there for their flocks.] Which made them seek for no other settlement.

Ver. 42. *And some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to Mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi.*] Another body of them under these four great commanders, who were brethren, settled themselves in some part of the country of the Edomites: being forced to seek for subsistence abroad; either when the Assyrians invaded their country, or afterward, when it was destroyed, and there was not room enough for them among the Jews; whither many of them fled.

Ver. 43. *And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped.*] Who escaped the hands of Saul, and of David.

And dwelt there unto this day.] The king of Babylon did not disturb them in these new possessions: which were small, and not worth his regard.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *NOW the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel (for he was the first-born; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto Joseph the son of Israel.*] The double portion, which was the right of the first-born, (Deut. xxi. 16, 17.) was given to Joseph: whose two sons had each of them a lot in the land of Canaan; as if they had been the sons of Israel. The Jewish doctors say there were two other prerogatives belonging to the first-born; *viz.* the *principality*, and the *priesthood:* the former of which was given to Judah, the latter to Levi. But I see no ground to think the priesthood was annexed to it: and as for the other, it is taken notice of in the following verse.

And the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.] This is the reason why neither Reuben's nor Joseph's genealogy is first set down: for though the double portion belonged to the first-born, yet he had not therefore the pre-eminence in other things, as it here follows.

Ver. 2. *For Judah prevailed above his brethren.*] That is, the tribe of Judah (not his person), which was the most powerful, and in all things, as I before shewed, preferred to the rest.

And of him came the chief ruler.] This is the principal reason why he prevailed, because the great prince of the people was to arise out of this tribe: first David, and at last the Messiah.

But the birthright was Joseph's).] Or, *though* the birthright was Joseph's; yet, for the reason beforementioned, Judah's genealogy is first set down.

Ver. 3. *The sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel, were Hanoch, and Pallu, and Hezron, and Carmi.*] See Gen. xlvi. 19.

Ver. 4. *The sons of Joel.*] Who, it is likely, was the son of Hanoch the eldest son of Reuben: because it appears from ver. 6. that he here gives an account of the chief per-

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sons of this tribe; and consequently those who were descended from the first-born.

Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son.

Ver. 5. *Micah his son, Reaia his son, Baal his son.*

Ver. 6. *Beerah his son.*] Whom the Targum takes for a prophet, the father of Hosea, who is called Beeri, Hos. i. 1. But that is a mere fancy; for that prophet was of the tribe of Issachar, but this Beerah of the tribe of Reuben.

Whom Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria carried away captive out of their own land.] He is called Tiglath-pileser, 2 Kings xv. 29.

He was prince of the Reubenites.] When the two tribes and half were carried away captive out of their own country beyond Jordan, by the king of Assyria; *viz.* Tiglath beforementioned. The rest were carried away by Shalmaneser.

Ver. 7. *And his brethren by their families (when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned) were the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah.*] The genealogies of those descended from the rest of Reuben's sons were preserved: but he thought fit to mention only the chief of them, who were these two and those that follow.

Ver. 8. *And Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel.*] This was another Joel, different from him mentioned ver. 4.

Who dwelt in Aroer, even unto Nebo, and Baal-meon.] All these were seated on the other side of Jordan. See Numb. xxxii. 37. Josh. xiii. 15, 16, &c. where we read of this city Baal-meon.

Ver. 9. *And eastward he inhabited.*] That is, the posterity of Reuben.

Unto the entering in of the wilderness.] This is the wilderness of Kedemoth, mentioned Deut. ii. 28. upon which the country of Sihon (which Reuben possessed) bordered.

From the river Euphrates.] Their territory did not reach so far as Euphrates: but only to the entrance of that wilderness, which extended itself to that river.

Because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead.] When their stock very much increased, so that they had not pasturage enough for them, they enlarged their border, as far as they were able, eastward towards the river Euphrates.

Ver. 10. *And in the days of Saul they made war.*] With the assistance of other tribes that dwelt on that side Jordan, (ver. 18, 19.)

With the Hagarites.] That is, the Ishmaelites descended from Hagar; who were settled in Arabia Deserta. (See Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 11.)

Who fell by their hands.] Were conquered by them in that war: so that, as it here follows, they possessed their country.

And they dwelt in their tents.] This shews they were Arabians; or near neighbours to them.

Throughout all the east land of Gilead.] They possessed all that country which lay east of Gilead: which chiefly belonged to the Gadites and Manassites, though the Reubenites had some of it, (Deut. iii. 12, 13.) A very learned man of our own is of opinion, that those Hagarites inhabited the country called Petra-Nabatæa. See Dr. Fuller's Miscellanea Sacra, lib. ii. cap. 13. where he observes, that all the rest, who were called Ishmaelites, or Kedar, were afterward comprehended under the name of Saracens.

Ver. 11. *And the children of Gad dwelt over against them, in the land of Bashan, unto Salcah.*] See Josh. xiii. 24, 25, &c. He next mentions the Gadites, because they were neighbours to the Reubenites.

Ver. 12. *Joel the chief, and Shapham the next, and Jaanai, and Shaphat in Bashan.*] He doth not give us the genealogy of this whole tribe, but only the names of the principal persons; among whom these were the most eminent, when their genealogy was examined: which seems to have been in the reign of Josham, (ver. 17.) All these dwelt, I suppose, in the metropolis of the country called Bashan: where the chief city was called by the same name; and afterward called Batanæa.

Ver. 13. *And their brethren, of the house of their fathers, were Michael, and Meshullam, and Sheba, and Jorai, and Jachan, and Zia, and Heber, seven.*] These seven were eminent persons descended from other great men, of the same family with those beforenamed: and therefore are called their *brethren.*

Ver. 14. *These are the children of Abihail the son of Huri.*] That is, the seven beforementioned came from Abihail; whose pedigree here follows.

The son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz.

Ver. 15. *Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house of their fathers.*] Besides the foregoing, there was another great person who was of chief authority in the family of Abdiel and Guni, and their fathers.

Ver. 16. *And they dwelt in Gilead in Bashan.*] In a part of it, the rest being given to the Reubenites and the half tribe of Manasseh. See Josh. xiii. 25. xvii. 1. Deut. iii. 13. where it is said Moses gave all Bashan to the Manassites: but the meaning is, all that was not given to the other two tribes, who had a share therein. (See what I have noted upon Deut. iii. 13.)

And in her towns.] That is, such towns as belonged to that portion of the country which they possessed.

And in all the suburbs of Sharan.] A country where there was excellent pasturage, and which produced the most generous wine. There were two Sharans; one in the east inhabited by the Gadites, (Deut. iii. 12, 13.) another in the west, (Josh. xii. 18.) not far from the famous port called Joppa, (Acts ix. 35.)

Upon their borders.] Unto the utmost bounds (as the Hebrew words signify) of that country.

Ver. 17. *All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.*] This doth not imply that Jotham and Jeroboam reigned in the same time: but that in their several reigns this account was taken. Kimchi thinks that *all these* (*i. e.* the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh) *were reckoned,* that were listed to undertake the war afterward mentioned with the Hagarites: so that it may not concern the genealogy.

Ver. 18. *The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, were four-and-forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war.*] These three tribes, or at least so many of them as made a great army, joined their forces together, consisting of their best soldiers, to invade the country of the Hagarites. This seems to be a distinct war from that in the days of Saul, ver. 10. (See 1 Sam. xiv. 47.)

Ver. 19. *And they made war with the Hagarites, with*

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Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab.] There was mention of the Hagarites before, but now he shews how they were utterly expelled their country, though their neighbours came to their assistance; *viz.* those of Jetur, Nephish, and Nodab: who were all Ishmaelites; the two first being expressly mentioned as the sons of Ishmael, (Gen. xxv. 15.) from whom these people took their name. But, as Dr. Jackson observes, there are no people mentioned in Scripture, who took their name from Nebaioth his eldest son. Which makes it probable, that they who in heathen writers are called Nabathæi, were in Scripture called Ishmaelites, as sole heirs to their first progenitor's name. Their seat was in the best part of Arabia Petræa, near to the Midianites. See book i. on the Creed, chap. 25. sect. 3. where he notes, that the Greek writers call the Hagarites Ἀγραῖοι; which is more consonant to the Hebrew name than the Latin, Hagareni. Their chief city was called Atra, and the inhabitants Atræni, unless they mistook their name, which perhaps was Agreni.

Ver. 20. *And they were helped against them.*] It is likely the Hagarites fought stoutly, but God assisted the Israelites; enduing them with extraordinary courage, and daunted their enemies. For it is not likely any other *help* is here meant but that from God.

And the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them.] That is, those allies beforementioned, who came to their aid.

For they cried unto God in the battle, and he was entreated of them; because they put their trust in him.] I suppose their enemies were too hard for them in the first onset, which made them pray to God most earnestly in the midst of the fight: representing to him the pious confidence they placed in him and his almighty power, and not in their arms and warlike skill: which moved him to give them the success they desired. Here the Targum, instead of these words, They put their trust *in him*, hath these, They put their trust *be Memra, in his Word.*

Ver. 21. *And they took away their cattle.*] In the Hebrew, *led captive;* that is, drove as many of their cattle as they pleased into their own country. This place is, among others, alleged by Grotius, as a proof of the lawfulness of taking the spoil in a just war against an enemy: as God allowed the Israelites to do, when a city fell into their hands, which had refused their offers of peace, (Deut. xx. 14.) But this instance is the more to be minded, because the war here spoken of was not by Divine precept as that against the seven nations of Canaan: but from common right, which men had to defend themselves against injurious persons, or to invade those who had invaded them, and would make them no satisfaction. Such war was approved by God, it appears by this, that he aided them, when they called upon him for help, as we read in the foregoing verse. (See lib. iii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 6. sect. 1.)

Of their camels fifty thousand.] It is no wonder there were so many, for the Arabians abounded in camels, as Diodorus Siculus relates, lib. iii. cap. 12. which they used in war, as well as to carry burdens in the time of peace. (See Pliny, lib. viii. cap. 18. and Vegetius, lib. iii.) For they being creatures very patient of thirst, were the fitter for any service in that hot and dry country. (See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2.)

And of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand.] The prodigious number of sheep that those countries produced, is at large shewed by the same author, lib. ii. cap. 46. and their breed of asses in the same book, cap. 13.

And of men.] In the Hebrew, *souls of men; i. e.* of men, women, and children.

A hundred thousand.] Whom they did not kill (it appears by this relation), but carried them out of their own country, and sold them for slaves (as the manner was in those days), or employed them as such in their own business.

Ver. 22. *For there fell down many slain.*] Besides these taken captive, a great number were slain in the fight, which could not be avoided.

Because the war was of God.] Perhaps they consulted him before they went upon this expedition; and he encouraged them to undertake it, as he powerfully assisted them in it. Here again the Targum saith, The war was *from the Word of Jehovah.*

And they dwelt in their steads.] Possibly all those valiant men who were engaged in this war, settled themselves in the country which they had conquered.

Until the captivity.] In the days of Pekah, 2 Kings xv. 29. when they were rooted out, as the rest of the ten tribes were in the days of Hoshea.

Ver. 23. *And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land.*] In the same country, on the other side of Jordan, with the Reubenites and Gadites: of whom he having spoken, gives a short account of the Manassites.

They increased from Bashan unto Baal-Hermon and Senir, and unto Hermon.] They were first possessed of the kingdom of Og and Bashan; (Josh. xiii. 30.) from whence they extended their territories, when they were increased, unto the northern parts of the country beyond Jordan.

Ver. 24. *And these were the heads of the house of their fathers, even Epher, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty men of valour, famous men, and heads of the house of their fathers.*] He reckons only the most remarkable men of this tribe: who were not only of chief authority in their several families, but by their valiant exploits had gotten great renown.

Ver. 25. *And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them.*] All Israel transgressed as well as they: but it seems they were the greatest transgressors, who began, perhaps, the apostacy from God, and were ring-leaders to idolatry. And, therefore, as it here follows, they were the first that were carried away captive.

Ver. 26. *And the God of Israel.*] The Targum saith, The *Memra*, or *Word, of the God of Israel.* From whence it appears they thought the Divine ΛΟΓΟΣ to be the God of Israel: for they are words of the same import.

Stirred up the spirit of Pul the king of Assyria.] When, perhaps, he intended to bend his forces another way, God inclined him to go against Israel: whom he distressed so much, that they were forced to make him a great present: whereby they moved him not to stay there, but return to his own country, (2 Kings xv. 19, 20.) We do not read that he carried any of the people captive, though perhaps he might, after some spoil in the skirts of the country, as he went home.

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And the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria.] Who came in the next king's reign but one, and carried those tribes away captive, as we read in 2 Kings xv. 29.

And he carried them away (even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh).] He carried these away entirely, together with some of the people of Galilee, particularly all Naphtali, as the forenamed place tells us. And the Jews say, they carried away the golden calf which was in Dan, as they gather from 2 Chron. xxviii. 21.

And brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara.] These are the very places unto which Shalmaneser afterward carried the remainder of the ten tribes, 2 Kings xvii. 6. xviii. 11. where there is only this difference, that there it is said *into the cities of the Medes,* but here *unto Hara,* which is all one; for Media is the very same with Hara, and is by St. Jerome (without an aspiration) called Ara. And the Greeks commonly call it Aria, and the people of it Arii, as we read in Herodotus, Pausanias, and others. And Bochartus thinks, not without reason, that the mountainous part of the country of Media towards the north was properly called by this name of Hara, from the word *har,* which signifies a *mountain.* Here Strabo saith many foreigners inhabited: for it is likely this hilly country was most empty of people.

And to the river Gozan.] That is, to the banks of the river on both sides: for it is as much as *τὴν περιχώραν, to the region about this river,* as our very learned Mr. Nic. Fuller observes, in his Miscellanea, lib. ii. cap. 5. where he takes Gozan to be the ancient name for that river, which the Persians afterward called Cyrus: near to which stood the city Gauzania in Ptolemy, which retained that name from the river Gozan.

Unto this day.] Here they settled, as the same learned man observes; and did not range as far as Tartary, as some have thought. For how should they, being miserable captives, who had no power to go back, or to go forward? especially through strange countries, without any arms, or other accommodations.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *THE sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.*] The first of these is called Gershom, ver. 16. (See Gen. xlvi. 11. Exod. vi. 16.)

Ver. 2. *And the sons of Kohath.*] He begins with the genealogy of the second son, because from him sprung the family of the priests.

Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.] The second of these sons is called Amminadab, ver. 22.

Ver. 3. *And the children of Amram; Aaron, Moses, and Miriam.*] See Exod. vi. 20.

The sons also of Aaron; Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.] The two first perished for their sin, in offering with strange fire, (Lev. x. 1.)

Ver. 4. *Eleazar begat Phinehas, and Phinehas begat Abishua.*

Ver. 5. *And Abishua begat Bukki, and Bukki begat Uzzi.*] According to the manner of the Greeks and Latins, who are wont to deprave oriental names, Josephus calls these three Abiezer, Boccias, and Ozi: (lib. v. Archæol. cap. 41.) and the Chronicon Alexandrinum, as Mr. Selden observes, assigns the very time when they exercised the high-priesthood; Abishua (whom he calls Abiud) in the time of Ehud; Bukki in the time of Shamgar; and Uzzi in the time of Tola. In whose days, the Jews think, the priesthood was translated from the family of Eleazar to that of Ithamar: for some great sin which they had committed; as afterward for the sins of Eli's sons, it was translated back again to Eleazar's posterity. So they say in Juchasin, "In the days of Samson died Uzzi of the family of Eleazar, and the high-priesthood was translated to the family of Ithamar; the first of which was Eli." But, as the Alexandrian Chronicle is of no great authority, so there is no mention, as Mr. Selden observes, of the names of these three persons, as succeeding Phinehas, either in the Scripture, or the Hebrew Chronicles, or in Eusebius. But the only high-priest between Eleazar and Eli is Phinehas: who the Jews think was alive in the war with the Benjamites, Judg. xxi. 28. (See lib. i. de Success. ad Pontif. cap. 2.) But this cannot be justified.

Ver. 6. *And Uzzi begat Zerahiah, and Zerahiah begat Meraioth.*

Ver. 7. *Meraioth begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub.*] See Ezra vii. 3. where in this genealogy six generations are omitted by him, *from Meraioth to Azariah the son of Johanan,* which are here mentioned. This Kimchi thinks was done for brevity's sake.

Ver. 8. *And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Ahimaaz.*] See 2 Sam. viii. 17. xv. 27.

Ver. 9. *And Ahimaaz begat Azariah, and Azariah begat Johanan.*

Ver. 10. *And Johanan begat Azariah (he it is that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem).*] The Divine writer sets a mark of honour upon Azariah (which he doth not on any of the foregoing) for maintaining his office so resolutely, with the danger of his life, against the usurpation of one of Solomon's successors, who would have offered incense in that very temple which Solomon had built: of which see 2 Chron. xxvi. 17, 18, &c. The mention of Solomon's temple in this place, plainly denotes, that this was written after the second temple was built, or while it was building.

But Ludovicus Capellus is of opinion, that Azariah here spoken of is not he that resisted Uzziah. For such a noble fact as that was, he thinks, would not have been touched in such general words: but he takes him to have been the high-priest in the days of Solomon; and was the first that ministered only in his temple. For Zadok his grandfather, and Ahimaaz his father, ministered first in the tabernacle. Therefore to make this agree with that Azariah, he thinks, we ought to acknowledge a double metathesis in these verses, 9—12. which ought to be read thus: *Ahimaaz begat Azariah (he is the first that executed the priest's office in the house which Solomon built in Jerusalem), Azariah begat Amariah, Amariah begat Johanan, Johanan begat Azariah, Azariah begat Ahitub, Ahitub begat Zadok.* If this be admitted, all the difficulties that arise out of this genealogy are quite removed. (See his Chronologia Sacra Notæ in Tab. xiv. p. 286.)

Ver. 11. *Azariah begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub.*

Ver. 12. *And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Shallum.*] Who is called Meshullam in chap. ix. 11. These three are mentioned no where else, but in Nehem. xi. 11.

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though they discharged the high-priest's office in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh, as Ludovicus Capellus makes account in his Chronol. Sacra, p. 287.

Ver. 13. *And Shallum begat Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begat Azariah.*

Ver. 14. *And Azariah begat Seraiah, and Seraiah begat Jehozadak.*] When Jerusalem was taken by the king of Babylon's army, Seraiah was carried by the captain of the guard to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah: where he commanded him to be put to death. So that in him ended the succession of high-priests under the first temple: which from Zadok unto him were twelve. The Jews, in Seder Olam Zula, make them to be eighteen; but they are not to be believed against the Scripture: there being also the very same succession mentioned Ezra vii. 1, 2, &c. which beginning from Aaron, the first four of these here mentioned, together with Ahitub the father of Zadok, are omitted for brevity's sake, as Kimchi thinks. (See Selden, de Success. ad Pontif. lib. i. cap. 5.) But some think it sufficient to say, that it was not the intention of the writer of this book to mention all the high-priests that were from Zadok to Seraiah: because Jehoiada, who was the high-priest in the time of Athaliah, is not here named. He is called indeed every where *Jehoiada the priest:* yet he took upon him such authority, as may well make us suppose him to have been high-priest. It is observed by Kimchi, that the line of the high-priests is drawn from Aaron down to the captivity, through the family of Eleazar his eldest son; none of Ithamar's being mentioned: because the perpetual priesthood was promised only to Phinehas the son of Eleazar, (Numb. xxv.)

Ver. 15. *And Jehozadak went into captivity, when the Lord carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.*] In the captivity he begat Jeshua, who came back in the time of Cyrus, (Ezra iii. 2.)

Ver. 16. *The sons of Levi; Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.*] He hath not yet done with the account he intends to give of Levi's posterity: and therefore repeats the names of his sons, from whom these Levites sprung, who were not priests.

Ver. 17. *And these be the names of the sons of Gershom; Libni, and Shimei.*] Who were not mentioned before.

Ver. 18. *And the sons of Kohath were Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel.*] See ver. 2.

Ver. 19. *And the sons of Merari; Mahli, and Mushi.*] See Exod. vi. 19.

And these are the families of the Levites, according to their fathers.] That is, these were the heads of the families that sprung from them: as it is probable, they that follow in the next catalogue were the chief of their families which continued unto the days of David; who regulated their attendance in their several courses.

Ver. 20. *Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son.*] This last was his grandson by his son Shimei, as appears from ver. 42. But such are frequently called *sons.*

Ver. 21. *Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeaterai his son.*

Ver. 22. *The sons of Kohath; Amminadab.*] Called Izhar, ver. 2.

Korah his son, Assir his son.

Ver. 23. *Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son.*

Ver. 24. *Tahath his son, Uriel his son.*] Called also Zephaniah, ver. 36.

Uzziah his son.] Who went also by the name of Azariah, as that verse tells us.

And Shaul his son.

Ver. 25. *And the sons of Elkanah.*] He was the son of Korah, mentioned ver. 23. as appears from Exod. vi. 24.

Amasai, and Ahimoth.

Ver. 26. *As for Elkanah: the sons of Elkanah; Zophai his son.*] Or Zuph, as he is called ver. 35. This is another Elkanah; son it is likely of him last mentioned.

And Nahath his son.

Ver. 27. *Eliab his son.*] Who is called Eliel, ver. 34.

Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son.

Ver. 28. *The sons of Samuel.*] Who was the son of Elkanah, as we read 1 Sam. i. 1. which being a thing well known, this writer (giving only a breviate of these histories) omits the mention of it. But it appears by this account, that Samuel was only a Levite, not of the race of the priests (for he did not descend from Aaron, but from Izhar the uncle of Aaron), much less the high-priest, as some great men have fancied. (See Selden, de Success. ad Pontif. lib. i. cap. 14.)

The first-born Vashni, and Abiah.] The first of these is called Joel, 1 Sam. viii. 2. and here below, ver. 33.

Ver. 29. *The sons of Merari: Mahli; Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzza his son.*

Ver. 30. *Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.*

Ver. 31. *And these are they.*] Having thus far deduced the genealogy of the Levites, he proceeds now to give an account how David ordered their attendance upon the service of God at the tabernacle: and sets down the names of the chief of them, which here follow.

Whom David set over the service of the song.] Appointed to minister unto God by singing of songs in his house.

After that the ark had rest.] After David had brought it from the house of Obed-Edom, and settled it at Jerusalem, (2 Sam. viii. 17.)

Ver. 32. *And they ministered before the dwelling-place of the tabernacle of glory.*] Which David had prepared for the ark, when it came to Jerusalem, (2 Sam. viii. 17.)

With singing.] The Psalms which David and other prophets composed.

Until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.] Before the temple was built by Solomon they performed this service: which did not cease after it was built, but continued in great order, as it here follows.

And then they waited in their office according to their order.] Which David himself had constituted a little before his death: as we read in the latter end of this book.

Ver. 33. *And these are they that waited with their children: of the sons of the Kohathites; Heman a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel.*] That is, of Samuel the great prophet: whose name, it appears by this, was differently pronounced in different times and places. This place also still shews more clearly, that Samuel was only a Levite of the family of the Kohathites, not a priest of the family of Aaron, which is suggested by the Psalmist, (Psal. xcix.) "Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name." Therefore, as Estius observes, when Samuel is said to have offered sacrifice (as he did often in Gilgal and other places), it must be un-

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derstood that he did it by the ministry of the priests, not by himself. And thus David and Solomon sacrificed, but not by their own hands, but by those to whose office it properly belonged.

This Heman was so eminent for his skill in singing, that he is thought to have been a composer of hymns: which I have considered in my notes upon 1 Kings iv.

Ver. 34. *The son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah.*] Called Nahath, ver. 26.

Ver. 35. *The son of Zuph.*] Called Zophai, ver. 26.

The son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai.

Ver. 36. *The son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah.*

Ver. 37. *The son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah.*

Ver. 38. *The son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel.*] Thus, in honour of Samuel, the pedigree of Heman, who was his grandson, is derived from Israel the father of them all.

Ver. 39. *And his brother Asaph (who stood on his right hand), even Asaph the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea.*] This depends upon ver. 33. where it is said, *these are they that waited with their children*, &c. *viz.* Heman and Asaph: who is called Heman's brother, according to the Hebrew phrase; in which all near kindred are called brothers. And these two were of the same tribe and family; and also of the same employment, upon which account, if there were no other, he might be called the brother of Heman.

Ver. 40. *The son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Melchiah.*

Ver. 41. *The son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah.*

Ver. 42. *The son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei.*

Ver. 43. *The son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi.*] There was no need to add *the son of Israel:* for it is apparent they sprung from the same stock, by two brethren the sons of Levi.

Ver. 44. *Their brethren, the sons of Merari, stood on the left hand.*] In like manner the children of the next son of Levi are here mentioned; who had the lowest place assigned, because they were of the youngest family. So there were three principal singers, who were masters and governors of the whole choir; Heman, descended from Kohath, was the prime, who, together with his sons, stood in the middle: and then Asaph, descended from Gershom, with his sons, stood on his right hand: and Ethan from Merari on the left. Of these three families there were three principal persons, who bare rule over the rest of the singers here mentioned, and kept good order among them. And indeed there was an admirable order observed, in the whole ministry at the tabernacle: three great men, and their sons, were singers and musicians; the rest of the Levites prepared and made ready the sacrifices; the priests offered them; and the high-priest officiated in the most holy place, as it here follows.

Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch.] He who is here called Ethan, is called Jeduthun, chap. ix. 16. and in many other places.

Ver. 45. *The son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah.*

Ver. 46. *The son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer.*

Ver. 47. *The son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi.*] It is observable, that, in all the genealogies of the Levites, there is not a word said of the sons of Moses and their posterity: he having no ambition to prefer them unto any office, either in church or state.

Ver. 48. *Their brethren also the Levites.*] The rest of that tribe, who were not fit to be singers.

Were appointed unto all manner of service of the tabernacle of the house of God.] They performed all the laborious work that was to be done in the tabernacle; being porters, keepers of the vessels of the sanctuary, as well as taking care to prepare the sacrifices, and such-like things. Of which an account is given below in chap. xxiii. and these following.

Ver. 49. *But Aaron and his sons offered upon the altar of the burnt-offering, and on the altar of incense, and were appointed for all the work of the place most holy, and to make an atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses, the servant of God, had commanded.*] The noblest part of the ministry was reserved for Aaron and his posterity: which is mentioned at large in the book of Leviticus. Which shews that Aaron alone, and his successors in the high-priesthood, ministered in *the place most holy*, and made the *atonement:* but his sons, the priests, offered on the altars *of burnt-offering and of incense.*

Ver. 50. *And these are the sons of Aaron; Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son.*

Ver. 51. *Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son.*

Ver. 52. *Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son.*

Ver. 53. *Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son.*] Having mentioned the high-priest's office, he sets down the succession of it from Aaron to the time of David: which he had done before more largely to the time of the captivity, (ver. 3, 4, &c.) There was no age like to this of David's, as Victorinus Strigelius observes; which produced so many great men, that he calls it the prophetical age. Wherein God raised up Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan: who made the word of God dwell plentifully in the church of Israel in all wisdom.

Ver. 54. *Now these are their dwelling-places throughout their castles, in the coasts of the sons of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites.*] Now follows an account of the places where they inhabited: and first of the habitation of the sons of Aaron, who were the noblest of the Kohathites.

For theirs was the lot.] That is, the first lot fell to them. (See Josh. xxi. 4.)

Ver. 55. *And they gave them Hebron in the land of Judah, and the suburbs thereof round about it.*] See Josh. xxi. 10, 11.

Ver. 56. *But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh.*] See Josh. xxi. 12.

Ver. 57. *And to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of Judah, namely, Hebron, the city of refuge, and Libnah with her suburbs, and Jattir and Eshtemoa with their suburbs.*] Besides the forenamed city of Hebron (which is mentioned again, because the most eminent) they gave them these following, which were in the same tribe of Judah.

Ver. 58. *And Hilen with her suburbs.*] Called Holon in the book of Joshua, (chap. xxi. 15.)

And Debir with her suburbs.] Mentioned in the same place.

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Ver. 59. *And Ashan with her suburbs.*] Called Ain, Josh. xxi. 16.

And Beth-shemesh with her suburbs.] Mentioned in the same place.

Ver. 60. *And out of the tribe of Benjamin; Geba with her suburbs, and Alemeth with her suburbs.*] Called Almon, Josh. xxi. 18.

And Anothoth with her suburbs. All their cities, throughout their families, were thirteen cities.] Whereof there are only eleven here mentioned: but there are two more added in the book of Joshua, *viz.* Juttah and Gibeon, which make thirteen, chap. xxi. 16, 17. Perhaps they were not yet rebuilt when this book was written.

Ver. 61. *And unto the sons of Kohath, which were left of the family of that tribe.*] Who were not of the sons of Aaron, but descended from Kohath.

Were cities given out of the half tribe, namely, out of the half tribe of Manasseh, by lot, ten cities.] Some of these cities were taken out of the tribe of Manasseh, and some out of others; as appears from Josh. xxi. But in all they made ten, (ver. 26.)

Ver. 62. *And to the sons of Gershom, throughout their families, out of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the tribe of Manasseh, in Bashan, thirteen cities.*] Their cities were assigned them in these several tribes, because they were too many to be contained in one.

Ver. 63. *Unto the sons of Merari were given by lot, throughout their families, out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.*

Ver. 64. *And the children of Israel gave to the Levites these cities with their suburbs.*] To the tribe of Levi, consisting of priests and simple Levites, these cities were given, which are here mentioned in this chapter.

Ver. 65. *And they gave by lot out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, and out of the tribe of the children of Benjamin.*] These three tribes were very near one to another; and in several places Simeon mixed together with the other two.

These cities which are called by their names.] Which are recited in the foregoing verses, (ver. 57, &c.) and given to the sons of Aaron.

Ver. 66. *And the residue of the families of the sons of Kohath had cities of their coasts out of the tribe of Ephraim.*] By *coasts* here is meant portions: which were assigned them, though they were not priests, for their support in a lower ministry. These things seem to be mentioned so often, and with such exactness, that it might appear what care was taken by God for the maintenance of his ministers of all sorts; and for the instruction of his people, among whom he dispersed the Levites, who were peculiarly devoted to his service.

Ver. 67. *And they gave unto them, of the cities of refuge, Shechem in Mount Ephraim with her suburbs; they gave also Gezer with her suburbs.*] These were places of great eminence, unto which there was great resort: which gave them the greater opportunity of doing good. They are both expressly mentioned Josh. xxi. 21.

Ver. 68. *And Jokmeam with her suburbs, and Beth-horon with her suburbs.*

Ver. 69. *And Aijalon with her suburbs, and Gath-rimmon with her suburbs.*

Ver. 70. *And out of the half tribe of Manasseh; Aner with her suburbs, and Bileam with her suburbs, for the family of the remnant of the sons of Kohath.*] The city here called *Bileam* is called *Ibleam* in the book of Joshua; length of time making greater alterations in the names both of persons and places than this is, as appears by several other places here mentioned. For, as Kimchi here well notes (which frivolous cavillers should observe), the Divine writers did not affect accuracy in such matters as these; but took names as they found them.

Ver. 71. *Unto the sons of Gershom were given, out of the family of the half tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, and Ashtaroth with her suburbs.*] From Golan came the Gaulonites.

Ver. 72. *And out of the tribe of Issachar; Kedesh with her suburbs, Daberath with her suburbs.*

Ver. 73. *And Ramoth with her suburbs, and Anem with her suburbs.*

Ver. 74. *And out of the tribe of Asher; Mashal with her suburbs, and Abdon with her suburbs.*

Ver. 75. *And Hukok with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs.*

Ver. 76. *And out of the tribe of Naphtali; Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, and Hammon with her suburbs, and Kirjathaim with her suburbs.*] That place which here is called *Hammon*, is in Josh. xxi. 32. called *Hammoth:* from whence some argue, that one of these places is corrupted; and they fancy this, because the LXX. here hath Χαμώθ. As though the name of some place and person (as I said before) may not be differently pronounced in different times and countries. As Achan and Achar, mentioned above.

Ver. 77. *Unto the rest of the children of Merari were given, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Rimmon with her suburbs, Tabor with her suburbs.*

Ver. 78. *And on the other side Jordan by Jericho, on the east side of Jordan, were given them, out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer in the wilderness with her suburbs, and Jahzah with her suburbs.*

Ver. 79. *Kedemoth also with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs.*

Ver. 80. *And out of the tribe of Gad; Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, and Mahanaim with her suburbs.*

Ver. 81. *And Heshbon with her suburbs, and Jazer with her suburbs.*] The first of these, Heshbon, was reckoned to be in the tribe of Reuben as well as in Gad. Of which see Josh. xiii. 17.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *NOW the sons of Issachar were Tola, and Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four.*] There is some little difference in the names of two of these, as they are mentioned Gen. xlvi. And Jashub seems to have been called Job, for brevity's sake: just as Aram is called Ram, and among us Alexander is called Saunder. See Buxtorf's Anticritica, par. ii. cap. 8. where Rasi gives another account of it, but not so likely.

Ver. 2. *And the sons of Tola; Uzzi, and Rephaiah, and Jeriel, and Jahmai, and Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their*

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father's house, to wit, of Tola: they were valiant men of might in their generations; whose number was, in the days of David, two-and-twenty thousand and six hundred.] When David numbered the people, (2 Sam. xxiv.) there were found thus many descended from the first-born of Issachar; which was a very great increase.

Ver. 3. *And the sons of Uzzi; Izrahiah.*] He names but one son: therefore, all his posterity is comprehended in the name of *sons*.

And the sons of Izrahiah; Michael, and Obadiah, and Joel, Ishiah, five: all of them chief men.] Reckoning their father for one, they were five in all: and persons of great authority.

Ver. 4. *And with them, by their generations, after the house of their fathers, were bands of soldiers for war, six-and-thirty thousand men.*] As they were numerous, so they were of a warlike spirit; which made them very considerable.

For they had many wives and sons.] They were very fruitful, and propagated the more, because they had many wives, who bare them many sons: and those sons, it is likely, took many wives also, for the greater increase of their family. For this was the cause of polygamy among them, the desire of a numerous offspring (whereby God's promise to Abraham, of making them as the stars of heaven for multitude, might be fulfilled), and of a holy race of people to propagate piety, when the nations of the world were generally corrupted. (See chap. viii. 40.)

Ver. 5. *And their brethren.*] That is, their kindred.

Among all the families of Issachar, were valiant men of might, reckoned in all, by their genealogies, fourscore and seven thousand.] There was no such great increase of the rest of the families of Issachar, since in all they amounted but to this number: and from two of his sons sprung above fifty-eight thousand.

Ver. 6. *The sons of Benjamin; Bela, and Becher, and Jediael, three.*] He mentions no more in this place; but in the next chapter (ver. 1, 2.) he mentions five: they were ten in all, as we read in Gen. xlvi. 21. But either half of them died without issue, or their families were extinct, or their genealogies lost.

Ver. 7. *And the sons of Bela; Ezbon, and Uzzi, and Uzziel, and Jerimoth, and Iri, five; heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valour; and were reckoned by their genealogies twenty and two thousand and thirty and four.*] There are others mentioned as his sons, chap. viii. 8. therefore it is likely these were his grandsons: who, being more eminent than their fathers, were mentioned as the chief of their several families, from whence they sprung.

Ver. 8. *And the sons of Becher; Zemira, and Joash, and Eliezer, and Elioenai, and Omri, and Jerimoth, and Abiah, and Anathoth, and Alameth. All these are the sons of Becher.*

Ver. 9. *And the number of them, after their genealogy by their generations, heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valour, was twenty thousand and two hundred.*] They were not so many as those descended from the eldest son; and the youngest son had still fewer.

Ver. 10. *The sons also of Jediael; Bilhan.*] He mentions but one; who includes all descended from him, as it here follows.

And the sons of Bilhan; Jeush, and Benjamin, and Ehud, and Chenaanah, and Zethan, and Tharshish, and Ahishahar.

Ver. 11. *All these the sons of Jediael, by the heads of their fathers, mighty men of valour, were seventeen thousand and two hundred soldiers, fit to go out for war and battle.*

Ver. 12. *Shuppim also, and Huppim, the children of Ir.*] Or of Iri, as he is called, ver. 7. the youngest son of Bela; whose sons are called Huppim and Muppim, Gen. xlvi. 21. In which book there are other proper names of men, in the plural number, (Gen. x. 13, 14. xxv. 3.)

And Hushim, the sons of Aher.] If he still speak of the sons of Benjamin, this person was called Ahiram, Numb. xxvi. 39. But there being no mention of the tribe of Dan in this genealogy, unless it be here, many take Aher not to be a proper name, but a common word, signifying *other*; and so translate the words thus, *another son*: that is, the son of another tribe or family, *viz.* of Dan. For Hushim was his only son, Gen. xlvi. 23. where the word *sons*, though he speak of one man only, is used as it is in this place.

Ver. 13. *The sons of Naphtali; Jahziel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.*] The sons of Bilhah were Naphtali and Dan. Therefore these were her grandsons by the first of them.

Ver. 14. *The sons of Manasseh; Ashriel.*] His great-grandson; for both he and Zelophehad were the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. (See Numb. xxvi. 29. &c. xxvii. 1.)

Whom she bare.] That is, whom his wife bare; for his concubine is here opposed to her, in the next words.

(But his concubine the Aramitess bare Machir the father of Gilead.] He took a Syrian woman to wife, from whom his chief posterity descended.

Ver. 15. *And Machir took to wife the sister of Huppim and Shuppim, whose sister's name was Maachah).*] He married into the tribe of Benjamin, whose sons these were.

And the name of the second son was Zelophehad.] This relates to the beginning of ver. 14. where his first son Ashriel is mentioned.

And Zelophehad had daughters.] No sons, but only daughters; as we read in the book of Numbers, chap. xxvii.

Ver. 16. *And Maachah, the wife of Machir, bare a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother was Sheresh; and his sons were Ulam and Rakem.*

Ver. 17. *And the sons of Ulam; Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.*

Ver. 18. *And his sister Hammoleketh bare Ishod, and Abiezer, and Mahalah.*] That is, the sister of Gilead, as Kimchi understands it (though some take her to have been the sister of Bedan), who was an illustrious woman, and therefore here mentioned, and, as the Targum imagines, was a queen; that is, governess of a certain tract of land in the country of Gilead. For he takes Hammoleketh not for a proper name, but for an appellative: of which there is no mention neither in the law, nor in the prophets, as Kimchi confesses; but they have this by tradition. Which, though it be very groundless, the Vulgar Latin follows it, and translates this word *regina*. Which Estius ingenuously acknowledges to be a mistake.

Ver. 19. *And the sons of Shemida were Ahian, and Shechem, and Likhi, and Aniam.*] There is no mention of Shemida before. But he is supposed to be another son of Gilead's sister beforenamed.

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Ver. 20. *And the sons of Ephraim; Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah his son, and Tahath his son.*] Some will have all these to be the sons of Ephraim: but the most natural sense seems to be, that Bered was the son of Shuthelah, and Tahath the son of Bered, &c. and so on to the following descendants of Ephraim, whose genealogy is now related.

Ver. 21. *And Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle.*] This piece of history is no where else recorded: which in all likelihood fell out before the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt. For Ephraim, it appears by the next verse, was alive when these children of his were slain. Who, as the Targum thinks, mistook in their computation of the end of the years, wherein they were to be slaves in Egypt, and imagining them to be expired, made an inroad into the land of Canaan to take possession of it, before the time they were to enjoy it. But others think it proceeded from their desire of prey and spoil, which they thought they might lawfully get from those whose country they were to possess: and they presumed the more to make this attempt, because they were valiant men, and proud, perhaps, of the great power and authority which their uncle Joseph had in Egypt. Though others think it more probable, that the Philistines having infested them in the land of Goshen, these sons of Zabad broke into their country to make reprisals upon their cattle. Dr. Lightfoot (in his conclusion of his Annotations on Genesis), quite contrary, thinks that the men of Gath went to plunder in Egypt, and there slew these Ephraimites, who only stood up in defence of their cattle. And those words, *that were born in the land*, he thinks, signify these men of Gath were born in Egypt, though they now dwelt in Gath. So the men of Gath were the plunderers, and not the Ephraimites. But they who take the Ephraimites to have been the invaders, think those words are added, to shew that the Philistines were the more incensed against them; because they seemed to come to dispossess them of their land.

Ver. 22. *And Ephraim their father.*] They were his grandchildren.

Mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.] That is, his kindred (as the word *brethren* often signifies), they that were of his family came to condole with him. This shews Ephraim lived to be a very old man, if this happened near to the time of their going out of Egypt.

Ver. 23. *And when he went in to his wife, she conceived and bare a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it went evil with his house.*] For so the word *Beriah* imports: his family was *in an ill condition.*

Ver. 24. *(And his daughter was Sherah, who built Beth-horon the nether, and the upper, and Uzzan-Sherah).*] She was, it seems, a very great woman: who restored both these cities of Beth-horon, which were destroyed by the Israelites, when they conquered the land of Canaan, and rebuilt them in the same place, adding another city, which carried her own name in it.

Ver. 25. *And Rephah was his son.*] *i. e.* The son of Beriah.

Also Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan his son.] Beriah also had another son, whose name was Resheph, whose son was Telah, &c.

Ver. 26. *Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son.*] Who was the chief commander in the tribe of Ephraim when they were in the wilderness, (Numb. i. 10.)

Ver. 27. *Non his son, Jehoshua his son.*] For whose sake his pedigree seems to be thus largely deduced.

Ver. 28. *And their possessions and habitations were Beth-el and the towns thereof.*] See Josh. xvi. 1, &c.

And eastward Naaran, and westward Gezer with the towns thereof; Shechem also and the towns thereof, unto Gaza and the towns thereof.] Or rather Ad-azea, a place so called: for their border did not extend so far as Gaza in the land of the Philistines.

Ver. 29. *And by the borders of the children of Manasseh, Beth-shean and her towns, Taanach and her towns, Megiddo and her towns, Dor and her towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph, the son of Israel.*] That is, the children of Manasseh. (See Josh. xvi. 11.)

Ver. 30. *The sons of Asher; Imnah, and Isuah, and Ishuai, and Beriah, and Serah their sister.*] See the same account of them in Gen. xlvi. 17.

Ver. 31. *And the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel, who is the father of Birzavith.*] The two first of these were born before they went into Egypt, as appears from Gen. xlvi. 18.

Ver. 32. *And Heber begat Japhlet, and Shomer, and Hotham, and Shuah their sister.*

Ver. 33. *And the sons of Japhlet; Pasach, and Bimhal, and Ashvath: these are the children of Japhlet.*

Ver. 34. *And the sons of Shamer; Ahi, and Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram.*] The father of these was the second brother of Japhlet, called Shomer, ver. 32.

Ver. 35. *And the sons of his brother.*] That is, of Hotham, who was next brother to Shamer.

Helem; Zophah, and Imna, and Shelesh, and Amal.

Ver. 36. *The sons of Zophah; Suah, and Harnepher, and Shual, and Beri, and Imrah.*

Ver. 37. *Bezer, and Hod, and Shamma, and Shilshah, and Ithran, and Beera.*

Ver. 38. *And the sons of Jether; Jephunneh, and Pispah, and Ara.*] This Jether is the same that is called in the verse foregoing Ithran; the youngest son but one of Zophah: the rest had no sons, or their genealogy was lost.

Ver. 39. *And the sons of Ulla; Arah, and Hanniel, and Rezia.*] We do not read whose son Ulla was; but it is probable of Jether; whereof there are many examples in the foregoing chapters.

Ver. 40. *All these were the children of Asher, heads of their father's house, choice and mighty men of valour, chief of the princes.*] Of these only he gives an account, and takes no notice of inferior families: though they are included, I suppose, in the following number.

And the number throughout the genealogy of them that were apt to the war and to battle was twenty and six thousand men.] Though they lived in a rich and delicious country, abounding with wine and oil, and other good things, in the best part of Galilee; yet they did not give themselves up to sloth and laziness, but were a warlike and valiant people.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *NOW Benjamin begat Bela his first-born.*] He goes over the genealogy of this tribe again, (which he had

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begun before in the foregoing chapter, ver. 6.) and gives a larger account of it, because it was entirely joined to the tribe of Judah; and likewise, that he might make way for the following history, and touch upon the generations of Saul; and shew how this tribe was increased again, after that great calamity which befel them in the time of the judges.

Ashbel the second son, and Aharah the third.] His first-born, Bela, is expressly so called by Moses, Gen. xlvi. 21. but all the rest are called by very different names. Therefore, either these were his grand-children (who are frequently called *sons*), or they had two names, which I shewed before was not unusual. (See chap. iii. 1.)

Ver. 2. *Noah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth.*

Ver. 3. *And the sons of Bela were Addar, and Gera, and Abihud.*

Ver. 4. *And Abishua, and Naaman, and Ahoah.*

Ver. 5. *And Gera.*] It is likely this was the son of the forenamed, and so grandson to Bela.

And Shephuphan, and Huram.

Ver. 6. *And these are the sons of Ehud.*] Who is not named before; unless he be the third son of Bela, called Abihud, ver. 3. And some think the three persons last named to have been his sons.

These are the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Geba.] Where their first settlement was.

And they removed them to Manahath.] That is, Gera removed them, as it follows, ver. 7. to a place mentioned before in the second chapter of this book, ver. 52. 54. Geba being too narrow for them, when they were multiplied: or, this other place being a more commodious habitation.

Ver. 7. *And Naaman, and Ahiah, and Gera, he removed them, and begat Uzza and Ahihud.*] After his removal.

Ver. 8. *And Shaharaim begat children in the country of Moab, after he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara were his wives.*] After the removal beforementioned, this person took two wives of the country of Moab: whose names are here set down. To shew (say some of the Jews) that though a Moabite was excluded from the congregation of the Lord, yet a Moabitess was not; as appears by the example of Ruth.

Ver. 9. *And he begat of Hodesh his wife.*] The Jews think she is the same with Baara: who was called Hodesh, that is *new*, because he renewed the example of marrying a Moabitish woman: which was first practised in Ruth. But this is an odd fancy of theirs, who misplace the time of Ruth.

Jobab, and Zibia, and Mesha, and Malcham.

Ver. 10. *And Jeuz, and Shachia, and Mirma. These were his sons, heads of the fathers.*] Chief men in their families.

Ver. 11. *And of Hushim he begat Ahitub and Elpaal.*] On this verse the Jews ground what they say of Hodesh, that she was the same with Baara, mentioned ver. 8. with Hushim as his other wife.

Ver. 12. *The sons of Elpaal; Eber, and Misham, and Shamed, who built Ono and Lod, with the towns thereof.*] These two, Ono and Lod, are joined together in other places, being neighbouring cities. (See Ezra ii. 33. Nehem. vi. 37. xi. 33.) They were but three miles distant one from the other, as Dr. Lightfoot computes in his Chorographical Decats before St. Mark, chap. 9. sect. *ult.* where he shews the Talmudists say, that Ono was a walled city from the days of Joshua; but in the war against Gibeah it was burnt with fire, as other cities were; and rebuilt by this Elpaal: who also re-edified Lod, which is the same with Lydda in the New Testament, as the same Dr. Lightfoot observes in his Chorographical Century before St. Matthew. Where he observes, the author of the maps of the land of Canaan hath placed Lydda not far from Jordan, and Lod near the Mediterranean: whereas they are one and the same place, as he shews at large. And in the other place mentioned before, he shews it was also called Laodicea: for sometimes they speak of the *martyrs in Lod*, and in other places call them the *martyrs in Laodicea.*

Ver. 13. *Beriah also, and Shema, who were heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Aijalon.*] That is, of the fields that lay about Aijalon: for the town itself belonged to the tribe of Dan, (Josh. xix. 42.)

Who drove away the inhabitants of Gath.] In revenge (as Pellicanus thinks) of the slaughter they made long ago of their brethren the Ephraimites: (chap. vii. 21.) or, finding the men of Gath had possessed themselves of this place, they drove them out after their return from the captivity of Babylon. But we read of no war after their return till the time of the Maccabees: and, therefore, this belongs (as a most judicious friend of mine, Dr. Alix, observes) to what was done in ancienter times, *viz.* after the division of the country by Joshua.

Ver. 14. *And Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth.*

Ver. 15. *And Zebadiah, and Arad, and Ader.*

Ver. 16. *And Michael, and Ispah, and Joha, the sons of Beriah.*] Mentioned before, ver. 13.

Ver. 17. *And Zebadiah, and Meshullam, and Hezeki, and Heber.*

Ver. 18. *Ishmerai also, and Jezliah, and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal.*] Of whom we had an account before, (ver. 11, 12.)

Ver. 19. *And Jakim, and Zichri, and Zabdi.*

Ver. 20. *And Elienai, and Zilthai, and Eliel.*

Ver. 21. *And Adaiah, and Beraiah, and Shimrath, the sons of Shimhi.*] It is likely that this Shimhi is the same with him who is called Shema, ver. 13.

Ver. 22. *And Ishpan, and Heber, and Eliel.*

Ver. 23. *And Abdon, and Zichri, and Hanan,*

Ver. 24. *And Hananiah, and Elam, and Antothijah.*

Ver. 25. *And Iphedeiah, and Penuel, the sons of Shashak.*] This Shashak was an eminent person, mentioned ver. 14.

Ver. 26. *And Shamsherai, and Shehariah, and Athaliah.*] Here is another instance of the same name, being common to men and women.

Ver. 27. *And Jaresiah, and Eliah, and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham.*] He is the same with Jeremoth, mentioned ver. 14. next to Shashak.

Ver. 28. *These were heads of the fathers, by their generations, chief men. These dwelt in Jerusalem.*] It is probable that all these mentioned from ver. 14. dwelt at Jerusalem (one part of which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin), as they that are forenamed did at Aijalon.

Ver. 29. *And at Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name was Maachah.*] Perhaps Gibeon built this city, and gave his name to it, as Kimchi conjectures. But his proper name was Jehiel (as we read chap. ix. 35. where this genealogy is repeated); and he is called *the father of Gibeon*, because he was the chief ruler or governor of the Benjamites, who inhabited that place.

Ver. 30. *And his first-born son Abdon, and Zur, and*

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Kish, and Baal, and Nadab.] Between Baal and Nadab, there is mention of another son called Ner, chap. ix. 36.

Ver. 31. *And Gedor, and Ahio, and Zacher.*] Who is called Zechariah in chap. ix. 37. where another son is added, called Mikloth, whose posterity here follows.

Ver. 32. *And Mikloth begat Shimeah.*] Who is called Shimeam, chap. ix. 38.

And these also dwelt with their brethren in Jerusalem, over against them.] These families likewise were settled at Jerusalem, as well as the forenamed: and dwelt in a part of the city directly over against the other.

Ver. 33. *And Ner begat Kish, and Kish begat Saul.*] I observed before, ver. 30. that Ner was one of the sons of Gibeon (or Jehiel), who did not beget (in the common signification of the word) Kish; but educated him, and bred him up. For Kish was the son of Abiel: but different from him mentioned 1 Sam. xiv. 51. who was his brother. The Targum here saith, that Ner and Abiel were the same men, who had two names: Abiel was his proper name, but he was called Ner (which signifies a *light*), because he was illustrious upon some accounts which the Jews mention. See upon 1 Sam. ix. 1. where there is a large account of the ancestors of Abiel, none of which are here mentioned. Upon which Conradus Pellicanus makes this reflection: "That hence we may learn, it is an unnecessary labour scrupulously to inquire after these things, from which we can reap no fruit, and of which we may be ignorant without danger. Especially in the matter of these genealogies; the reason of which is long ago expired, together with the tribes to which they belong. As for the certainty of our belief, which depends upon the authority of the Holy Scriptures, that stands firm and constant, though some things by the length of time be so obscure, that they are not now exactly understood, especially in the difference we find in the proper names of persons and places, which without any prejudice to the faith may be neglected." Thus he.

And Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchi-shua, and Abinadab, and Esh-baal.] Who is called also Ish-bosheth. (See 2 Sam. ii. 8.

Ver. 34. *And the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal; and Merib-baal begat Micah.*] This son of Jonathan is called commonly Mephibosheth. (See in the forenamed place.)

Ver. 35. *And the sons of Micah were Pithon, and Melech, and Tarea, and Ahaz.*] The third of these is called Tahrea, chap. ix. 41.

Ver. 36. *And Ahaz begat Jehoadah; and Jehoadah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza.*

Ver. 37. *And Moza begat Binea: Rapha was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son.*

Ver. 38. *And Azel had six sons, whose names are these, Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan. All these were the sons of Azel.*

Ver. 39. *And the sons of Eshek his brother were Ulam his first-born, Jehush the second, and Eliphelet the third.*] We read nothing of Eshek before, unless he be the same with Eleasah, ver. 37.

Thus the family of Saul, though he was rejected by God from being king of Israel, was blessed with a numerous progeny, which sprung from his great-grandchild Micah, whose posterity is here largely recorded in honour of Jonathan.

Ver. 40. *And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valour, archers.*] In the Hebrew the word for *archers* is, those that *tread the bow*, because their steel bows (which were much in use among them) were so strong, that they could not bend them with their arms; but sat down, and pressing them with their feet, pulled the arrow with both hands, that it might fly with greater force.

And had many sons and sons' sons a hundred and fifty. All these are of the sons of Benjamin.] Who, it appears by Judg. xx. were a very valiant tribe: and this family, in particular, were noted to be very great, both in number and valour.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies.*] As much as to say, Thus I have summarily reckoned up the genealogies of all the tribes; as I found them in the public registers.

And, behold, they were written in the book of the Kings of Israel and of Judah.] For, let it be noted, they were so careful to preserve their genealogies, that they were kept in the public records, not only of the Jews, but of the Israelites: whose kings were not negligent in this matter.

Who were carried away to Babylon for their transgression.] These last mentioned, of the tribe of Judah, were carried thither; as the Israelites had been before into remote countries, upon the same account of their idolatry. In which captivity there was, no doubt, a great confusion made in their families: but Ezra, by the help of the prophets Haggai and Malachi (as the Jews think), undertook to set them right, by giving an account of what he found remaining in his time. Though there is a great difference of names in Nehem. xi. from those who are here mentioned: Malachi, also, and Ezra did not live in the same time.

Ver. 2. *Now the first inhabitants, that dwelt in their possessions in their cities, were.*] He speaks of those that came back to their own country with Zerubbabel.

The Israelites, the priests, Levites, and the Nethinims.] The first inhabitants that came and settled in their country, out of which they had been carried captive, he comprehends under four sorts of persons, Israelites, priests, Levites, and Nethinims. The first of these seems to comprehend not only all those of the ten tribes, who were carried captive with Judah and Benjamin, but those also who were carried into Assyria and Media by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmanaser. For the edict of Cyrus extended to them, as well as to Judah and Benjamin; and, as the prophets had foretold, (see Jer. v. 3, 4. 10. and xxi.) some of them did return, though too many (as the Jews also did) continued where they were settled in their captivity. But that the word Israelites is here a distinct name from the Jews, is apparent from what follows, ver. 3. The last of these, *viz.* the Nethinims, are generally thought by the Jewish interpreters to be the same with the Gibeonites, who performed the lower offices in the temple, being hewers of wood and drawers of water. (See Josh. ix. 27.) But Ezra hath given us a better account of them, chap. viii. 20. where he informs us they were *given* by David to minister to the Levites (which is the original of their name), as the Levites were given by God to help the priests. And therefore in all places they are mentioned with holy persons.

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Ver. 3. *And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim, and Manasseh.*] This shews that some of the ten tribes returned with those of Judah and Benjamin. For the proclamation of Cyrus excepted none, but gave all the people of that nation liberty to return to their own country. And Josephus says expressly, that the edict of Cyrus was sent by Zerubbabel to those of Assyria and Media. Many, indeed, neglected that favour (as I said before), and continued where they were settled; but those that did return were united to the Jews without distinction. Insomuch, that at Jerusalem, which belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, some of Ephraim and Manasseh were permitted to make their abode. For several of those tribes, being left in the land of Samaria, when the ten tribes were carried away, joined with Judah, (2 Chron. xxxi. 1. xxxii. 1. xxxiv. 9, &c.) and were carried with them to Babylon, and returned with them.

Ver. 4. *Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the children of Pharez the son of Judah.*] Now he sets down their names; and first those of the tribe of Judah, in this and the two following verses. But their names are so different from those in Nehem. xi. that it is an argument they speak of quite different persons, who lived in different times.

Ver. 5. *And of the Shilonites.*] Who are called Shelanites in Numb. xxvi. 20.

Asaiah the first-born, and his sons.] The eldest of that family, and those descended from him.

Ver. 6. *And of the sons of Zerah; Jeuel and his brethren.*] By *brethren* are meant near relations, as ver. 9. 13. 21.

Six hundred and ninety.] This was the whole number of the children of Judah, who dwelt in Jerusalem, after they came out of their captivity.

Ver. 7. *And of the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hasenuah.*] This Meshullam is said to be descended from quite different ancestors, than are mentioned Nehem. xi. 7. And therefore this is a quite different person from the other, though of the same name. Though some think that one of these authors gives an account of his remote ancestors, and the other of his more immediate: which is not probable.

Ver. 8. *And Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah.*

Ver. 9. *And their brethren, according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty and six.*] By *brethren*, as I said before, are meant their near kindred.

All these men.] That is, the seven mentioned above, (ver. 4. 8.)

Were chief of the fathers in the house of their fathers.] They are called *chief fathers*, because they were principal governors in their families. Nehemiah mentions no more than nine hundred twenty and eight, who came with these; therefore gives an account of different persons; or some before his time were dead, or removed to some other place. The first is most likely.

Ver. 10. *And of the priests; Jedaiah, and Jehoiarib, and Jachin.*] These are the second sort of inhabitants that first settled in their possessions after the captivity, mentioned ver. 2.

Ver. 11. *And Azariah the son of Hilkiah.*] Not he in the days of Josiah, (2 Kings xxii. 8.) but another of the same name; whose son Seraiah lived in the time of Nehemiah, xi. 11.

The son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the ruler of the house of God.] This last person is thought by Pellicanus to have been the high-priest: but both Ezra and Haggai tell us, Jeshua (or Joshua) was high-priest, (Ezra iii. 2. Haggai i. 1.) This therefore was not *the ruler*, but *a ruler* in God's house (as the words should be translated); not the principal ruler, but one in great authority under him: perhaps he that was called the sagan (who was vicar to the high-priest; and performed his office when he was sick, or otherwise hindered), or he was the head of one of the courses of the priests, that attended in their turns, at the house of God. Here it is to be noted, that by *the house of God* in this place, we are taught by ver. 23. to understand *the house of the tabernacle.* For as, before the first temple was built, there was a tabernacle for Divine service; so, after the second was founded, they erected a tabernacle, till this temple could be finished: without which they could not have performed the several parts of the worship of God, which were annexed to the several parts of the holy places, according to the law.

Ver. 12. *And Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasiai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer.*] There were three between that Jeroham and Pashur mentioned in Nehemiah: and therefore he was either his great-grandson, or they were different persons, though of the same name.

Ver. 13. *And their brethren, heads of the house of their fathers, a thousand and seven hundred and threescore; very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.*] In the Hebrew they are called *mighty men of valour.* For the service of the house of God required not only great strength of body, but great courage and resolution of mind; especially at that time when they were newly come out of captivity. There was a famous instance of this courage before the captivity, in Azariah: who resisted the king himself, when he would have profaned the holy place, (2 Chron. xxvi. 17, 18, &c.)

Ver. 14. *And of the Levites; Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari.*] These are the third sort of persons, mentioned ver. 2.

Ver. 15. *And Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph.*] This last was descended, it is likely, from that Asaph who lived in David's time, (2 Chron. xx. 14.)

Ver. 16. *And Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, that dwelt in the villages of the Netophathites.*] He speaks of Elkanah, not of Berechiah: for he dwelt at Jerusalem. But there was not room for them all there; therefore Elkanah, and those that belonged to him, dwelt in these villages, till their own cities were rebuilt. They were in the tribe of Judah, (chap. ii. 54.) and waited at Jerusalem in their courses, though they did not dwell there.

Ver. 17. *And the porters.*] Or rather the *guards*, as the Hebrew word signifies, and not *porters.*

Were Shallum, and Akkub, and Talmon, and Ahiman,

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and their brethren: Shallum was the chief.] The next verse tells us, at what places these guards exercised their office.

Ver. 18. *(Who hitherto waited in the king's gate eastward).*] That is, where the king's gate formerly was; which shews that the tabernacle they had erected was not on Mount Moriah, but in Zion, since their return from captivity.

They were porters.] That is, the four persons abovementioned.

In the companies of the children of Levi.] That were at the four sides of the tabernacle, Jerusalem being without walls.

Ver. 19. *And Shallum.*] Mentioned ver. 17.

The son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren (of the house of his father).] That is, the rest of that family.

The Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the gates of the tabernacle.] Their service was to be keepers of the porches of the tabernacle. From which it appears again, that the Jews (as I said before) did pitch a tabernacle upon Mount Zion, till they had rebuilt the temple on Mount Moriah.

And their fathers, being over the host of the Lord.] Here the principal person among them attended, taking care of the tabernacle and all its appurtenances, which some think is meant by the *host of the Lord.*

Were keepers of the entry.] More especially they took care of the court, that none should enter into it but such as the law allowed.

Ver. 20. *And Phinehas the son of Eleazar was the ruler over them in time past.*] So we rightly translate the last word, *lepanim;* which, as R. David Gauz observes in his Tzemoth David, (ad A. M. 2892.) doth not signify that Phinehas was now living, but he was ruler of them *in time past* when he was living. And thus that Hebrew word is rendered, Ruth iv. 7. Psal. cii. 26. But that he should be ruler over this sort of officers seems unlikely, being the son of the high-priest, and after Eleazar high-priest himself: which raised him far above such a low employment. Besides, it is evident he is here speaking of the Levites, not of the priests, and therefore it is probable this Phinehas was only a Levite, called, as his father was, by the ancient name of a high-priest. (See Selden, de Success. in Pontificatum, lib. i. cap. 2. fol. 117. 119.)

And the Lord was with him.] In the Targum, *the Word of the Lord was his helper.* From which Beckius frames this argument against the present Jews, That if he who was with Phinehas was Jehovah the true God, and this Word was with Phinehas, then the Word, in the opinion of this paraphrast, was Jehovah the true God.

Ver. 21. *And Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was porter of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*] Here again the *tabernacle* is mentioned, which, as I said, the first inhabitants of the country, after their return from captivity, erected, till the temple could be built. For they would not be without the public worship of God, and a place was necessary for it. By the *door of the tabernacle,* I suppose, is meant the door which let into the court of the priests; for the Levites might not go into that court; and therefore this is not meant of the door of the sanctuary, as some have thought.

Ver. 22. *All these which were chosen to be porters in the gates were two hundred and twelve.*] Who came in their turns to discharge this office.

These were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages.] See ver. 16.

Whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain.] All things (that is, after their return from captivity), were put into that order at the house of God, which Samuel projected, and David, when he was settled in peace, put in execution. (See chap. xxiii. 5.) For there had been very great confusion, no doubt, in the service of God, in the days of the judges, as there had been in all other things. But when Samuel came to govern, he designed to put things in good order: and especially to make the attendance of God's ministers at his house more regular than it had been. For which end he contrived, in all likelihood, that method of the priests and Levites waiting in their courses; which (Saul being rejected by God) he imparted unto David, whom he anointed by God's appointment to be king over Israel. Who accordingly, in the latter end of his reign, disposed their services at the tabernacle.

In their set office.] Or rather (as it is in the margin) *in their trust;* for the Hebrew word signifies *fidelity:* importing, that their attendance at the house of God was no longer confused and disorderly (as it had been formerly, when there were sometimes too many, and sometimes too few waiting there; or, they had no certain work assigned them, or were negligent for want of overseers), but they every one in their course obediently went about their proper work, and faithfully discharged it.

Ver. 23. *So they and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of the Lord, namely, the house of the tabernacle.*] This verse plainly instructs us that they built a tabernacle for the worship of God, (as I noted ver. 10.) after their return from Babylon, till the temple was finished: and here the priests and Levites attended; as *in the house of the Lord.*

By wards.] According to the courses that David appointed; as it is explained, ver. 25.

Ver. 24. *In four quarters were the porters, towards the east, west, north, and south.*] On the four sides of the tabernacle, as I observed on ver. 18. After the temple was built, these guards were kept, as Dr. Lightfoot notes, on the four quarters of the outward wall. For the wall that encompassed the courts had no gate on the west. (See Prospect of the Temple, chap. 4. sect. 3.)

Ver. 25. *And their brethren, which were in the villages, were to come after seven days.*] Every week a new course came to attend the service of the house of God, and to relieve their brethren.

From time to time with them.] They came to wait their week under the government of the chief porters: who seem to have constantly dwelt at Jerusalem, to see the courses disposed according as David had ordained. So it here follows.

Ver. 26. *For these Levites, the four chief porters, were in their set office.*] The principal porters were four, one at each gate, (ver. 24.) to whom was committed the care of the rest of their brethren to see that they did their duty.

And were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God.] This I shall explain upon chap. xxvi. 20. where it is more distinctly mentioned.

Ver. 27. *And they lodged round about the house of God, because the charge was upon them, and the opening thereof every morning pertained to them.*] Round about the out-

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ward wall, beforementioned, ver. 24. For, as the same learned man observes, neither priests nor Levites had any lodgings in the gates of the courts: nor did the Levites open those doors, but the priests.

Ver. 28. *And certain of them had the charge of ministering vessels, that they should bring them in and out by tale.*] For the use of the priests when they ministered: who returned, when they had done their work, the same number to the Levites, which they had received from them. This was another duty of the Levites.

Ver. 29. *Some of them also were appointed to oversee the vessels, and all the instruments of the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices.*] See upon chap. xxvi. 20.

Ver. 30. *And some of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices.*] Or rather, *but some of the sons of the priests*, &c. For though the Levites had the custody of the spices of which the ointment was made, yet none but the *priests* could compound them and make the ointment.

Ver. 31. *And Mattithiah, one of the Levites (who was the first-born of Shallum the Korahite), had the set office* (or trust) *over the things that were made in the pans.*] To prepare fine flour and oil for the *mincha*, or meat-offering that was offered every morning and evening, as we read Lev. ii. 5, 6. The LXX. (who herein follow the Talmudists) will have this peculiarly refer to the *mincha* offered by the high-priest for himself and his family: which was the tenth part of an *ephah*; half in the morning, and half in the evening, (Lev. vi. 20, &c.)

Ver. 32. *And other of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the shew-bread, to prepare it every sabbath.*] When it was set new upon the table in the holy place, and the old taken away. (See upon Exod. xxv. 30.)

Ver. 33. *And these are the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, who remaining in the chambers were free.*] Others of the Levites, and principal persons among them, were appointed to be singers, and attended nothing else: but dwelt in some chambers about the temple, free from all other employment. And the reason why they dwelt there was, that they might not be defiled, and so made unfit at any time for that ministry: and that they might be ready at hand to attend upon it.

For they were employed in that work day and night.] In learning and teaching to sing, and to play upon instruments both wind and stringed: as appears from chap. xxvi. This was wholly a new thing, Moses having ordained nothing concerning singing and music in the house of God, and seems (as it is objected in the book of Cosri) to be contrary to what he commanded, Deut. xii. 32. *Thou shalt not add unto it* (that is, to the law), *nor take from it:* but they answer very well, that this command concerned the people only, who were forbidden out of their own heads, as we speak, to innovate any thing, and frame laws to themselves out of their own reasonings. But it did not oblige prophets and Divine men, such as Moses was: and therefore David had authority from God (who had not bound up himself to add nothing) to do what he did; as Solomon afterward had to set up another altar in the midst of the court, upon a special occasion, (2 Chron. vii. 7—9.) and Nehemiah to require but a third part of a shekel of the people, chap. x. 32. (Thus Sepher Cosri, par. iii. sect. 11, 12.)

Ver. 34. *These chief fathers of the Levites were chief throughout their generations.*] These were principal persons, among whose families had always been eminent men, who were chosen for this service.

These dwelt at Jerusalem.] They were settled there, for the greater convenience of attending the morning and evening service at the temple, without much trouble. But these words seem to comprehend a great deal more; *viz.* that not only these chief of the Levites, but all those whom he hath mentioned from ver. 3. unto this verse, lived at Jerusalem, and came back with Zerubbabel.

Ver. 35. *And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, Jehiel, whose wife's name was Maachah.*] From hence to the end of the chapter the same genealogy is set down again, which we had in the foregoing chapter, (ver. 29, 30, &c.) and in the same words: and therefore I shall not here transcribe them. Of this I can give no account, but that this narrative of the descent and family of Saul is repeated, the better to join the following history to it, concerning the death of that king. But if we could give no account of it, Conradus Pellicanus thinks it is not irreligious to acknowledge that in these Jewish genealogies, which are very long and useless to us, some errors may have crept in by the negligence of transcribers. Who, in copying of them might not attend sometimes, but be drowsy, as we are apt to be, when we are about any tedious work and not very profitable, in which, if there be any error, the church suffers no damage by it. But there is no need of this.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *NOW the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa.*] This verse, and those that follow to ver. 13. have been explained upon 1 Sam. xxxi. where the same history is related; in the same words, and with very little difference. And it is repeated here, to make way for the history of David (which is mainly intended in the rest of this book), who, by Saul's death, was advanced to the crown.

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines followed hard after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul.*

Ver. 3. *And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers.*

Ver. 4. *Then said Saul to his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me. But his armour-bearer would not, for he was sore afraid. So Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.*

Ver. 5. *And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword, and died.*

Ver. 6. *So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together.*] That is, all that were present with him in the battle: and his family had such a blow by their fall, that it never recovered itself. For though Ish-bosheth reigned over a part of the country, yet it was not in any splendour: such a deadly wound being given to the house of Saul, that it did not long survive him in the kingly authority.

Ver. 7. *And when all the men of Israel that were in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, then they forsook their cities, and fled: and the Phi-*

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listines came and dwelt in them.] By *the valley* is meant the towns in the open country, which were not fortified. (See 1 Sam. xxxi. 7.)

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in Mount Gilboa.*

Ver. 9. *And when they had stripped him, they took his head.*] Which they cut off from his body, as we read 1 Sam. xxxi. 9.

And his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people.] That public thanksgiving might be given by them to their gods for this victory.

Ver. 10. *And they put his armour in the house of their gods.*] In the temple of Ashtaroth, as the same book tells us, (1 Sam. xxxi. 10.)

And fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.] These two, Dagon and Ashtaroth, were the principal gods of the country of the Philistines; unto whom they sent these trophies of their victory. And the place forenamed informs us where they fastened his body, after they had separated his head from it, and stripped off the skin and the hair; for the Hebrew word signifies a *skull.*

Ver. 11. *And when all Jabesh-Gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul.*] By Jabesh-Gilead, is meant the people of the city, and of the territory round about it.

Ver. 12. *They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.*] This was a noble instance of their courage, and of their love and gratitude to their prince: who had some excellent qualities in him, and had highly obliged this city in the beginning of his reign: as I have observed on the book of Samuel. If we may believe Josephus, there was a law among the Jews, that they who killed themselves should be denied burial: for this was all the punishment that could be inflicted on them after they were dead, for so great a sin. Yet David highly approved this fact of the men of Jabesh-Gilead, who buried Saul: and therefore the Jews make this exception to the rule, That if they killed themselves merely to avoid that reproach which might be cast upon them if they lived, they might be buried: and they instance in Samson and Saul. Who they fancy repented of his many sins, after Samuel had appeared to him, and told him of his sad fate. But the two following verses seem to contradict this. (See Grotius, in his book de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 19. sect. 5.)

Ver. 13. *So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it.*] His two great transgressions (one against the express order and command of God by Samuel, and the other against a known law of Moses) were his sparing the Amalekites, and his consulting the witch of Endor: which were plain proofs that he did not mind God, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 14. *And inquired not of the Lord.*] He did not regard him as he ought to have done: for otherwise he did inquire of him, (1 Sam. xxviii. 6.) but not with a religious mind.

Therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.] Kingdoms are never translated from one family to another, but injustice and impiety go before, as Grotius here notes. Which the son of Sirach expresses admirably, Ecclus. x. 8. "Because of unrighteous dealings, injuries, and riches got by deceit, the kingdom is translated from one people to another."

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *THEN.*] That is, after the death of Ish-bosheth: for many things passed after the death of Saul which are here omitted. As, the coming of the Amalekite to David with the news of it; his lamentation over Saul and Jonathan; his anointing at Hebron over the tribe of Judah; the death of Abner, and then of Ish-bosheth. After which this author relates the promotion of David to be king of all the tribes of Israel, by the full consent of all the people.

All Israel gathered themselves together to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.] By *all Israel* is meant the elders of all their tribes, 2 Sam. v. 1. where this verse is explained.

Ver. 2. *And moreover, in time past, when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and the Lord thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel.*] See 2 Sam. v. 2. where there are the very same words.

Ver. 3. *Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron, before the Lord; and they anointed David king over Israel.*] See there, 2 Sam. v. 3.

According to the word of the Lord by Samuel.] These words are added unto those in the book of Samuel, to shew how the people came to know that God told David (as they say in the foregoing verse) he should govern Israel. Samuel declared it to him, and published it, no doubt, among the people.

Ver. 4. *And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus.*] See concerning this place, Judg. xix. 10.

Where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land.] See 2 Sam. v. 6.

Ver. 5. *And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David.*] The insolent language of the Jebusites is recorded more largely in 2 Sam. v. 6. where see what I have noted.

Ver. 6. *And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and was chief.*] It is evident Joab was before this in a great station, commanding all the forces of Judah; as may be gathered from 2 Sam. ii. 13, 14. and iii. 22, 23. But now he was a commander-in-chief of all the forces both of Judah and Israel; which made him very powerful: or, perhaps, Abishai being his elder brother, was general of the forces before; and this place gives an account how Joab came to have the pre-eminence, by this great achievement.

Ver. 7. *And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it The city of David.*] Because here he chose to have his constant residence: in order to which he enlarged and adorned it with many buildings, as it here follows.

Ver. 8. *And he built the city round about, even from Millo round about.*] See 2 Sam. v. 9.

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And Joab repaired the rest of the city.] He repaired, perhaps, the fortifications, which had been, in the time of the siege, much shattered. And, as Conradus Pellicanus thinks, built some houses, for the quartering of his soldiers.

Ver. 9. *So David waxed greater and greater: for the Lord of hosts was with him.*] The Word of the Lord was his help, as the Targum expresses it. (See 2 Sam. v. 10.)

Ver. 10. *These also are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom.*] Having touched upon David's promotion to the throne, and his settlement in Zion, he next thought fit to relate who those valiant men were that assisted him in his advancement, and helped to establish him in his authority. They were such, in all likelihood, as had accompanied him during his persecution, when they gave David many proofs of their valour and affection, as they also did afterward.

And with all Israel, to make him king.] A great many of the Israelites, as is related in the next chapter, came to David before the death of Saul, believing he was designed by God to be their king.

According to the word of the Lord concerning Israel.] That David should be king over all Israel: which word was delivered by Samuel, and known to all the people, as well as to Saul and Jonathan.

Ver. 11. *And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains: he lifted up his spear against three hundred, slain by him at one time.*] I have explained this upon 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. where I observed, how Kimchi reconciles this place to that, which saith he slew eight hundred. But I now think it plainer to say, That he slew three hundred with his own hand, and thereby routed the enemy, and put them to flight, in which five hundred more were killed in the pursuit. All which might be said to be slain by him; because the slaughter he made was the cause the rest were slain. Or, as Mayerus (upon Seder Olam) interprets it; After he had slain three hundred, he was so little tired, that he slew as many more as made eight hundred.

Ver. 12. *And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite.*] The son of Ahothi, as Kimchi understands it; for this is not the name of a country, but of a family.

Who was one of the three mighties.] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 9.

Ver. 13. *He was with David at Pas-dammim.*] The same with Ephes-dammin, 1 Sam. xvii. 1.

And there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines.

Ver. 14. *And they set themselves in the midst of that parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines; and the Lord saved them by a great deliverance.*] All this is related, and hath been explained in 2 Sam. xxiii. 9—12.

Ver. 15. *Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim.*] See there, ver. 13.

Ver. 16. *And David was then in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison was then at Beth-lehem.*] See there, ver. 14.

Ver. 17. *And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, that is at the gate!*] See ver. 15. He did not desire any one should venture to fetch him some of this water, but in a very hot day, said, as we sometimes do, What would I not give for a draught of those cool and refreshing waters! which he remembered he had drunk of freely in his youth.

Ver. 18. *And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the Lord.*

Ver. 19. *And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing. Shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it: therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighties.*] See all this explained in that place, ver. 16, 17.

Ver. 20. *And Abishai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three: for lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew them, and had a name among the three.*] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 18. There are but two here mentioned; the third, Abarbinel thinks, was Adina the son of Shiza, mentioned ver. 42. who is said to be a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him.

Ver. 21. *Of the three he was more honourable than the two, for he was their captain.*] Perhaps he was the first, and led them on, in that bold exploit at Beth-lehem.

Howbeit he attained not unto the first three.] But came short of them in their great achievements.

Ver. 22. *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabziel, who had done many acts; he slew two lion-like men of Moab: also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day.*] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 20.

Ver. 23. *And he slew an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits high,* &c.] The country of Egypt was famous for men of vast bigness, as we learn from Herodotus, lib. ii. cap. 130. 143. 153. 175, 176. See Huetius, in his Quæstiones Alnetanæ, lib. ii. p. 180. where he observes, out of Pliny, that in Ethiopia there was a people that were eight cubits high, (lib. vi. cap. 30. lib. vii. cap. 2.)

Ver. 24. *These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among the three mighties.*] See all this explained in the forenamed book, 2 Sam. xxiii. 21, 22.

Ver. 25. *Behold, he was honourable among the thirty, but attained not to the first three.*] He sets a mark of honour upon him as a man of great reputation among the thirty, though he did not rise up to the pitch of the first three, nor of Abishai, though it is likely he excelled the third. (See there, ver. 23.)

And David set him over his guard.] The Cherethites and Pelethites. Or, as some take it, he made him president of his council, as the Hebrew word imports (so Kimchi), there being a rare conjunction in him of wisdom with valour.

Ver. 26. *Also the valiant men of the armies were Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem.*] See there, ver. 24. These were chief commanders in the army, either colonels, as we speak, or captains; and they were under the command of the three foregoing great men, who were over them, as they were over the soldiers. But these great men were below the first three: who are said, in the tenth verse of this chapter, to be *mighty men to David* (as the words are in the Hebrew), because they attended upon him continually, as the keepers of his body, and had no other command.

Ver. 27. *Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite.*] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 25.

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Ver. 28. *Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abi-ezer the Antothite.*] See there, ver. 26. All the rest that follow are mentioned in that chapter of the second book of Samuel, with some difference in their names, as I have there noted. Some others also are added, being men of great note, though not equal to the abovenamed. Particularly he relates who were the chief commanders, in the borders of the kingdom beyond Jordan, (ver. 42, &c.) This appears by the names of their country, which was beyond that river.

There is a little difficulty in the thirty-eighth verse, where Joel, who is called Igal in 2 Sam. xxiii. 36. (there being nothing more common than such alterations in names), is said to be the brother of Nathan: which seems not to consist with what is said in the other place, that he was the son of Nathan. But the account of this is easy, for he might be both, if he was his adopted son, for want of children: the word *son* often signifying no more than a nephew, as the word *brother* doth one near of kin. As for the rest of the variations, Conradus Pellicanus resolves, that we need not trouble ourselves about the errors of transcribers, which we may acknowledge, in such matters as these, without any prejudice to faith, truth, or good manners. So he concludes this chapter.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *NOW these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war.*] This author thought fit to do those the honour of being remembered (which is omitted in the book of Samuel), who came and joined themselves to David, when he was in exile: and were afterward very assistant to him in his wars. They are said to come to him, while he *kept himself close because of Saul:* because they pitying David's condition, who was forced to skulk in secret places to secure himself from Saul's fury, designed to help him, and it is likely left their habitations, and went to seek him: though they did not actually join him till he came to Ziklag.

Ver. 2. *They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left.*] Which gave them a great advantage in war: and made them more valuable soldiers. (See Judg. xx. 16.)

In hurling stones, and shooting arrows out of a bow.] They were excellent slingers as well as archers.

Even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.] There was some extraordinary cause which moved some of Saul's kindred, as well as of his tribe, to desert him, and go over to David. Either the great virtue of David attracted them, or they abhorred to see an innocent person so violently persecuted; or, perhaps, they were pious persons, who had a great regard to the words of Samuel, concerning David's right to the kingdom.

Ver. 3. *The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite, and Jeziel and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth, and Berachah, and Jehu the Antothite.*] There is mention before of Azmaveth, (chap. viii. 36.) as descended from Micah the son of Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul.

Ver. 4. *And Ismaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty.*] I suppose there were thirty Benjamites came over to David at one time, and this was their leader.

And Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite.

Ver. 5. *Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite.*

Ver. 6. *Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites.*

Ver. 7. *And Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.*] These were the principal persons among the thirty, mentioned ver. 4. the rest, perhaps, were not of such note.

Ver. 8. *And of the Gadites there separated themselves.*] From their countrymen and families, which they left to follow David.

Unto David, into the hold of the wilderness.] There are several *holds*, or inaccessible places mentioned, where David secured himself from Saul's persecution. (See 1 Sam. xxii. 4. xxiii. 14. xxiv. 22.) But some think he still speaks of those that came to David at Ziklag: which may be called *a hold*, they think, as the *city of David* is, chap. xi. 7. because he fortified it.

Men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler.] Under these are comprehended all weapons of war, which they could manage skilfully; being bred to it, and wanting no courage to engage any enemy.

Whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains.] They had a fierceness in their countenances, which terrified their enemies; who durst not look them in their face, but ran away as soon as they saw them. But they could not save themselves by flight, being pursued so swiftly by these men, that they overtook them and slew them. Bochart observes out of Aristotle, that lions have faces more like men than any other creatures, but very stern and terrible.

Ver. 9. *Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third.*] They are reckoned up thus distinctly, according to the dignity and precedence which they had in their own country; or according to the order wherein they came to David.

Ver. 10. *Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth.*

Ver. 11. *Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh.*

Ver. 12. *Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth.*

Ver. 13. *Jeremiah the tenth, Machbanai the eleventh.*

Ver. 14. *These were of the sons of Gad, captains of the host: one of the least was over a hundred, and the greatest over a thousand.*] They did not bring a host of men with them, but they had been commanders of the army in their own country. Or, when David came to the crown, he thought them worthy to be preferred, and the lowest of them was made a centurion.

Ver. 15. *These are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflown all his banks.*] This is an instance of their fearless valour, that they ventured over Jordan in the most dangerous season: and perhaps swam over, when the stream was most rapid and violent, to help their brethren. (See Josh. iii. 15.)

And they put to flight all them of the valleys, both towards the east and towards the west.] When Saul was engaged to attend the motions of the Philistines, it is likely some people both of the eastern and western countries,

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which bordered upon Jordan, laid hold of this opportunity to invade and spoil the land thereabout; which moved these men to go to their relief, and God gave them a great victory over them. Where these valleys lay, and what enemies these men encountered, is no where recorded.

Ver. 16. *And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David.*] Besides those of Saul's kindred beforementioned, there were others of that tribe, together with some of Judah, who came to him when he was in the hold, mentioned ver. 8. which I conjectured might be Ziklag; but I rather think it was some of the holds he was in, when he lay in the wilderness.

Ver. 17. *And David went out to meet them.*] They were so considerable, either for their number, or quality, that David went out (attended, no doubt, with some of his men) to meet them, before they came to the hold.

And answered and said unto them.] After the first salutation which they made him, he replied in the following words.

If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you.] As much as to say, If you be really friends, you are welcome, and I will make a league with you.

But if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.] He knew himself to be so innocent, both with respect to Saul and all other men, whom he had no way injured, that he doubted not God would protect him, and do him right against these men, if they came with bad intentions to him. What should make him suspect there might possibly be some treachery designed, is not now to be known. Perhaps some had before this come with pretences of great kindness to him, whom he had found to be false: which made him now more cautious whom he entertained.

Ver. 18. *Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains.*] The spirit of power, saith the Targum: that is, God powerfully moved him with an heroical boldness, and resolution, in the name of them all, to profess their fidelity to David, in such pathetical words, as convinced him they were friends. Rasi compares with this those words in Judg. vi. 34. But none hath discoursed so well upon these words as Maimonides, who observes, that by *the spirit* in such places as this, is not to be understood a power to speak or declare any thing; but only to excite those who felt it, to do some excellent thing either for particular persons, or the whole church. With this power Moses was endued, when he came to man's estate, and was moved to smite the Egyptian, who injured one of his brethren. Which power did not leave him, but remained still with him when he fled into Midian. (See Exod. ii. 17.) This power exerted itself in David after he was anointed, 1 Sam. xv. 13. xvii. 34. (See More Nevoch. par. ii. cap. 45.)

And he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse.] He seems to have broken out into this speech with a sudden violence, being unable to hear with patience their fidelity questioned. For the words *and he said,* are not in the Hebrew text; nor those *are we:* but only, *thine David,* &c. Which is a broken speech, expressing great passion.

Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers.] He most affectionately wishes all happiness to him, and to all that came to his assistance: which implies a desire they might not prosper, if they did not now sincerely come to his help.

For thy God helpeth thee.] God they saw was on his side, who, by his marvellous deliverances of him, had shewn he had a special affection to him, and care of him: and therefore they believed would bless those that came to his help.

Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.] He preferred them to considerable commands in his army, when he came to be king: for it is not likely he would set them above those, who had served him all the time of his exile; they being but new comers.

Ver. 19. *And there fell some of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle; but they helped them not.*] It seems they offered their service to David, when he was going with the Philistines to help them against Saul, in the last battle which he fought. This shews a strange zeal for David, and abhorrence of Saul's enmity to him, that they should then join their forces with him, when he took part with the Philistines. But neither they, nor the rest of David's men were admitted to fight in that battle.

For the lords of the Philistines, upon advertisement, sent him away, saying, He will fall to his master Saul to the jeopardy of our heads.] First kill them, and then flee to Saul and make his peace with him, at the cost of their heads. (See 1 Sam. xxix. 3, &c.)

Ver. 20. *As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediael, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands that were of Manasseh.*] These came to him, in that nick of time, when he went from the Philistines, in his return to Ziklag. Which fell out very opportunely, for they being valiant men, assisted him against that band of robbers, the Amalekites, who had burnt Ziklag, and carried captive their wives and children. He had indeed only six hundred men with him in that expedition, but these were of the number, who, as it follows, did him great service in recovery of his losses.

Ver. 21. *And they helped David against the band of the rovers; for they were all mighty men of valour.*] They were not at all disheartened, when they found David in such exceeding great distress; but being most valiant captains, offered their service to him in the pursuit of his enemies.

And were captains in the host.] In their own country they had been commanders of a company of men; many of which, it is likely, they brought over to David with them: or, they followed after them, as is intimated in the following words.

Ver. 22. *For at that time, day by day, there came to David to help him.*] After the battle wherein Saul was slain, so many resorted to him every day, that his forces grew very considerable.

Until it was a great host, like the host of God.] A very formidable host. Which he compares to the host of heaven (the stars or the angels), because they were numerous, and many of them illustrious persons.

Ver. 23. *And these are the numbers of the bands that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron.*] The great resort to him at Ziklag, mentioned in the fore-

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going verse, made greater numbers flock to him, when by God's direction he went to Hebron: and they brought their arms with them, that they might be ready to fight for him.

To turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord.] They remembered what Samuel had said, and resolved to anoint him king, (2 Sam. ii. 4.)

Ver. 24. *The children of Judah, that bare shield and spear, were six thousand and eight hundred ready armed to the war.*] In the place beforenamed we read, *the men of Judah came* and anointed him king: which signifies the whole tribe consented to it. Therefore these six thousand and eight hundred men were only the first that came, and perhaps appeared in the name of the rest.

Ver. 25. *Of the children of Simeon, mighty men of valour for the war, seven thousand and one hundred.*] Though David was anointed king only over the tribe of Judah (one of Saul's posterity reigning over Israel), yet some of other tribes came and owned David for their king; particularly a great number of the tribe of Simeon, who were near neighbours to Judah.

Ver. 26. *Of the children of Levi, four thousand and six hundred.*] Those came out of several tribes, into which they were dispersed; yet all agreed to shew their affection to David.

Ver. 27. *And Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites.*] He was not the high-priest, for Abiathar held that place: but he was chief, as Jarchi thinks, of one of the courses of the priests; and now the chief commander of those of the family of Aaron, who came to invite David to take the government upon him. He was a man of war also, and brought these priests armed with him: for it is said, of all that came to David to Hebron, (ver. 23.) that they were ready armed for the war, in case any should oppose their design. (See Selden, de Succession. ad Pontificatum, lib. i. cap. 3.)

And with him were three thousand and seven hundred.] Besides those of the Levites beforenamed.

Ver. 28. *And Zadok, a young man mighty of valour, and of his father's house twenty-and-two captains.*] It is likely, he is the same person who was made high-priest in Solomon's time, who was now very young, but had a great deal of courage; whom two-and-twenty of his family followed, who were commanders of so many companies.

Ver. 29. *And of the children of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, three thousand.*] We read of several of this tribe, and of Saul's kindred, that came to David before this, (ver. 1, 2. 16.) but now a greater number came over to him; which shews his interest to be considerably grown among them.

For hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul.] But still a multitude of them (as it is in the Hebrew) adhered to the house of Saul, and endeavoured to keep the crown in that family. And, as Solomon Jarchi, and D. Kimchi, and others, understand it, the *three thousand* beforementioned, being of Saul's kindred, were of that mind, looking upon his grandson as the lawful heir of the kingdom, who ought to succeed in it. But now they altered their opinion, and came to David.

Ver. 30. *And of the children of Ephraim twenty thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of valour, famous throughout the house of their fathers.*] This was so great a number, that by their defection from the house of Saul, it must needs be extremely weakened; especially since they were men of such great account in that tribe.

Ver. 31. *And of the half tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand.*] He speaks of those on this side Jordan, for of those beyond it on the other side he speaks afterward, (ver. 37.)

Which were expressed by name, to come and make David king.] These were appointed to go in the name of the rest of their brethren, and assure David of their affection to him; being picked (as we speak) out of the whole tribe, for this purpose. And some think the names of these men were set down in the public register of the kings of Judah: from which this author transcribed it.

Ver. 32. *And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times.*] The Targum, and many of the Jews (particularly Maimonides in Rosch Hashanah), take this to signify their skill, in computing the beginning of their years, and months, and intercalations, that it might be certainly known when their feasts were to be celebrated. Others think they were great astronomers; whence the Hebrew doctors say, that the name of this tribe was engraven in the sapphire in the high-priest's breastplate, and that their banner was of a sky colour, having the figures of the sun, moon, and stars, wrought in it, because of their skill in the motions of the heavenly bodies. Others take it to signify their skill in the weather, whereby they knew the proper season for sowing, planting, reaping, and navigation. Many such-like fancies there are, which seem impertinent to the present business, which required men of great abilities in political affairs, who could discern what was fit to be done in the various cases of human life, and particularly what was good for the commonwealth in all turns of affairs. Thus Solomon Jarchi himself: "They knew how to advise and give counsel, according to the nature and circumstances of all cases: which sort of men David stood in great need of at this time, to consult the best means to confirm him in his kingdom."

To know what Israel ought to do.] These words shew they were men skilful in secular affairs: and now, I suppose, told the Israelites it was the proper time to think of David, and make him their king; after the Philistines had gained so great a victory over Saul, and destroyed his family. For none was so likely to quell the Philistines as he, who had so often beaten them.

The heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.] These two hundred were eminent persons among them; and were of such known wisdom and judgment, that they had all the rest of their tribe at their beck.

Ver. 33. *Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand.*] This is the greatest number of any tribe that went over to David; that is, gave him assurance of their readiness to assist him to make him king of Israel. For it is not likely, that so many as are here mentioned went to Hebron, as soon as David came thither.

Which could keep rank.] Men well disciplined; or, as some understand it, men that would stand their ground, and not flinch when they were assaulted by their enemies.

They were not of double heart.] But all sincerely affected to David, though there were so many of them. Thus some

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understand it; but others think, it rather relates to the foregoing words, that they had not a counterfeit courage, but would stand to it (as we speak) with a firm resolution, to die rather than stagger in their undertaking. For this is affirmed of them all, that they *came with a perfect heart unto David,* (ver. 38.) and therefore needs not to be said of these in particular, there being no reason to suspect their loyalty.

Ver. 34. *And of Naphtali a thousand captains, and with them, with shield and spear, thirty and seven thousand.*

Ver. 35. *And of the Danites, expert in war, twenty and eight thousand and six hundred.*

Ver. 36. *And of Asher, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, forty thousand.*

Ver. 37. *And on the other side of Jordan, of the Reubenites, and of the Gadites, and of the half tribe of Manasseh, with all manner of instruments of war for the battle, a hundred and twenty thousand.*] Here were so many thousands of valiant men, expert in war, reckoned up in the several tribes of Israel; that Saul could not well have been overthrown in battle by the Philistines, if God had not forsaken him, and the hearts of his people had not been alienated from him.

Ver. 38. *All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest of Israel were of one heart to make David king.*] After the death of Ish-bosheth (see 2 Sam. v.) all Israel, "communi consilio," *with one consent,* (as Maimonides explains this phrase, *with one heart,* More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 39.) came and joined with their brethren, who were gone over to him. And they were such a number, men of such undaunted spirits and expert in war, who crowded in to him, that the like is not to be found in any history. For, as Herodotus saith, in his Polyhymnia, in the army of Xerxes there were πολλοὶ μὲν ἄνθρωποι, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἄνδρες, *a world of people, but few men;* that is, men of courage and conduct; with which David's army so abounded, that every one of this vast number seems to have been fit to command in an army.

Ver. 39. *And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking.*] The famous historian Dion (as Victorinus Strigelius here observes) saith, he never saw a more splendid and pompous show than that was, when the emperor Severus entered Rome. But here was a far more noble feast, which lasted three days, for three hundred forty-eight thousand and eight hundred brave men.

For their brethren had prepared for them.] They who were before actually gone over to David, and others about Hebron, hearing of such a great concourse of people, had made a preparation for their entertainment.

Ver. 40. *Moreover, they that were nigh them, even unto Issachar, and Zebulun, and Naphtali.*] All the neighbouring countries brought in provisions for those who dwelt more remote: their common concernments begetting great love and kindness (as there ought always to be, especially on such occasions) for all their brethren, though never so distant from them.

Brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen.] Whom they employed, in that country, in carrying burdens; for horses were very scarce among them. So Bochart observes, that they did not only ride upon mules, but some of them were ἀχθοφόροι, *employed in carrying burdens,* as these were. Others were ζευγῖται, *yoked to draw chariots,* (lib. ii. Hieroz. par. i. cap. 19.) The same he observes of oxen, that though they seem made rather for the plough, yet they made them serve for the other purpose also, of bearing burdens.

And meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly.] All sort of provisions for a great feast.

For there was joy in Israel.] Their hearts were enlarged with joy to see an end of their division, by their union under such a king; as they might reasonably hope would procure great happiness to them.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *AND David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader.*] With all the principal persons in authority, who had any command over others. For it is a dangerous thing for a prince, especially in the beginning of his reign, to rely wholly upon himself alone, and not advise with others.

Ver. 2. *And David said unto all the congregation of Israel.*] Who were represented by those great men, whom he had called together for their advice.

If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God.] Whom, I suppose, he intended to consult, as well as them.

Let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in the land of Israel.] Who were not there present.

And with them also the priests and Levites which are in the cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us.] Whose assistance was very necessary, in the sacred work which he intended.

Ver. 3. *And let us bring again the ark of our God to us.*] In the book of Samuel this is said to have been done after that which here follows, in the next chapter, concerning Hiram and David's wars with the Philistines; and so it was. Only David (as became a good king, whose first care is about religion) took advice with the elders of the people, as soon as he came to the crown, concerning the bringing up the ark of God. Which was put in execution afterward, when they had gone to their several countries, and spoken with the people about it; and a time was appointed for their meeting to do it. In the mean time Hiram sent his ambassadors to him, and the Philistines came twice to disturb him, and were beaten by him; and then all the people met in a vast number (it is probable at some solemn festival) to bring the ark to its place.

For we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.] They were not solicitous in his days to find a fit place for the residence of the ark of God, where they might conveniently attend upon his worship and service. For they were hindered by perpetual wars, and contented themselves with going to Gibeon, where the tabernacle was; though without the presence of God in it. But it is probable, that Saul, after David fled from him, and he was haunted by that evil spirit, that oft came upon him, grew so profane that he was not concerned about religion. So the words are in the Hebrew, *We inquired not of it,* or *about it.*

Ver. 4. *And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.*]

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They were convinced of their negligence, and piously disposed to comply with the king's desire.

Ver. 5. *So David gathered all Israel together.*] Some chosen persons out of all the tribes, with their attendants (who represented all the rest): which were thirty thousand, (2 Sam. vi. 1.)

From Shihor of Egypt even to the entering of Hemath.] The former of these, Shihor, was the southern bounds, as Hemath was the northern of the land of Canaan. And by Sihor (called in other places the river of Egypt) the Targum, and most of the Jews, even Abarbinel himself, understand the river Nile. But there is great reason to take it for a little branch of that river, as I have shewn upon Gen. xv. 18. and see upon Numb. xxxiv. 5. Josh. xiii. 3.

To bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim.] Where it had been a long time, ever since it returned out of the land of the Philistines. (See 1 Sam. vi. *ult.* vii. 1.)

Ver. 6. *And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjath-jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of the Lord, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it.*] See 2 Sam. vi. 1.

Ver. 7. *And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart.*] They had so long been without it, that they had forgot how it ought to be carried. (See 2 Sam. vi. 3.)

Ver. 8. *And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.*] See there, ver. 5.

Ver. 9. *And when they came to the threshing-floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled.*

Ver. 10. *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put forth his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.*

Ver. 11. *And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perez-uzza to this day.*] All this hath been explained in the forenamed place, ver. 6—8.

Ver. 12. *And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?*] See there, ver. 9. It is an old observation, that "pœna ad unum, metus ad plures pervenit;" *punishment falls upon one, the fear of it falls upon all:* which justifies the severity of God, as not contrary to his mercy, in such cases.

Ver. 13. *So David brought not the ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.*] See there also, ver. 10.

Ver. 14. *And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that he had.*] See there, ver. 11. The Targum here pretends to give us an account how God blessed this family, by increasing it prodigiously with a numerous issue; of which the Jews were so desirous, that they could think of no greater blessing. For his wife and eight daughters (says that paraphrast), the wives of his sons, brought each of them at one birth eight sons: so that fathers and sons made up fourscore and one. But though history acquaints us with wondrous births of many children at a time, yet there is no ground to believe this of so many in one family.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *NOW Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and timber of cedars, with masons and carpenters, to build him a house.*

Ver. 2. *And David perceived that the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel; for his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel.*] See both these verses explained in 2 Sam. v. 11, 12. where the same thing is related, almost in the same words.

Ver. 3. *And David took more wives at Jerusalem; and David begat more sons and daughters.*] After he came from Hebron, and had possessed himself of Jerusalem, he took more wives and concubines also, as we read 2 Sam. v. 13. But they are all here called *wives*, for so they were: though not principal wives (as Pellicanus notes); that is, not such as governed the family, for that the concubines did not.

Ver. 4. *Now these are the names of his children which he had in Jerusalem: Shammua, and Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon.*

Ver. 5. *And Ibhar, and Elishua, and Elpalet.*

Ver. 6. *And Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia.*

Ver. 7. *And Elishama, and Beeliada, and Eliphalet.*] In 2 Sam. v. 14—16. there are but eleven mentioned, whereas here are thirteen; of which I gave some account in that place. To which I shall here add, that some of them died in their childhood, which are reckoned here, but not in the other place. For here are two Eliphalets, the first of which dying young, the last was so called to preserve his memory. So Kimchi writes very judiciously; perhaps neither the first Eliphalet, nor Nogah, are mentioned in the book of Samuel, because they were not then living, but they are recorded here: because the author of this book proposed to himself to give an account of all David's sons born at Jerusalem, as he saith ver. 4. As for the difference between Elpalet ver. 5. and Eliphalet in this verse, Simeon de Muis hath well observed, it ought not to make any one think there is an error either here or in any other place: for that king of France who is commonly called Clodovæus, is called, by Cassiodore Luduinus, Ludovicus, and, in Hincmar, Hludovicus: such differences there are in the pronunciation of the same name, the examples of which are infinite, as he speaks in his Varia Sacra.

Ver. 8. *And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David: and David heard of it, and went out against them.*] See 2 Sam. v. 17.

Ver. 9. *And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.*] This phrase *spread themselves*, seems to import that they were very numerous, and assured themselves of victory. (See there, ver. 18.)

Ver. 10. *And David inquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto him, Go up; for I will deliver them into thine hand.*

Ver. 11. *So they came up to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there. Then said David, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand, like the breaking forth of waters: therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim.*] See these verses explained in 2 Sam. v. 19, 20.

Ver. 12. *And when they had left their gods there, David*

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gave a commandment, and they were burnt with fire.] No wonder they could not preserve such gods as could not preserve them. Which David would not honour, as they had done the ark when they took it, but burnt them. (See there, ver. 21.)

Ver. 13. *And the Philistines yet again spread themselves abroad in the valley.*

Ver. 14. *Therefore David inquired again of God; and God said unto him, Go not up after them; turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees.*

Ver. 15. *And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry-trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone forth before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.*

Ver. 16. *David therefore did as the Lord commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer.*] See there, 2 Sam. v. 22—25.

Ver. 17. *And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations.*] Upon all those upon whom the fame of him came: that is, all the neighbouring countries.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *AND David made him houses in the city of David.*] He had need of many houses, because he had many wives and children, as we read before: who could not all well live in one house, unless we suppose it to be very large, and to contain many apartments, which may be called houses.

And prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.] As we read in 2 Sam. vi. 17. For he did not think fit to bring the tabernacle from Gibeon, because he intended shortly to build a house for the ark. Or, as Conradus Pellicanus thinks, the tabernacle of Moses, having been long neglected, was grown ruinous: and he thought it better to prepare a new tabernacle than repair the old.

Ver. 2. *Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever.*] The former miscarriage, when they brought up the ark from Kirjath-jearim, had taught him to use it with greater reverence, according to the prescription of the law; which ordered the Levites to carry it upon their shoulders. (See Numb. vi. 15. vii. 9.)

Ver. 3. *And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the Lord unto his place which he had prepared for it.*] See 2 Sam. vi. 15.

Ver. 4. *And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites.*] Whom he ordered should be sent for before, when he first attempted to bring up the ark, but we do not read that they came, (chap. xiii. 2. 5.) therefore now he actually got them together.

Ver. 5. *Of the sons of Kohath; Uriel the chief, and his brethren a hundred and twenty.*] The sons of Kohath are mentioned in Exod. vi. 17, 18. and Uriel is none of them: therefore he was his grandson, who proved so famous, that his descendants are reckoned in the first place.

Ver. 6. *Of the sons of Merari; Asaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred and twenty.*

Ver. 7. *Of the sons of Gershom; Joel the chief, and his brethren a hundred and thirty.*

Ver. 8. *Of the sons of Elizaphan; Shemaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred.*] He was the son of Uzziel, the youngest son of Kohath. (See Exod. vi. 18. 23. Numb. iv. 3.)

Ver. 9. *Of the sons of Hebron; Eliel the chief, and his brethren fourscore.*

Ver. 10. *Of the sons of Uzziel; Amminadab the chief, and his brethren a hundred and twelve.*] These two last named were the sons of Kohath.

Ver. 11. *And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests.*] I have observed here before, that Zadok was in the greatest favour with David: and therefore is mentioned first, though Abiathar was the high-priest, and Zadok only the second priest. (See upon 2 Sam. xv. 27. 29.)

And for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab.] The six persons mentioned in the foregoing verses.

Ver. 12. *And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it.*] This sanctification was by washing their bodies and garments, abstaining from their wives, and other purifications. (See Exod. xix. 10. 15.)

Ver. 13. *For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us.*] It seems the priests and Levites were not well acquainted with the law; or, the ark having been very long in one place, they had forgot how it ought to be removed: and did not sanctify themselves, and seriously consider their duty. At least, they that were then present (for the chief were not then assembled, as I said ver. 4.) were ignorant, or careless.

For that we sought him not after the due order.] This good king doth not wholly excuse himself, and lay all the blame on them: but puts himself into the number of those who were negligent in this matter. For it was his duty as well as theirs to look into the law, and pray to God for his direction. There were four faults committed: First, in putting the ark into the cart, which should have been carried by the Levites on their shoulders. Secondly, the Levites were not permitted to touch the ark, as Uzza did. Thirdly, he was no Levite, and therefore more grievously offended. (Numb. xvi. 28.) Lastly, he wanted faith, that God would take care of the ark. This last David could not help: but the three first he might have prevented.

Ver. 14. *So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel.*] From this place, and some others, (as Josh. iii. 3.) Buxtorf truly infers, I think, that all the tribe of Levi had a right to carry the ark, the priests as well as the others. But while they were in the wilderness, they that were bare Levites commonly did it, because the priests were few, and had other employment. But the priests, being Levites, might do it when they pleased, or were appointed to it. (See Histor. Arcæ, cap. 8. sect. 2.)

Ver. 15. *And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders, with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded, according to the word of the Lord.*] The children of Kohath had this peculiar privilege: who are the Levites here mentioned, (Numb. iv. 4.)

Ver. 16. *And David spake to the chief of the Levites.*] To those six persons beforementioned, ver. 5, 6, &c.

To appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments

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of music, psalteries, and harps, and cymbals.] They that were chief among them knew who could sing well, and play upon such instruments as are here mentioned: the best of which were to be ordered to perform this service.

Sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.] Singing so loud that all might hear, and have their hearts lifted up with joy in God. (See 2 Chron. xx. 19.) Here it may be observed, that though David did not build the temple, yet he ordered how the service of God should be performed there, in a more solemn manner than it had been hitherto, with singing and musical instruments. Which began now when the ark was brought to the place prepared for it; and was ordered afterward to be constantly performed every day, (chap. xvi. 4. 42.) And indeed there was scarce any solemn service performed to their gods, either by Greeks or barbarians, without both vocal and instrumental music, as the illustrious Ezekiel Spanhemius hath observed out of Strabo, lib. x. p. 467. See him upon Callimachus's hymn to Diana, ver. 245. where he notes out of Plutarch, that their musical instruments were three (as they were here); and that music was thought to be a thing so heavenly, that their gods were accounted the inventors of the principal instruments of it. (See upon ver. 295.) Certain it is that the Greeks were not the inventors of them, but they had them out of the east, as he shews upon ver. 249. Which appears by the names of some of them, which are plainly extant in the Bible, as Bochartus hath observed.

Ver. 17. *So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brethren, Ethan the son of Kushaiah.*] These three were the principal, who were appointed to govern the rest.

Ver. 18. *And with them their brethren of the second degree, Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel.*] The LXX. take *Ben* for an appellative, and join it with the next, as if he had said, *Zechariah the son of Jaaziel.* But the Jews take it for a proper name of one of the singers (as we do), and David Kimchi thinks this is the person to whom David directed the ninth psalm, to be sung by him, upon the occasion of the death of Saul; for it is said to be *Laben*, which he understands to be *to Ben* the singer.

And Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Uni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-Edom, and Jeiel, the porters.] This was the office of these of the second degree; who were also, when their attendance was over, instructed in music, and assisted in it when they were not in the other employment.

Ver. 19. *So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass.*

Ver. 20. *And Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah.*] Here is no mention made of Ben; which some imagine is, because, before they came to execute their office, he fell sick, or died: and Azaziah, who was not mentioned before, came in his room: but was not so eminent as he, and therefore put in the last place.

With psalteries on Alamoth.] Or, *with Alamoth.* Which being joined with psalteries, is thought by some to be a musical instrument. But Strigelius, from the derivation of the word, thinks that Alamoth signifies that these men sung the *bass*, as those in the next verse did the *treble.*

Ver. 21. *And Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-Edom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with harps on the Sheminith.*] Some take *Sheminith* to signify a harp with eight strings.

To excel.] The Hebrew word *lenatzeach*, coming from *natzach, to overcome,* is thought by Strigelius to signify a voice higher than all the rest.

Ver. 22. *And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites.*] A principal person among them, but not before mentioned: so that it doth not appear of what family he was.

Was for song.] Or, as it is translated in the margin, *was for carriage;* that is, for managing of the voice. He taught them how to sing, as the following words tell us, *he instructed about the song, because he was skilful.* Being a great artist in singing, he was the precentor: for, ver. 27. he is called *master of the song.* Which Lud. Capellus thinks signifies as much, as that he guided them to keep time, by the elevation of his hand, or of a wand. So the LXX. ἄρχων τῶν ᾠδῶν, who is properly called *the precentor* among us: who among the ancient Salii was called *vates:* he being the prime singer while they were dancing; as Gutberletius observes in his book De Saliis, cap. 11.

Ver. 23. *And Berechiah and Elkanah were door-keepers for the ark.*] Their office at present was to guard the ark as it passed along, that none might touch it.

Ver. 24. *And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God.*] For this was the office of the priests, as we read in Numb. x. the beginning.

And Obed-Edom and Jehiah were door-keepers for the ark.] When it was settled at Jerusalem, they kept the door of the tent prepared for it; that none might approach it but the high-priest at proper seasons.

Ver. 25. *So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the house of Obed-Edom with joy.*] With music and dancing. (See 2 Sam. vi. 5. 12. 15.)

Ver. 26. *And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams.*] Some understand this of the strength that God gave them to carry the ark without fainting, though they went up a steep hill, to settle it in the place where it was to rest. But it is not likely God imposed such great burdens on them in his service, that it was hard to bear them, without an extraordinary assistance. I think the meaning rather is, that he preserved them from committing any error, so that they carried it without offence. Or, as Junius takes it, God gave them ease, and others were ordered to take their place, when they had gone some part of the way. For, though it was not a heavy burden, yet they could not but proceed with fear and trembling, lest they should incur God's displeasure, as Uzzah did. Then *they*, that is, the Levites, offered upon their own account the sacrifices here mentioned; besides those which the king offered, as we read 2 Sam. vi. 13. And seven bullocks, and as many rams, being offered, some think, that every time the ark rested, for the Levites to rest themselves, a bullock was offered with a ram: which was

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seven times between the house of Obed-Edom and the city of David.

Ver. 27. *And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen.*] Pure white garments were proper (as Grotius here notes) in Divine ministrations. And Kimchi thinks, that the Levites, who bare the ark, and the singers, being thus clothed upon this solemn occasion, David being musical, and bearing his part among them, chose to appear in the very same habit. Just, saith he, as, among Christians, their kings and princes, when they go in procession with the clergy, are clothed like them. And by this, perhaps, may be understood what Michal meant when she found fault with David for *uncovering himself:* which does not signify that he appeared naked, but put off his royal robes, and put on those that did not belong to him. But it must be confessed, that fine linen was the apparel of kings and great men.

And all the Levites that bare the ark, and Chenaniah the master of the song, with the singers.] These were all clothed in fine linen.

David also had upon him an ephod of linen.] Which was an honorary vestment allowed to those who were not Levites, as I have shewn upon 1 Sam. ii. 18. (See my notes there, and upon 2 Sam. vi. 14.)

Ver. 28. *Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.*] See upon 2 Sam. vi. 15.

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the city of David, that Michal, the daughter of Saul, looking out at a window, saw king David dancing and playing; and she despised him in her heart.*] And expressed as much, when he came to his house, in words of great contempt. (See 2 Sam. vi. 16. 20.) She was a proud woman, and it is likely had no great sense of religion, which in the reign of Saul (as we read before, xiii. 3.) was much neglected.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt-sacrifices and peace-offerings before God.*

Ver. 2. *And when David had made an end of offering the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord.*] The Targum translates it, *in the name of the Word of the Lord.* Which shews that interpreter took the Word to be Jehovah.

Ver. 3. *And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.*] These three verses have been explained upon 2 Sam. vi. 17—19. (See there.)

Ver. 4. *And he appointed certain of the Levites.*] In their courses.

To minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel.] To declare unto the people the wonderful works God had done for Israel (for that is to record), and to give him thanks, and to extol his almighty goodness, and all his glorious perfections. As none could sacrifice but the priests of the seed of Aaron; so none could minister in the temple but the Levites: which was unalterably established by the law of God. But it was in the power of their king to assign the priests or Levites several functions in the service of God, as Grotius observes from this place. They were appointed to be singers, with instruments of music, by the prophets, as we are told in 2 Chron. xxix. 25. and David, as a prophet, not as a king, appointed this Divine service, xxiii. 2. But the application of persons to their several places is every where ascribed to king David, and afterward to Solomon; and Jehoshaphat, who was no prophet, ordered the priests and Levites to go and teach the people. So David here appointed who should sing, who should be porters, and discharge other duties. (See De Imper. Sum. Potest. circa Sacra, cap. 10. p. 270. edit. Paris.)]

Ver. 5. *Asaph the chief.*] Some of whose Divine composures we have in the book of Psalms.

And next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-Edom: and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps: but Asaph made a sound with cymbals.] By whom all the rest were directed to take their several parts in this service.

Ver. 6. *Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.*] At the morning and evening service these priests attended with trumpets, as the Levites did with other musical instruments.

Ver. 7. *Then on that day David delivered first this psalm.*] Or, as it may be plainly translated out of the Hebrew, *This David appointed (or ordained) in the first place at that time; viz.* that God should be praised by Asaph and his colleagues in the manner following. Which solemn service began on the day when he brought up the ark, and ever after was continued.

To thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.] To give him thanks (as Conradus Pellicanus well glosses) for all his benefits he had bestowed on his people Israel, and which he intended to bestow upon all the people of this world by his son Christ.

Ver. 8. *Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.*] Out of Psal. xcvi. and cv. which, I suppose, David had made before this time, he now composed one hymn to be daily used in the Divine service: wherein the Divine perfections are admirably set forth, that the people might be excited to his fear, love, and obedience. I have sufficiently explained the sense of every verse in my paraphrase upon the Psalms: but shall here touch upon them again, out of that good and truly great man now mentioned, who thus glosses upon this verse: O ye ministers and worshippers of the Most High, celebrate with heart and voice all the benefits you have received from him the fountain of all good; and if you suffer any evil, or want any thing, pray to him for relief; and being taught by happy experience how good he is, proclaim it to all the world, and teach them, that all things depend upon his pleasure and order.

Ver. 9. *Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk you of all his wondrous works.*] Praise him with heart and voice: declare his wonderful works, wherein he hath testified his omnipotence, and his wisdom to be faithful.

Ver. 10. *Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*] Look upon this as your highest happiness, and make your boast of it, that he is your God:

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and let their heart rejoice who seek his favour as their chiefest good.

Ver. 11. *Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually.*] Being sensible of your own weakness, depend upon his power for help: and seek his clemency and mercy with humble prayer on all occasions. The ark is called *God's strength* in other places, 2 Chron. vi. 41. Psal. lxxviii. 61. and therefore here they are exhorted to fall down before it and implore his mercy.

Ver. 12. *Remember his marvellous works that he hath done.*] For the preservation of his people, and the punishment of their enemies.

His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.] He would have them reflect upon the plagues of Egypt, which came upon them in a wonderful manner, at the command of Moses. Or, perhaps, he means by *judgments* the laws he gave them at Mount Sinai, (Exod. xxi. 1.)

Ver. 13. *O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen ones.*] This is your duty, as you are the offspring of a most faithful servant of his: O ye posterity of Jacob, whom God hath chosen for his people; not for your merits, but out of his free love to one that loved him.

Ver. 14. *He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth.*] The great Lord of all things, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is our God: who rules the whole world by his providence.

Ver. 15. *Be ye mindful always of his covenant, the word that he commanded to a thousand generations.*] Never forget his most gracious covenant, wherein he promises to be ever propitious to you, if you keep his law.

Ver. 16. *Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac.*] This covenant he made with your fathers, and confirmed it with an oath, that it should never fail.

Ver. 17. *And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.*] And what he first promised to Abraham, and confirmed to Isaac by a solemn oath, he established to Jacob by an inviolable law, to endure for ever. (See Gen. xvii. 1, 2. xxii. 16, &c. xxvi. 3. xxviii. 13.)

Ver. 18. *Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.*] He gave him an undoubted title to that good land; and afterward put his posterity into actual possession of it.

Ver. 19. *When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it.*] Remember your former condition, when you were the smallest of all nations, poor and little esteemed; were strangers in the land, which now you enjoy.

Ver. 20. *And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people.*] When you wandered up and down, from one country to another: having no settled dwelling-place.

Ver. 21. *He suffered no man to do them wrong.*] Though they were in danger to be oppressed by those who had not the fear of God before their eyes, yet they were safe every where under the Divine protection.

Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes.] When great princes did but attempt to offer any violence to them, he presently made them feel his hand against them.

In Seder Olam Rabba they say, that thus far they sung in the morning.

Ver. 22. *Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*] So that they durst not so much as touch them, but used them as if they had been kings and lords of the land. "So precious were you in his eyes, as if to do them the least harm had been the crime of treason against the Divine Majesty."

Grotius thinks they are called God's *anointed*, because they had in their family *jus regium*; and therefore Nicolaus Damascenus and Justin call them kings. Kimchi more plainly translates the word *anointed, my great men*, or *princes:* for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were honoured by kings, Abimelech and Pharaoh, as if they had been anointed kings. Whence the children of Heth say to Abraham, Thou art *a prince of God*, that is, a great prince, *in the midst of us*, (Gen. xxiii. 6.) St. Jerome thinks, that all the Israelites when they came out of Egypt were called *God's anointed*, because they were under his special protection, by the cloud that covered them; as Cyrus was called his *anointed*, because he was chosen by him to a special office, to be the deliverer of his people, and restore them to their own land.

Ver. 23. *Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation.*] Let not only the Israelites praise him, but all the people of the earth acknowledge their great Creator; proclaim his promised salvation by Christ, without intermission.

Here began the song between the two evenings (if we may believe the Jews in Seder Olam Rabba) unto those words, (ver. 36.) *Let all the people say, Amen.*

Ver. 24. *Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations.*] Let them spread his fame among all nations, and celebrate every where his astonishing works.

Ver. 25. *For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.*] He is the great Creator of all things, and the Donor of all good, who therefore cannot be sufficiently magnified and praised: and none ought to share with him in his worship and service.

Ver. 26. *For all the gods of the people are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.*] For all the gods which the heathen worship are empty names, who can do nothing: it is the Lord God of Israel who made the sun, moon, and stars (which the gentiles worship), and therefore only is to be adored.

Ver. 27. *Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place.*] To him only we ought to ascribe glory, honour, and power: in him alone we ought to confide, to him we ought to cleave, and in his clemency and favour perpetually rejoice.

Ver. 28. *Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.*] Let not his worship be confined to the people of Israel, but let all sorts of people, from one end of the world to the other, acknowledge him to be the great God, who governs the whole world.

Ver. 29. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*] Acknowledge all his glorious attributes, wherein he excels all beings: offer unto him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; prostrate yourselves before him in the humblest manner, and adore his most holy and gracious majesty.

Ver. 30. *Fear before him, all the earth.*] Let all the in-

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habitants of the earth tremble before him, and humble themselves unto him.

The world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.] For if they humbly submit themselves to his gospel, and implore his grace, he will amend the world, and confirm them in all that is good; and not suffer so many nations to wander in such labyrinths of error.

Ver. 31. *Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; and let men say among the nations, The Lord reigneth.*] Let all the inhabitants in heaven and earth be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will not only be known in Judea, but most gloriously reign in all nations.

Ver. 32. *Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.*] By *the fulness* of it, is meant its swelling to the very top of the banks, as Bochartus observes.

Let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.

Ver. 33. *Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth.*] These two verses he thus paraphrases, "Let the vast sea, and all that live in the waters triumph; let the dry land, and all the living creatures therein exult for joy: let the trees, and all the fruit that grows on them, sing to the Lord for his benefits." For the Creator of all comes to restore mankind, and resume them into his favour; for whom all these things acknowledge they were created.

Ver. 34. *O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Whatsoever we are or can do, we owe it to his Divine bounty: unto whom we ought to give perpetual thanks, and hope in his mercy for ever.

Ver. 35. *And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.*] Let all, both Jews and gentiles, say, Save us, O Lord our God, most just, merciful, and powerful: and gather those who now are distant from, and opposite to one another, by variance and hatred, into the unity of faith and charity: that all nations may unanimously give thanks unto thee, and glory in this, that they are always praising thee.

Some have imagined that Ezra added these words after they came out of captivity: but David rather uttered them by the spirit of prophecy, concerning the happy union of Jews and gentiles.

Ver. 36. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever.*] Unto the great Creator and Sovereign of the world, God most blessed for ever, let all men every where never cease to give blessing and praise.

And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord.] At the end of this hymn (the two last verses of which are the conclusion of Psal. cvi. 47, 48.) all the people expressed their desire that God might be for ever praised in this manner, by saying, *Amen*. From whence Vitringa observes the great antiquity of this sacred rite of saying *Amen* at the conclusion of all our prayers and benedictions: which was continued after the captivity, as we find Nehem. viii. 6. And he notes there rules which the Jewish doctors give concerning the pronunciation of this word by the people; first, that it be not pronounced too hastily and swiftly, but with a grave and distinct voice: and then, not louder than the tone of him that blessed: and lastly, it was to be expressed *in faith;* with a certain persuasion, that God would bless them and hear their prayers. (De Synag. Veteri, lib. iii. par. ii. cap. 18.)

Ver. 37. *So he left there, before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required.*] To sing hymns proper to the season.

Ver. 38. *And Obed-Edom with their brethren, threescore and eight.*] He was one of the principal singers under Asaph, (ver. 5.)

Obed-Edom also the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah, to be porters.] This is another Obed-Edom: who is joined with Jehiah as door-keeper for the ark, xv. 24. But Jehiah, I suppose, was also called Hosah.

Ver. 39. *And Zadok the priest.*] He was the second priest, as I have often noted, deputy to the high-priest.

And his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the Lord, in the high place that was in Gibeon.] As Asaph and his brethren ministered at Jerusalem; so others were appointed to minister at Gibeon: where the tabernacle of Moses was, and the altar of burnt-offering, ever since the slaughter of the priests by Saul. (See 2 Chron. i. 3.) Here the ordinary worship of God was performed, and therefore the priests attended at this place to offer sacrifice, which the Levites could not do, (ver. 40.) But the extraordinary worship was where the ark was placed, at Jerusalem; where Abiathar the high-priest attended upon David: that if he had any occasion to consult the Divine Majesty (which could be done only before the ark), he might be ready to do it for him. But Zadok, the chief of the secondary priests, always attended at Gibeon.

Ver. 40. *To offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord upon the altar of the burnt-offering continually morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord, which he commanded Israel.*] For this part of the Divine service could be performed no where but there where the altar was, nor by any body but by the priests: and therefore David took care it should be constantly performed here, though he was not present every day at those sacrifices, which were offered for all the people of Israel, wheresoever they were. The priests also took care to trim the lamps, and set the shew-bread on the table, and to do all other things which the law required.

Ver. 41. *And with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the Lord, because his mercy endureth for ever.*] As Asaph and his brethren took care of the music at Jerusalem, where no sacrifices were offered, but only hymns sung and prayers made; so did Heman and Jeduthun (who were with Zadok) at Gibeon, where they sung and played on instruments when the morning and evening sacrifices were offered.

Ver. 42. *And with them Heman and Jeduthun, with trumpets and cymbals.*] It should be translated, *with them* (Heman and Jeduthun) *there were trumpets and cymbals.*

For those that should make a sound, and with musical instruments of God.] All the utensils of the tabernacle and temple were sacred and set apart for that use: not only those of the altar, but even these instruments of music, which David ordained to praise the Lord withal. They were not common, but consecrated to God to be used in his service alone: and therefore called *musical instruments of God,* both here and in 2 Chron. vii. 6. that is, sacred ones: whence those that sung the song of victory over the beast, Rev. xv. 2. are said to have in their hands *the harps*

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of God: that is, not profane or common, but sacred harps, the harps of the temple, for there they sung their anthem, as Mr. Mede observes, book i. discourse 2.

And the sons of Jeduthun were porters.] To the tabernacle, as others of them were to the ark, (ver. 38.)

Ver. 43. *And all the people departed, every man to his house; and David returned to bless his house.*] See 2 Sam. vi. 19, 20.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in a house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains.*

Ver. 2. *Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee.*

Ver. 3. *And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying,*

Ver. 4. *Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in.*] These four verses have been explained before, 2 Sam. vii. in the five first verses.

Ver. 5. *For I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but I have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another.*] This verse is the very same with the sixth verse of that chapter in Samuel: only there it is said, *I have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle;* and here, *I have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another.* Both which signify, that he had no settled place wherein to dwell, but walked or went, where the tent, or tabernacle, was pitched for him. For the words may be translated, *I went out of the tent into the tent:* that is, when they marched in the wilderness, the ark was taken out of the tent, and when they rested it was put into the tent again: and not into a house built of cedar. Or, this may refer to the translation of the ark from the tabernacle made by Moses, unto the tent made for it by David.

Ver. 6. *Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel (whom I commanded to feed my people), saying, Why have ye not built me a house of cedars?*] See 2 Sam. vii. 7.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheep-cote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel.*

Ver. 8. *And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that are in the earth.*

Ver. 9. *Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning.*] He speaks here, as if now, and not before, they were possessed of the land of Canaan: for under David's government they were settled and flourished; whereas under the judges they had no rest.

Ver. 10. *And since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel: moreover, I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee, that the Lord will build thee a house.*

Ver. 11. *And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired, that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.*

Ver. 12. *He shall build me a house, and I will establish his throne for ever.*

Ver. 13. *I will be his father, and he shall be my son; and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee.*] All these verses, which are set down almost in the same words in 2 Sam. vii. from ver. 7. to ver. 16. are there explained.

Ver. 14. *But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever; and his throne shall be established for evermore.*] That is, *in my church,* which is the house of God, wherein he dwelt; and which he governed, ruled, and protected as his peculiar people. It is very observable, that in 2 Sam. vii. 16. speaking to David, he calls them, *thine house,* and *thy kingdom:* but here, *mine house,* and *my kingdom.* Which confirms, what I noted upon the former place, that this principally belongs to the Messiah, of whom David was but a figure.

Ver. 15. *According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.*] See there, 2 Sam. vii. 17.

Ver. 16. *And David the king came and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?*] He came and took his place before the ark, and then stood up, and made the following prayer to God, as I have explained it 2 Sam. vii. 18.

Ver. 17. *And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God.*] This is likewise explained there, ver. 19. but the latter part of that verse is expressed in different words, for there he saith, *Is this the manner of men, O Lord;* but here, *thou hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God.* This was not after the manner of men, to treat a poor shepherd, as if he were a great prince: but so he had dealt with David. But Victorinus Strigelius thinks, the Hebrew words will bear this translation, which in his opinion is better than our own, *Thou hast looked upon me in the form of a man, who art in the highest the Lord God.* Which he looks upon as a prophecy of the Messiah, who was really the Lord God, but appeared in the form of a man. The LXX. come near this sense in the former part of the words, ἐπεῖδές με ὡς ὅρασις ἀνθρώπου, *Thou hast looked upon me as the aspect of a man.* So Christophorus Helvicus interprets it in his Elenchus Judæorum.

Ver. 18. *What can David speak more to thee for the honour of thy servant? for thou knowest thy servant.*] He could desire no more for the increase of his honour: which is an explication of what is said 2 Sam. vii. 20. (See there.)

Ver. 19. *O Lord, for thy servant's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness, in making known all these great things.*] In 2 Sam. vii. 21. it is said *for thy word's sake,* that is, for the sake of thy promise to thy servant, as this place explains it. He had passed his word to David by his prophets, out of his own mere goodness, without any other motive. (See there.) It may be also thought to signify, *for the sake of the Messiah,* who is

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the Word of God: and by way of eminence is called *his servant,* Isa. xlii. 1. xlix. 5.

Ver. 20. *O Lord, there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.*] This is more fully expressed in 2 Sam. vii. 22.

Ver. 21. *And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?*] See 2 Sam. vii. 23. As in the former verse he acknowledges his happiness, in being beloved of God; so in this, the great honour God had done him, in making him king of such a people.

Ver. 22. *For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, Lord, becamest their God.*] See there, ver. 24.

Ver. 23. *Therefore now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, be established for ever, and do as thou hast said.*] See ver. 25.

Ver. 24. *Let it even be established, that thy name may be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel; and let the house of David thy servant be established before thee.*] See ver. 20. where the same thing is said, only the title of God is a little here enlarged. For there it is only said, *The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel;* but here, *The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel.* Or, as it may be translated, *The Lord of hosts the God of Israel, is a God to Israel;* that is, most gracious and merciful, as appeared in many things, particularly in bestowing such a king upon them.

Ver. 25. *For thou, O my God, hast told thy servant, that thou wilt build him a house: therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee.*] See there, ver. 27.

Ver. 26. *And now, Lord, thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto thy servant.*] See ver. 28.

Ver. 27. *Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever: for thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed for ever.*] This is delivered a little more largely in 2 Sam. vii. 29. (See there.)

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *NOW after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines.*] This chapter hath been fully explained in 2 Sam. viii. What differences there are in any expression is there noted, and an account given of them, to which I refer the reader. Only it may be observed upon this verse, that in the book of Samuel it is said, he took Metheg-ammah out of their hand; but here *Gath and her towns:* which are all one in Abarbinel's account, who takes Metheg-ammah for a region or province, which comprehended Gath and her towns. We may observe also in ver. 11. the great piety of David, who had in his heart to build a splendid house for God's habitation: and when he was prohibited by God to do it (because he had been engaged in so many wars, and shed a great deal of blood), he could not satisfy himself without doing something towards it: by preparing materials for it, and consecrating a great deal of treasure to be employed in the building, and to no other use. For that is the meaning of what is here said, That he dedicated unto the Lord the gold and silver which he brought from several nations: that is, he consecrated, or solemnly deputed them to this holy use, that it might not be lawful hereafter to employ them to any other.

Ver. 16. It is observed by Drusius, that there were two Ahimelechs; one the grandson of Ahitub, the other the son of Abiathar: who, by the change of a letter, is here called Abimelech. (Miscel. Cent. i. cap. 46.)

CHAP. XIX.

THIS chapter also hath been so fully explained in 2 Sam. x. that there is no need of adding any thing. Unless I observe, that the country which there is called simply Maacah, is here called, ver. 6. Aram-Maachah. Which is the foundation of their opinion who think this was in Syria, as I there observed: but it is plain the Scripture makes Maachah a city of Canaan, (see Deut. iii. 14. Josh. xii. 4, 5. and other places.) But it lying beyond Jordan on the borders of Syria, it had the name of Aram added to it: because the people were in their manners more Syrians than Canaanites, as Bochartus conjectures. In like manner, Aram-Bethrehob he thinks belonged to Canaan, in the north part of it, not far from Emath, that is, Epiphania. (See Numb. xiii. 41.) And Maachah was in the tribe of Manasseh, as Rehob in the tribe of Asher, (Josh. xiii. 11. xix. 28.) As for what is said here, that *they hired thirty-two thousand chariots,* the meaning must be, so many men, who fought in chariots, when they saw cause. For in the book of Samuel, it is said expressly that they hired twenty thousand footmen from Zoba, and twelve thousand men of Ish-tob: which make up the thirty-two thousand here mentioned. Which if it should be understood of such a number of chariots, there would have been no footmen in their whole army, which is incredible: as it is that they should have so many chariots. (See 1 Sam. xiii. 5.)

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time that kings go out to battle, Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah (but David tarried at Jerusalem); and Joab smote Rabbah, and destroyed it.*] See 2 Sam. xi. 1. where the history of David's adultery with Bath-sheba, and the murder of Uriah follows: which is here omitted, it being there so largely related, that nothing could be added to it.

Ver. 2. *And David took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there were precious stones in it; and it was set upon David's head: and he brought also exceeding much spoil out of the city.*

Ver. 3. *And he brought out the people that were in it, and cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes: even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.*] See 2 Sam. xii. 30, 31. where these two verses are explained.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass after this, that there arose*

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war at Gezer with the Philistines; at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Sippai, that was of the children of the giant; and they were subdued.] An account is given of this in 2 Sam. xxi. 18. where this giant is called Saph; who was, as I observed there, of the race of the Anakims. (See Deut. ix. 2.)

Ver. 5. *And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi, the brother of Goliah the Gittite, whose spear's staff was like a weaver's beam.*] See there, 2 Sam. xxi. 19.

Ver. 6. *And yet again there was war at Gath, where was a man of great stature, whose fingers and toes were four-and-twenty, six on each hand, and six on each foot; and he also was the son of the giant.*

Ver. 7. *But when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, slew him.*

Ver. 8. *These were born unto the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.*] These three verses are explained in the forenamed place, 2 Sam. xxi. 20—22. After which follows the hymn which David composed in commemoration of his many deliverances from these and other enemies, especially from Saul: which is here omitted, because not only there largely recorded, but also in the book of Psalms.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *AND Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.*] It is said in 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. that God, being angry with Israel, moved David: that is, suffered Satan to move him. This is sufficiently explained there: only here the phrase *stood up* is to be observed. Which was the posture of those who charged and accused any person of a crime in a court of justice. (See 1 Kings xxii. 21.) Thus Satan is represented as the accuser of the brethren, in the book of the Revelation: and here to lay some sin to the charge of the Israelites, which he represented to God as a reason to punish them: for it is the way of the Holy Scripture thus to bring down these things, and accommodate them to the lowest capacities.

Ver. 2. *And David said to Joab, and to the rulers of the people.*] Who, it is plain by 2 Sam. xxiv. 4. were with Joab when the king gave this command.

Go, number Israel, from Beer-sheba even unto Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

Ver. 3. *And Joab answered, The Lord make his people a hundred times so many as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?*] See what I have noted upon 2 Sam. xxiv. 3. It is something strange that Joab should see the danger of this, and David not think of it; no, not when it was so plainly represented to him. But the best men are sometimes very drowsy, and apprehend not those things which plainly appear to those who are not so good.

Ver. 4. *Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab: wherefore Joab departed, and went through all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.*] Unto which they came at the end of nine months and twenty days, as is more largely related in 2 Sam. xxiv. from ver. 4. to 9.

Ver. 5. *And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and a hundred thousand men that drew sword; and Judah were four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.*] This account of their number differs much from that given in 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. concerning which see what I have there noted.

Ver. 6. *But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them.*] Some think he took no account of Levi because they were not warriors, and such only as were fit for war, David desired to be satisfied how many they were. And Benjamin they think was so diminished in the time of the judges, that they were to be spared. But these, it were easy to shew, are not good reasons; and no other reason is to be sought for, than that given here in the very next words.

For the king's word was abominable to Joab.] He did all this against his will, and at last the work was so odious to him, that he was quite tired with it: and therefore broke off before he took the number of these two tribes.

Ver. 7. *And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel.*] He resolved to punish them, because it was for their sins that God permitted David to indulge himself in this vanity.

Ver. 8. *And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.*] See 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. where I have explained this, and given the best account I could of the nature of this sin.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying.*] This is expressed a little more largely in 2 Sam. xxiv. 11. (See there.)

Ver. 10. *Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things, choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.*] He speaks to him so solemnly in the name of the Lord, that he might attend the more seriously to what he said, and look upon it as peremptorily resolved.

Ver. 11. *So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Choose thee.*

Ver. 12. *Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes (while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee); or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.*] In the book of Samuel it is said, the prophet propounded seven years of famine, and here but three. Of which difference I have given an account in 2 Sam. xxiv. 13.

Ver. 13. *And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the Lord (for very great are his mercies); but let me not fall into the hand of man.*] See there, upon ver. 14. I only add here, that the pestilence is more properly called *the hand of the Lord*, than other common calamities: for they have visible causes, but none know whence this sudden destruction comes, but immediately from the hand of God; when there is no alteration that we can see in the air, or other elements (as we call them). And therefore the angel of the Lord is said to have smote the army of Sennacherib with such a pestilence, as Josephus reasonably conjectures.

Ver. 14. *So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.*] This is more largely expressed in 2 Sam. xxiv. 15. (See my annotations there.)

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Ver. 15. *And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it; and, as he was destroying, the Lord beheld.*] This seems to import that there were more angels than one employed to destroy in several places of the country: and that the angel sent to Jerusalem had begun to slay some of the inhabitants: but God took pity of them; beholding, perhaps, their serious repentance.

And he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord stood by the thrashing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.] See there upon ver. 16.

Ver. 16. *And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand.*] Whence the pestilence is called, (ver. 12.) *the sword of the Lord.*

Stretched out over Jerusalem.] As ready to do execution upon the people there.

Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.] It appears by their habit, that they (and the people of Jerusalem with them, ver. 15.) were humbling themselves before God for their sins, and deprecating his displeasure: for mourners were wont to clothe themselves in sackcloth.

Ver. 17. *And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned, and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.*] See 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.

Ver. 18. *Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David.*] This seems to signify that Gad was sent upon his former message (ver. 9.) by an angel, who came with that command from God.

That David should go, and set up an altar unto the Lord in the thrashing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.] See there, ver. 18.

Ver. 19. *And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the Lord.*] See there, ver. 19.

Ver. 20. *And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves.*] Or, when he saw the angel, he turned his face from him (as did his four sons, who likewise saw him); being afraid at so glorious an appearance.

This book, as I observed in the beginning, supplies some things omitted in the book of Samuel, among which this is one. For nothing is said there of Araunah's seeing the angel, but only of David's seeing him.

Now Ornan was thrashing wheat.] For the greatest persons did not, in those days, disdain such employments.

Ver. 21. *And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked, and saw David, and went out of the thrashing-floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground.*] See 2 Sam. xxiv. 20.

Ver. 22. *Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this thrashing-floor, that I may build an altar therein unto the Lord.*] This he said, after Ornan had first desired, to know the cause of his coming to him.

Thou shalt grant it me for the full price, that the plague may be stayed from the people.] By offering a sacrifice to appease the Divine anger. (See ver. 21.)

Ver. 23. *And Ornan said unto David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give thee the oxen also for burnt-offerings, and the thrashing-instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat-offering; I give it all.*] He offered the ground to the king, as a free gift; with every thing that was necessary for sacrifice. (See 2 Sam. xxiv. 22, 23.)

Ver. 24. *And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt-offerings without cost.*

Ver. 25. *So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight.*] This confutes their opinion, who think there were no shekels but of silver. See 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. where I have shewn that this account of the sum of money which he paid, doth not disagree with that which is given there in that place.

Ver. 26. *And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.*] See there, ver. 25.

And called upon the Lord.] By thanksgivings for his mercy, beseeching the continuance of it.

And he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering.] This was the highest token of God's gracious acceptance of any sacrifice. (See Lev. ix. 24.) The Jews say thus God consumed the sacrifices of Abel, and of Noah, and of Abraham, when they first dedicated altars to him. It is certain from the Holy Scriptures, thus God testified his acceptance of the sacrifices of Gideon and Elijah in ancient times: which Julian himself had not the hardiness to deny. (See St. Cyril, contra Julianum, lib. x.) And indeed this was known by the heathens: for Servius upon Virg. Æneid. xii. ver. 200. saith, that in the old temples sacrifices were no other ways consumed, "quam igne divino precibus impetrato," *than by Divine fire obtained by prayers.* (See other testimonies out of heathen antiquity, in Huetius's Quæst. Alnetanæ, p. 216, &c.)

Ver. 27. *And the Lord commanded the angel, and he put up his sword into the sheath thereof.*] Which, it seems, was brandished over Jerusalem, till this sacrifice was offered.

Ver. 28. *At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him in the thrashing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there.*] That is, he continued to offer his sacrifices in that place, where there was such a manifest appearance of God, and a testimony of his acceptance of his sacrifices. So that from this time he did not go to Gibeon, where sacrifices were wont to be offered upon the brazen altar: which, as it follows, was then there, together with the table, the candlestick, and the fire that came down from heaven in the days of Moses: (as Seder Olam Rabba saith, cap. 14.) and here Zadok and his brethren ministered, while the ark was in Zion, and with them Heman and others, (xvi. 39—41.)

Ver. 29. *For the tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt-offering, were at that time in the high place at Gibeon.*] The Targum calls this high place *the sanctuary in Gibeon:* for this word comprehended the whole sacred house, as in 1 Sam. ix. 13.

Ver. 30. *But David could not go before it to inquire of God.*] He thought it not fit to go thither at this time, though that was the place to which they always resorted to beg mercy of God by sacrifice.

For he was afraid, because of the sword of the angel of the Lord.] As he thought God had consecrated this place for his service, and that he ought immediately to sacrifice

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here, and not stay till he could go to Gibeon; so perhaps he thought there might still be danger, that the angel might smite Jerusalem, if he did not continue to worship God here: where he knew, by some means or other, God intended his temple should be built for his perpetual honour in this place. The altar also now erected here was set up by the command of God, as well as that of Moses: so that he thought he might most acceptably serve God here.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *THEN David said, This is the house of the Lord God.*] He seems to have been inspired by God with this thought, that here he would have his temple to be built. At least, he concluded this, because the angel bade him build an altar here, which was for sacrifice: and here God testified his presence, as he did at the erection of the first altar, Lev. ix. 24. He seems to have respect to the words of Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

And this is the altar of burnt-offering for Israel.] That is, here all their sacrifices shall be offered, when the temple is built. From which words Maimonides concludes, it was utterly unlawful to build God a house any where else, or to offer sacrifice in any other place but this.

Ver. 2. *And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel.*] That is, those they called *proselytes*, who perhaps were better skilled in such works, as here follow, than the children of Israel. Or, as R. Solomon Jarchi thinks, these being servile works, he would not employ the free people of Israel therein: which example Solomon afterward followed, (1 Kings v. 15. ix. 22. 2 Chron. ii. 1. viii. 7.) But we must not from hence infer, as some have done, that proselytes were not as free as other subjects: for they did not settle among the Jews upon any condition of being under any kind of servitude.

And he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.] Though God had forbidden him to build him a house, yet he thought he might prepare materials for the building: which God so much approved, that he was pleased to shew him a model of such a house as he would have, as we read chap. xxviii. 19.

Ver. 3. *And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight.*] The word which we translate *joinings*, the Targum translates *hinges*.

Ver. 4. *Also cedar-trees in abundance: for the Zidonians, and they of Tyre, brought much cedar-wood to David.*] There being great friendship between them and David.

Ver. 5. *And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.*] He considered with himself these two things, the youth of Solomon, (of which see 1 Kings iii. 7.) and then the magnificence of the structure that was to be built; both which he thought required his care, to make what preparation he could for such an undertaking. For young men are wont to be careless, and are rarely capable of great designs. Learned men have observed, that this temple was so stately and rich, that it exceeded all others in the world: the famous temple of Diana at Ephesus, being not to be compared with it. (See Dr. Spencer, lib. iii. de Leg. Hebr. cap. 2. dissert. 6.)

Ver. 6. *Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an altar for the Lord God of Israel.*] By this it was apparent, and, I suppose, well known, that he intended him for his successor: which made the crime of Adonijah the greater, who endeavoured to put him by.

Ver. 7. *And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God.*] See in 2 Sam. vii. 1, 2.

Ver. 8. *But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.*] This reason is not mentioned in the book of Samuel, but here is recorded to shew, that though David's wars were warranted, and succeeded by God in an extraordinary manner, yet it did not suit so well with the Divine Majesty, to have a house built him by one who had shed so much blood, as by one that reigned in peace and quietness: that he might be an emblem of the King of peace, the Lord of the church, who was prefigured in all such great transactions. There may be respect also here to the blood of Uriah, and those worthy men slain together with him, by the contrivance of David: which made him unworthy to be honoured with such an undertaking as this. David himself takes notice of this blood-guiltiness, as a thing which was always in God's eye, Psal. li. 4. where he saith, *I have done this evil in thy sight:* as God here saith, *Thou hast shed blood in my sight.* (See more below, chap. xxviii. 3.)

Ver. 9. *Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.*] Here are two reasons, why his son should have this honour: because God would give him rest from all his enemies, and Israel should live in peace and quietness in his days. Which made his reign a proper season for this great work.

Ver. 10. *He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.*] This can belong to none, in the proper and full sense of the word, but Christ alone. For Solomon reigned but forty years, and after that his kingdom was torn in pieces: therefore to Christ the author to the Hebrews applies them, (Heb. i. 5.)

Ver. 11. *Now, my son, the Lord be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee.*] He would not have him doubt, but be as confident as he was, that God would prosper him in this work; because he ordered him to undertake it.

Ver. 12. *Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God.*] When he committed Israel to his care.

Ver. 13. *Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.*] Nothing gives a man such an undaunted courage as a conscience of well-doing; in exact obedience to God's commands.

Ver. 14. *Now, behold, in my trouble.*] In a tumultuous reign, full of various troubles.

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I have prepared for the house of the Lord a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight (for it is in abundance); timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.] His heart was so bent to shew his gratitude to God, that he would have done a great deal more for him, if he had been able. Though this was such a vast treasure which he amassed (not out of covetousness, but purely for the honour and service of God), that it hath seemed to some incredible. For if we take this to be meant of the greater talent, it makes such an immense sum, that it exceeds the riches of any of the Roman emperors, or other former monarchs. For in the time of Trajan, when that empire was largest, the money that was in his treasury did not exceed seventy-three thousand talents, as Bodinus observes in his book de Republ. lib. vi. cap. 2. But a better man than he, our Brerewood, hath computed these talents to make so many millions, that he thinks the word *kikkar* should not be translated *talent* in this place; but only a *mass*, or *cake* of gold and silver. And so Guil. Budæus observes in his book De Asse, that there was in Homer's time a talent of lesser value: for he speaks of two talents, which were given, with other things, as a reward of a victory obtained in some exercises. Such talents, he thinks, we are to understand in this place: for David reigned about the time of the kingdom of the Assyrians, which was near the time of Homer. (See Beckius upon the Targum in this place.) Of the same opinion is Jacobus Capellus, and Junius, and Tremellius, as appears by the sum to which they make these talents to amount, *viz.* five hundred thousand dollars of gold, and as much of silver. And more lately Hermannus Witsius hath computed, that half so many talents of the sanctuary (as some call them) amounts to twenty thousand five hundred eighty-five tons of gold: which he shews David had opportunity to heap together, in his Miscell. Sacra, tom. ii. exerc. x. sect. 17, 18.

Ver. 15. *Moreover, there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.*] Who were all to be paid, as well as the labourers, and carriers of burdens, out of this money; which required a very great sum.

Ver. 16. *Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number.*] The meaning is, the quantity of brass and iron was not numbered, as that of the gold and silver was.

Arise therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.] He would not have him now go about the work, but begin it when he was settled on his throne: nothing doubting the Lord would prosper it.

Ver. 17. *David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying.*] By advising him, and encouraging the people in their labours.

Ver. 18. *Is not the Lord your God with you? and hath he not given you rest on every side?*] What God had already done for them, was a ground of hope he would further them in this work; which was for his service.

For he hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine hand; and the land is subdued before the Lord, and before his people.] For God was the author of all those wars, and gave them all their victories.

Ver. 19. *Now, set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God: arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord your God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord.*] He beseeches them not to neglect this opportunity, which he spake of in the foregoing verse; *viz.* the time of peace which God had given them, which was fit for such a work. Strigelius compares these words with those of Christ, "While ye have the light, walk in the light." And, indeed, the ark and the tabernacle had been too long separated, and therefore such preparation being made for it, it was time to bring the ark, with all the holy vessels, in the tabernacle, together into a settled place, by building the sanctuary for them.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *So when David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel.*] Declared him his successor, but did not resign his throne to him, nor make him his coadjutor.

Ver. 2. *And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites.*] It is likely he took this opportunity to declare before them all, that Solomon should be king after his decease. But the principal end of this assembly was, that he might acquaint them with a new regulation of the priests and Levites in their ministration: which he intended to establish by a Divine direction, as we read xxviii. 12, 13. This was a work becoming his elder years, after he had long observed and weighed the inconveniences of their present method, and the necessity of putting things into a better order. For nothing is more useful or more beautiful than good order, as Strigelius observes out of Xenophon in his Œconomics. And therefore the church of God was highly obliged to David, for distinguishing the degrees and offices of the Levites: appointing some to take care of the Divine rites and ceremonies (as his words are); others to govern the public judgments; others to watch and guard the temple; others to celebrate the praises of God with singing and instruments of music.

Ver. 3. *Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and upward.*] So Moses appointed, Numb. iv. 3. for then they were come to their full strength, and fit for service: which lasted till they were fifty years old, and no longer. For then they generally began to decay, and grew less able to bear burdens: which was their work then, to carry the tabernacle when it was to be removed, and all the utensils belonging to it. Which work being now at an end, they seem to have continued till their death to discharge their business at the temple; which was more easy, after that was built, and required less labour.

And their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand.] The priests are not included in this number: which is so great, that it may very well incline us to think, that many of them served rather for state and ornament, than for necessity. Abarbinel here cries out, "See whether in all the countries there were so many singers and musicians, and other officers employed in their temples, as there were in the house of the sanctuary. Who ever saw the like? Who ever beheld such sanctity, such ornaments, and such praising of God?"

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Ver. 4. *Of which twenty and four thousand were to set forward the work of the house of the Lord.*] These were employed about the sacrifices and offerings, which they killed, and flayed, and washed: and served the priests in all other parts of their ministry about them. Which being very numerous, there were the greater number of Levites to attend this work; *viz.* a thousand every week: for they took their courses, which being twenty and four, in so many weeks they came about again. (See their business, ver. 28, 29.)

And six thousand were officers and judges.] God appointed judges and officers to be settled in all their gates; (Deut. xvi. 18.) but many think, there had been a long neglect in this matter: and that David himself could not restore their judicatures to their ancient order and dignity, till the latter end of his reign. For being hindered by perpetual wars, he was forced to be content with such judicatures as had been wont to be executed (which in many things was very defective), only reserving appeals to himself, in causes of great moment, (2 Sam. xv. 2.) But now he takes care of this so necessary a part of government, and having numbered the Levites, appointed them their certain business, which had been before unsettled and undetermined: employing them both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs, as Bertram discourses in his book de Republ. Jud. p. 124. But a late writer makes a doubt, whether the Israelites observed that command of Moses at all, when they came into the land of Canaan; the heads of their tribes taking upon them, for a long time, to determine all controverted matters. But now the Levites were constituted, in the cities where they dwelt, to be both officers and judges. All agree, that *shoterim* commonly signify such officers as execute the sentence of the judges. (See my notes upon Deut. xvi. 18. and other places.) But here, being placed before judges, we are not to take them for such inferior persons, but for men of greater authority; whom the Targum calls governors, such as our justices of the peace are, who saw good order kept according to the law: as the judges were such as decided causes in their several courts. (See Campegius Vitringa, in his book de Synag. Veteri, lib. i. par. ii. cap. 8.)

Ver. 5. *Moreover, four thousand were porters.*] Who were to take care that no unclean person entered into the temple; or any thing brought into it which ought not to be there; or any thing carried out of it which belonged only to that place: and that nothing was done about the door of the court which might disturb the people at their prayers.

And four thousand praised the Lord with the instruments which I made (said David) to praise therewith.] Thus he hath given an account how the whole thirty-eight thousand (mentioned ver. 3.) were disposed of to their offices. And this last four thousand had some among them that were more eminent than the rest; being their instructors, both in singing and playing upon instruments: and perhaps some of them, being very skilful in music, contrived instruments, and commanded them to be made.

Ver. 6. *And David divided them into courses among the sons of Levi, namely, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.*] They took their turns of waiting, some going off, and others coming on, to perform all the forementioned duties, which David, the man of God, ordered, (as he speaks, 2 Chron. viii. 14.) by the direction of Gad and of Nathan the prophets, who had a command for it from God, as we read in this book, xxix. 25.

Ver. 7. *Of the Gershonites were Laadan and Shimei.*] Who were their immediate ancestors is not said, nor is it material to be known.

Ver. 8. *The sons of Laadan; the chief was Jehiel, and Zetham, and Joel, three.*] It is likely they were not his sons, but some of his posterity: for so the word *sons* signifies in the verses following.

Ver. 9. *The sons of Shimei; Shelomith, and Haziel, and Haran, three. These were the chief of the fathers of Laadan.*] This Shimei was descended from one of the three sons of Laadan.

Ver. 10. *And the sons of Shimei were Jahath, Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These four were the sons of Shimei.*] That is, the sons of that Shimei, brother of Laadan, mentioned ver. 7.

Ver. 11. *And Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second.*] He is called Zina in the foregoing verse.

But Jeush and Beriah had not many sons.] As their two elder brothers had.

Therefore they were in one reckoning, according to their father's house.] They were accounted but as one family, and not called by the name of their fathers, Jeush and Beriah, but by the name of Shimei their grandfather.

Ver. 12. *The sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four.*] See Exod. vi. 18.

Ver. 13. *The sons of Amram; Aaron and Moses.*] See Exod. vi. 18.

And Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever.] The business of Aaron and his sons was very different from the rest of the Levites: for they were set apart for the special services of the priesthood; to *sanctify*, that is, to minister in a holy manner the most holy things. His sons burnt incense every day; and the high-priest went into the most holy place on the great day of expiation, with the blood of expiation: and when he came out, blessed the people, as the priest who offered incense did every day, at the conclusion of the sacrifice.

Ver. 14. *Now, concerning Moses, the man of God, his sons were named of the tribe of Levi.*] Though Moses was so great a man, the supreme governor of the people while he lived, and had such familiarity with the Divine Majesty, yet his sons were not advanced to any dignity, but he left them simple Levites, not so much as priests. Such was the wonderful humility and modesty of this holy man, that he did not aim at great things for his posterity. Which perhaps is here noted, that none might presume, because of their noble descent, to meddle with the priesthood, which was settled in the family of Aaron; as the civil government of the people was left to Joshua, a man of another tribe, and Moses's servant.

Ver. 15. *The sons of Moses were Gershom and Eliezer.*] See Exod. xviii. 3, 4.

Ver. 16. *Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel was the chief.*] Who is called Shobael, xxiv. 20.

Ver. 17. *The sons of Eliezer were Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had none other sons.*] The word for *chief* in the Hebrew is, the *first:* that is, the first-born, after whom

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he had no other son; but a great many grandsons, who are frequently called *sons.*

But the sons of Rehabiah were very many.] Which in the Hebrew is thus expressed, *were highly multiplied.* From whence the Targum took a conceit (as several Jewish doctors have done) that they were multiplied to above six hundred thousand: merely, because the same phrase is used of the children of Israel in Exod. i. 7. that they *multiplied exceedingly* in Egypt; that is, to this number, Exod. xii. 17. Whereby they imagine God fulfilled his intentions to Moses, if he would not intercede for the Israelites, that he would make him a great nation. But these are idle speculations; wherein they abound, since they were abandoned by God.

Ver. 18. *Of the sons of Izhar; Shelomith the chief.*] Who is called Shelomoth, xxiv. 22.

Ver. 19. *Of the sons of Hebron; Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jehaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth.*

Ver. 20. *Of the sons of Uzziel; Micah the first, and Jesiah the second.*

Ver. 21. *The sons of Merari; Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli; Eleazar and Kish.*

Ver. 22. *And Eleazar died, and had no sons, but daughters; and their brethren the sons of Kish took them.*] Their cousins married them, as the Targum expounds it.

Ver. 23. *The sons of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and Jeremoth, three.*

Ver. 24. *These are the sons of Levi, after the house of their fathers; even the chief of the fathers, as they were counted by number of names by their polls, that did the work for the service of the house of the Lord, from the age of twenty years and upwards.*] They were numbered twice, as they were in the time of Moses: the first time all from thirty, the second time from twenty. And these here mentioned were of the last sort; who were fit to minister in some things belonging to the service of the Levites, at twenty years old: though they were not employed in the rest till thirty. See upon Numb. viii. 24. where they are ordered to begin at five-and-twenty; though they did not completely minister till thirty.

Ver. 25. *For David said, The Lord God of Israel hath given rest unto his people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever.*] That is, constantly attend upon the service of God there settled. Which was the reason for this new order, that the Levites should begin their ministry at twenty years of age: because Israel having rest was very much multiplied, and there being greater resort to Jerusalem, the Levites had more work to do at the temple. But it must here be noted, that those words, *for ever,* suppose their obedience to God, (as in chap. xxviii. 4.) in which if they failed, they were not to continue in Jerusalem, but be expelled out of it.

Ver. 26. *And also unto the Levites; they shall no more carry the tabernacle, nor any vessels of it for the service thereof.*] It should rather be translated, *As concerning the Levites:* they were no longer to have that burdensome work of carrying the tabernacle and its vessels when they were removed: but had a much easier service; which they might begin sooner than formerly: it requiring not so much strength of body, as readiness of mind.

Ver. 27. *For, by the last words of David, the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above.*] This was his last will about this matter; after he had well considered what they had to do, and what number was necessary to perform every part of this duty. For some of which they were able enough at twenty years of age: when they might be called *probationers* till they were thirty. And there would not have been a sufficient number for all the work, unless they had come to it at the age of twenty.

Ver. 28. *Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron.*] Which the Levites were able to do at the age of twenty years. To attend, for instance, at the tabernacle; but not to carry the ark or the tabernacle.

For the service of the house of the Lord.] This is a general expression of what they were to do; the particulars of which follow: to assist in the *courts,* and in the *chambers,* in making clean the holy vessels, and cleansing the courts, and taking care nothing was wanting for the service of the sanctuary.

Ver. 29. *Both for the shew-bread, and for the fine flour, for the meat-offering, and the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried.*] They were to prepare the shew-bread, to be set on the table every week by the priests; and to see that there was a just quantity of fine flour for the meat-offering morning and evening; and that the unleavened cakes were rightly made: with every thing that was to be baked or fried. Of which in the second chapter of Leviticus.

And for all manner of measure and size.] They were to see also that the just measure for things liquid, and the just size for things dry, were exactly kept, and not altered. For all measures and weights (by which all that were used in the country were to be made) were kept in the sanctuary, in the custody of the Levites. Hence it is, that we read often of the *shekel of the sanctuary:* not that there were two sorts of *shekels,* one sacred, and another civil; but because weights and measures were reckoned *inter sacra, among holy things:* the examples, as I said, of them all being kept in the sanctuary. And so they were in the temples of the pagans, and afterward in Christian churches: as appears by Justinian's Novels, cxxviii. cap. 15. So Villalpandus and our bishop Walton have observed. Unto which may be added, that Constantine the Great had gone before him in this: for he commanded the cubit whereby the Egyptians measured the increase of Nilus, and was kept in the temple of Serapis, to be translated into one of the Christian churches, that there it might be preserved the safer by true religion; as both Socrates and Sozomen testify in their Ecclesiastical History, lib. i. cap. 18. lib. v. cap. 3. Julian, indeed, caused it to be restored to Serapis: but that temple being burnt, Ruffinus tells us the church had it again in its possession. All which shews, that this ancient piece of religion, to preserve weights and measures as sacred things, continued after the time of David; and perhaps was before it.

Ver. 30. *And to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even.*] At the time when the priests offered the morning and even sacrifice.

Ver. 31. *And to offer all burnt-sacrifices unto the Lord in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number.*] It was no part of their business to offer burnt-sacrifices, which belonged to the priests alone. Therefore the meaning is, to praise and give thanks to God at the offering of sacrifices at those solemnities, as well as every morning

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and even; and to see there were a just number of sacrifices then offered as the law prescribed.

According to the order commanded unto them, continually before the Lord.] That is, in their courses, wherein they were commanded to wait continually when their turn came.

Ver. 32. *And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy place, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the Lord.*] These words belong to those that went just before; signifying, that in their order, when their course came to attend, they served either about the tabernacle, or preparing the shew-bread in the holy place, or in any other things, wherein the priests had occasion to employ them: and the rest of their time they spent at home, in their several cities; where they studied, and taught the law.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *NOW these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.*] To avoid all confusion, now that they were much increased, David distributed the priests, as he had done the Levites, into several courses: which, no doubt, was by a Divine direction, as well as the other; or rather, there was greater reason he should have God's order for it: they being higher ministers of his than the Levites were.

Ver. 2. *But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office.*] From these two all the families of the priests descended, who were now to be disposed into a regular performance of their duty.

Ver. 3. *And David distributed them both, Zadok, of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech, of the sons of Ithamar.*] These two (Zadok and Ahimelech) were the chief persons, in David's days, of the posterity of those sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar.

According to their offices in their service.] He determined, when they and those priests who depended on them should perform their office in the temple-service.

Ver. 4. *And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided.*] Accordingly David divided them into certain classes and courses, as the Targum expounds it.

Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar, according to the house of their fathers.] He appointed therefore sixteen courses of the sons of Eleazar, under as many heads of their families: and half as many of the posterity of Ithamar. Which Kimchi, and other Hebrew doctors, explain in this manner: In the days of Moses there were but eight courses in the whole: four of Eleazar's family, and four of Ithamar's. But in Samuel's days they were grown to sixteen: eight of the one, and as many of the other. But in the end of David's reign they were enlarged to twenty-four courses; two-thirds of which were assigned to the sons of Eleazar, because they were more numerous than the other: and the sons of Ithamar continued as they were before; having eight courses. But the Holy Scriptures never mention any settled courses till this time, (as Dr. Lightfoot observes in his Temple Service, chap. 6.) though their doctors assert it to explain that precept, Deut. xxviii. 6.

Ver. 5. *Thus were they divided by lot.*] That there might be no occasion for complaint: when all was ordered by a Divine disposition, according to very ancient custom. For the choice of persons by lot, into sacred offices, was used from the beginning of the world, as Grotius observes, in his book De Imper. Sum. Potest. circa Sacra, cap. 10. sect. 5.

One sort with another.] Both the sons of Eleazar and of Ithamar were thus chosen, who should wait together.

For the governors of the sanctuary.] The words in the Hebrew are, *sharе kodesh:* which signify the principal ministers about holy things.

And governors of the house of God.] There is no word for *house* in the Hebrew; where we only read *share Elohim:* which seem to signify the *chief judges.*

Were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar.] These two families had obtained the chief functions both in the temple, and in the civil government: wherein they could not be distributed so well any way as by lot; without danger of envy among themselves.

Ver. 6. *And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel the scribe, one of the Levites, wrote them before the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and before the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites.*] In perpetual memory of the thing (as Conradus Pellicanus thinks), this Divine writer sets down the name of the public notary, by whom their names were written, and put into the urn, out of which the lots were to be drawn. Which, that there might be no suspicion of fraud, were drawn before the king, the princes, both the chief priests (the high-priest and the sagan), and before the chief persons of the several families of priests and Levites. Whence it is reasonable to conclude, that David did not make this regulation by his mere royal power, but by a Divine direction. Which he had in this, as in the order he gave about the temple; (chap. xxviii.) and he seems here not to have acted by an absolute authority, but to have advised with the high-priest, and other persons of great note, how to proceed.

One principal household being taken for Eleazar, and one taken for Ithamar.] These words are something obscure: but the meaning is, that one of the principal families of Eleazar was first taken, and then one of Ithamar's; and after that, one of Eleazar's again, and so by turns till all was done: that is, till there were eight of each. After which, those of Eleazar alone were distributed under their several heads.

Ver. 7. *Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah.*] The first lot that was drawn out of the urn had the name of Jehoiarib upon it: so that his family had the precedence, and waited in the first place. This was esteemed a great honour; for Josephus reckons himself noble, not only because he was descended ἐξ ἱερέων, *from the priests,* but ἐκ τῆς πρώτης ἐφημερίδος τῶν εἰκοσιτεσσάρων, *from the first course of the four-and-twenty.* For this made a great difference: Mattathias also, the father of the Maccabees, descended from Jehoiarib, as we read 1 Mac. ii. 54.

Ver. 8. *The third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim.*] I have nothing to observe concerning these, and the rest that follow to ver. 19. but only that Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, was of the eighth course of these priests; *viz.* that of Abijah, mentioned ver. 10. as we read in the first of St.

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Luke. For, as Josephus testifies, this order of the courses continued till his time; that is, till the destruction of the second temple.

Ver. 19. *These were the orderings of them in their service, to come into the house of the Lord, according to their manner, under Aaron their father.*] Under the inspection of the high-priest, who, being the successor of Aaron, is called by his name. He took care that this order should be observed in such manner, as is here prescribed: none of them anticipating their course, nor thrusting in themselves to attend before their time, but waiting till their time came. And then every course served a week, coming in on the sabbath; and going out the next before the burning of the incense at the morning sacrifice, when the shew-bread was set on the table, as Scaliger observes out of the Jewish writers, in his notes upon the Fragments at the end of his book De Emend. Temporum, p. 54. Upon the three great festivals, indeed, when all priests, as well as others, were bound to appear before God, they came out of their course, and, that they might not be idle, officiated in such things as properly belonged to those solemnities. But the ordinary business, for the daily burnt-sacrifice, and the free-will-offerings, was managed by those only whose course it was to wait. And thus the Jews understand those words, Deut. xviii. 6, 7. *The Levite (i. e.* the priests who were of that tribe) *that shall come to the place which the Lord his God shall choose* (that is, at the three solemn feasts), *then he shall minister in the house of the Lord his God, as all his brethren the Levites do* (which is meant of the priests, for they only ministered before God, not the Levites); *they shall have like portions to eat;* that is, of the sacrifices which were then offered at those solemn times they were to have their share, with the rest of the priests then in attendance, but the Levites did not eat of them: *beside that which cometh by the sale of his patrimony;* or, as it is in the Hebrew, by *the sale of his fathers.* That is, say they, except the portion of the daily sacrifices, and free-will-offerings, which by the ordinance of their fathers, Moses and Aaron, belonged only to those priests, who were in their ordinary attendance in their week.

As the Lord God of Israel had commanded him.] By his servant David.

Ver. 20. *And the rest of the sons of Levi were these: Of the sons of Amram; Shubael: of the sons of Shubael; Jehdeiah.*] Now he speaks of the rest of the Levites, who were not priests, who are mentioned in the foregoing chap. xxiii. 16, 17, &c. and here named again to distinguish them from the priests, and to shew that they also had their places assigned them by lot, ver. 31. I have nothing to note concerning those that follow between this verse and that, but only this: that several are mentioned as descended from Merari, who are not mentioned in the foregoing chapters, nor any where else. For which, no question, the author of this book had good authority, though we cannot, without the help of such records as he perused, give an account of it. (See Buxtorf's Anticritica, p. 1014.)

Ver. 31. *These likewise cast lots over against their brethren the sons of Aaron, in the presence of David the king, and Zadok and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites.*] There was the like solemnity used in their distribution, as there was in that of the priests, by casting lots: whereby they knew what Levites should wait, in every course with the sons of Aaron.

Even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren.] This is expressed very obscurely; but the meaning is, that the elder and younger had their places by lots, not by seniority of houses. They that were of greater dignity drew lots against those that were of less: and they were to take their courses, as they fell; either to the elder or the younger family.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. *MOREOVER David, and the captains of the host.*] It is absurd to think, that the commanders in war meddled with ordering the tribe of Levi, and the service of the temple. Therefore by *the host* we are to understand (as our Mr. Thorndike well observes) the companies of priests, that waited upon the service of God at the temple: the captains of whom (*i. e.* the chief leaders), together with David, divided the singers, as they had done the priests, (chap. xxiv. 3. 6, 7.) Though elsewhere, (chap. xxiii. 6.) David alone is mentioned to have done it. (Rites of the Church, p. 230.)

Separated to the service.] Of God in the temple.

Of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun.] These were the chief persons among the Levites, whose families were separated to the following service.

Who should prophesy.] Sing psalms, which David and other prophets composed. For these young men were not prophets, as their fathers were; but are said *to prophesy,* because they sung in the service of God those Divine prophetical hymns, which were composed by their fathers, who were men divinely inspired. Thus the Talmudists say, in Bava-Bathra, cap. 1. that all the hymns we find in the Bible were made by Adam, Melchisedec, Abraham, Moses, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and David: who collected them into one volume. But this is a foolish tradition, and very new.

With harps, and psalteries, and with cymbals.] There were also pipes, or hautboys, used upon several occasions, together with the trumpets. The difference between these three here mentioned is better described by Dr. Lightfoot out of Josephus, than by any I have met withal; who observes, that the other Israelites, if allied to the priests by marriage, might, if they had skill, join in this instrumental music; but none besides the Levites in the vocal. See his Temple Service, chap. 7. sect. 2. where he likewise notes what psalms were to be sung every day of the week.

And this was the first office of the Levites; the two other are explained in the two following chapters.

And the number of the workmen, according to the service, was.] It had better be translated, *the number of the men of the ministry* (*i. e.* of those who ministered in singing and playing on instruments), *according to their service, was,* as follows.

Ver. 2. *Of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph, under the hands of Asaph.*] Under his government, as their precentor: or, who taught and instructed them in singing and music.

Which prophesied according to the order of the king.] The Targum understand this, as if Asaph prophesied by the Holy Ghost, and was constituted the head of these by

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the king. But the word *prophecy* is of very large extent; signifying sometimes, as I said before, nothing more, but singing divinely-inspired hymns. Thus Miriam is called a prophetess, (Exod. xv. 20.) because she led up the women to praise God, with timbrels and dances. And, indeed, music and singing were in ancient times had in such esteem and veneration, that they who excelled in this faculty were looked upon as persons divinely moved. So Quintilian observes, as a known truth, lib. i. Instit. cap. 10. "Quis ignorat, musicen tantum jam illis antiquis temporibus non studii modo, verum etiam venerationis habuisse, ut iidem musici, et vates judicarentur." *Who is so ignorant as not to know that music, in those ancient times, was not only so much studied, but had in such veneration, that the same men, who were musicians, were accounted prophets and wise men?*

Ver. 3. *Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun, Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun.*] Here are but five named: but it appears afterward (ver. 17. when the lots were cast) there was another, whose name was Shimei: who being now very young, and not yet able either to sing or to play, is not named in this verse. But, that he might be instructed and learn both, he is chosen to be the head of a course, when he should be fit for it. Thus D. Kimchi explains this matter.

Who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the Lord.] The harp was a most noble instrument, in which Jeduthun seems to be peculiarly skilled, and therewith praised God; which is called *prophesying.*

Ver. 4. *Of Heman: the sons of Heman; Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth.*] He had the most numerous issue of these three; and they all had families who were employed in this service.

Ver. 5. *All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer.*] He was a prophet, in whose company the king delighted: and with whom he advised in difficult affairs.

In the words of God.] Especially in Divine matters.

To lift up the horn.] In the temple they used also wind music: which many think to have been trumpets made of horn: but the priests only blew with trumpets in the temple, while the Levites sung to those other instruments. Therefore others understand this, of the hymns they sung to magnify the power, greatness, and exaltation of David's kingdom: or rather, of the kingdom of the Messiah, whom Zachary in his song (Luke i. 69.) calls the *horn of salvation.* For the power of any thing in Scripture is expressed by *a horn;* in which lies the strength of some creatures. And from these words Victorinus Strigelius gathers, that Heman was David's seer in politic affairs, which belonged to the confirmation and settlement of his kingdom: "Cornu enim significat regimen et regnum;" *for a horn signifies government and kingdom.* But the first sense seems to me to be most natural, that at stated times they blew aloud with trumpets made of horns: for such, I suppose, they might use, though the priests only could blow with the silver trumpets. And thus the famous Bochartus interprets these words, *at set times to blow aloud with trumpets made of horns;* in his preface to his Hierozoicon.

And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.] Some have fancied there are fifteen mentioned in the foregoing verse: but the Jews look upon Romamti-ezer as one name; and so we take it: which is justified by ver. 31.

Ver. 6. *All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God.*] The whole number of these was four-and-twenty, who, under their several fathers, Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman, regulated the choir in their singing and music: being the instructors and governors of those who were under them. It is likely they set the psalms to music which David composed: or, if he himself modulated them, they sung them in the tunes he directed, with the musical instruments here mentioned.

According to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.] These were prophets, who composed many of the songs, which their sons sung by their direction: as appears from 2 Chron. xxix. 10. where it is said they sung praises, "in the words of David and Asaph the seer."

Ver. 7. *So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the Lord, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight.*] This was the whole number of those who were skilful in singing, who, under the persons beforementioned, were distributed (as it here follows) into several courses, after the same manner that the priests had been: with whom they were to attend in their order. For twelve of these singers, with their governor, came and waited every week; at the end of which they were succeeded by other twelve, till the course was finished: and then it began again, where it did at first. Now twelve times twenty-four amount to two hundred fourscore and eight.

It is no wonder that there were so many of them found very skilful in singing and music: for David himself was a great musician and poet, and every one knows how much the inclination of the supreme governor serves to the promoting of arts among the people.

Ver. 8. *And they cast lots, ward against ward.*] Being thus distributed into twenty-four courses, they cast lots, one course against another, which should wait first, and in order succeed one another.

As well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar.] So that they did not begin and succeed one another, according to the order of age, or of learning, but as God disposed them by their lot. The last words [*the teacher as the scholar*] the LXX. translate τελείων καὶ μανθανόντων, *those that were perfect, and those that were learners.* They were called perfect who were masters of their art, able to instruct others, who learnt of them.

Ver. 9. *Now, the first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph.*] Who was not his eldest son; (see ver. 2.) After the word Joseph, we are to supply the words that follow in the rest of these classes, *who, with his brethren and sons, were twelve:* otherwise the number of two hundred fourscore and eight (ver. 7.) will not be complete.

The second to Gedaliah.] Who was the eldest son to Jeduthun, (ver. 3.)

Who, with his brethren and sons, were twelve.] These words, as Rasi observes, are to be referred to Joseph as well as Gedaliah: for he mentions them both, in one and the same verse; and therefore he only saith once with respect to both, *he and his sons and brethren:* where by *brethren* is meant their kindred.

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Ver. 10. *The third to Zaccur, he, his sons and his brethren, were twelve.*] He was the eldest son of Asaph, (ver. 2.)

Ver. 11. *The fourth to Izri,* &c.] Called Zeri, ver. 3. who was the second son of Jeduthun.

Ver. 12. *The fifth to Nethaniah,* &c.] This lot fell upon the third son of Asaph, (ver. 2.)

Ver. 13. *The sixth to Bukkiah,* &c.] Who was the eldest son of Heman, (ver. 4.)

Ver. 14. *The seventh to Jesharelah,* &c.] Called Asarelah, ver. 2. the youngest son of Asaph.

Ver. 15. *The eighth to Jeshaiah,* &c.] Who was the third son of Jeduthun, (ver. 3.)

Ver. 16. *The ninth to Mattaniah,* &c.] Who was the second son of Heman, (ver. 4.)

Ver. 17. *The tenth to Shimei,* &c.] The youngest son of Jeduthun, as I have noted upon ver. 3.

Ver. 18. *The eleventh to Azareel,* &c.] The third son of Heman, who is called Uzziel in the same verse.

Ver. 19. *The twelfth to Hashabiah,* &c.] The fourth son of Jeduthun, (ver. 4.)

Ver. 20. *The thirteenth to Shubael,* &c.] The fourth son of Heman, called Shebuel, ver. 4.

Ver. 21. *The fourteenth to Mattithiah,* &c.] Who was the fifth son of Jeduthun, (ver. 3.)

Ver. 22. *The fifteenth to Jeremoth,* &c.] The fifth son of Heman, (ver. 4.)

Ver. 23. *The sixteenth to Hananiah,* &c.] The next son of Heman.

Ver. 24. *The seventeenth is Joshbekashah,* &c.] Who was the eleventh son of Heman.

Ver. 25. *The eighteenth to Hanani.*] Who was the seventh son of Heman.

Ver. 26. *The nineteenth to Mallothi,* &c.] Who was the twelfth son of Heman.

Ver. 27. *The twentieth to Eliathah,* &c.] Who was the eighth son of Heman.

Ver. 28. *The one-and-twentieth to Hothir,* &c.] Who was the thirteenth son of Heman.

Ver. 29. *The two-and-twentieth to Giddalti,* &c.] Who was the ninth son of Heman.

Ver. 30. *The three-and-twentieth to Mahazioth,* &c.] Who was the youngest son of Heman.

Ver. 31. *The four-and-twentieth to Romamti-ezer,* &c.] The tenth son of Heman.

Thus all things were disposed, for the preserving order, and avoiding all disputes about precedence: there being no respect had in this Divine distribution to their birth, but the younger in course preceded the elder.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1. *CONCERNING the divisions of the porters.*] As some of the Levites were chosen to be singers (of which an account is given in the foregoing chapter), so others were appointed to be porters. Which were fixed offices (as Dr. Lightfoot observes) which they might not change: none of them being permitted to intrude into the office of the other; and neither of them into the priesthood. It was an office of great dignity, and men of the best quality were put into it: they having the charge of the holy things, (ver. 20. 22. 24. 26.)

Of the Korhites was Meshelemiah.] Called Shelemiah, ver. 14.

The son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph.] Not of Asaph the musician, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, for he was of the family of Gershon, (ver. 41.) but of another Asaph, called Eliasaph, and sometimes Jasaph, of the line of Kohath, (chap. vi. 23. ix. 19.)

Ver. 2. *And the sons of Meshelemiah were Zechariah the first-born, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth.*

Ver. 3. *Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Elioenai the seventh.*

Ver. 4. *Moreover, the sons of Obed-Edom were Shemaiah the first-born, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sacar the fourth, and Nethaneel the fifth.*

Ver. 5. *Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth; for God blessed him.*] With a numerous offspring, as the Targum glosses upon the last words: because he entertained the ark in his house with great reverence. Upon which account God did him the honour to let him see of his sons and grandsons fourscore and two: who were chief men among the Levites. This the Targum had said before, one only being wanting of this number. (See upon chap. xiii. 14.) But what the Scripture saith is sufficient to shew how God blessed him with a numerous posterity, without the help of such monstrous stories as some of the Jews relate.

Ver. 6. *Also unto Shemaiah his son were sons born, that ruled throughout the house of their father.*] Being men of great authority in that family.

For they were mighty men of valour.] Which was requisite in men who had this office: for they were to watch and guard the house of God, night and day. And not only to open and shut the doors of the mountain of the house, and of the court of the women (for the priests opened and shut the gates of the other courts), but to attend there to prevent any thing that might be done to the prejudice of the peace, safety, and purity of the place. And likewise, as appears by what follows, they had the guard of some treasures, which required men of courage to defend them.

Ver. 7. *The sons of Shemaiah; Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad (whose brethren were strong men), Elihu, and Semachiah.*] Their names are recorded, with two of their brethren, or cousins: who are likewise noted to be *strong men.* That is, not only men of great bodily strength, but of great courage and resolution. So it is translated in the margin, out of the Hebrew, *sons of valour.* But strength of body was a principal requisite in this service; for the doors of the temple were so massy and weighty, that the hands of many men (as Josephus saith) were needful to open and shut them.

Ver. 8. *All these of the sons of Obed-Edom; they, and their sons, and their brethren, able men for strength for the service, were threescore and two of Obed-Edom.*] This was a great number, which he lived to see descended from him, and from his sons.

Ver. 9. *And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, strong men, eighteen.*] Still their strength is mentioned, as a qualification for this service.

Ver. 10. *Also Hosah, of the sons of Merari, had sons; Simri the chief (for though he was not the first-born, yet his father made him the chief).*] Because his elder brother was

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feeble, or some other way unfit for the service. For, as Jacob gave the kingdom to Judah, and the priesthood to Levi, and put Reuben his first-born from his right, because of his crime; so there was some weighty cause, no doubt, why this man had the right of primogeniture given him, which was not to be altered upon the account of affection, (Deut. xxi. 16, 17.)

Ver. 11. *Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth: all the sons and brethren of Hosah were thirteen.*] Who are not all named, but these who are the principal.

Ver. 12. *Among these were the divisions of the porters, even among the chief men.*] They were distributed into courses, as the priests and Levites were: and these were principal commanders over them: being the most illustrious among their brethren, and therefore particularly named.

Having wards one against another.] Having charges or custodies answerable to their brethren: that is, to the Levites, who attended as these did.

To minister in the house of the Lord.] This was not a vile ministry (as the word *porter* sounds among us), but they were like the standing guard of a king in his palace: and so the word, I observed before, had better be rendered. (See ix. 17.) Who kept the treasures of the temple, as it follows, (ver. 20. 26.) and officers and judges also were chosen out of them, (ver. 29, 30. 32.) which shews they were eminent persons: some of them being very learned and wise; (ver. 14.) though, I suppose, they were not judges of the law, but of other matters.

Ver. 13. *And they cast lots, as well the small as the great.*] Without respect to their age or dignity.

According to the house of their fathers.] Every family having a distinct lot drawn for it.

For every gate.] That it might be determined at what gate of the temple they were to wait.

Ver. 14. *And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah.*] Who is called Meshelemiah, ver. 1.

Then for Zechariah his son (a wise counsellor) they cast lots, and his lot came out northward.] He was as much reputed for prudence, as others were for strength or valour: and it was as necessary in the management of many of their affairs.

Ver. 15. *To Obed-Edom southward; and to his sons the house of Asuppim.*] Many learned men take *Asuppim* to signify the treasury of the temple, or the place where things dedicated were laid up. This they ground, first, upon the import of the word, which betokens collections, or *gatherings*, as we translate it in the margin: and, secondly, because *Obed-Edom* (whose sons are here said to be placed at Asuppim) is said in 2 Chron. xxv. 24. to have the custody of the treasures. But, though this be granted, it still remains a very difficult matter to find where Asuppim was. After a long discussion of it, Dr. Lightfoot concludes, that Asuppim were two gates in the western wall, which stood most south, or nearest to Jerusalem; and that *the house of Asuppim* was a large building which run between them, and was a treasury of divers rooms for laying up things that served the use of the temple. (See Temple Service, chap. 5. sect. 3.)

Ver. 16. *To Shuppim and Hosah the lot came forth westward, with the gate Shallecheth, by the causey of the going up.*] This gate which in Solomon's time was called Shallecheth, in the time of Herod's temple was called the gate of Coponius. Which is said here to be *by the causey of the going up:* because it was by that ascent which Solomon made for his own passage up from his own house to the temple, (1 Kings x. 5. 2 Chron. ix. 4.) Which Josephus thus expresses (as Dr. Lightfoot observes), *A gate led to the king's house from the temple, the valley between them being filled up for the passage.* From whence the gate was called by the name of Shallecheth, which signifies *casting up;* because of the causey that was cast up to lead to it from the king's palace: this being the ordinary way to the house of God.

Ward against ward.] I suppose the meaning is, that they guarded each of these gates of Asuppim: or, as others take it, they guarded by turns; when one went off, another coming on. But the most learned Dr. Alix (whom I consulted about it) thinks these words signify, that their stations were at the four points of heaven, opposite one to the other.

Ver. 17. *Eastward were six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and towards Asuppim two and two.*] That is, two at each gate of Asuppim beforementioned. The distribution of the porters into four-and-twenty courses, is not so plainly and distinctly set down in Scripture, as is the distribution of the priests and singers. Yet (as Dr. Lightfoot observes) it may be fairly concluded from two places: whereof this is one, in these two verses, 16, 17. where the fathers of the porters are summed up to the very same number that the first fathers of the other courses were, *viz.* to four-and-twenty. *Among all the porters* (saith Kimchi on this place) *there were four-and-twenty, according to the rest of the courses; six on the east side, four on the north, four on the south, at Asuppim two and two (four in all), four on the west, and two at Parbar: behold, four-and-twenty.* The other place is 2 Chron. viii. 14. where the porters go in the very same equipage (as he speaks), as to the matter of division into courses, with the priests and the singers. (See Temple Service, chap. 7.)

Ver. 18. *At Parbar westward, four at the causey, and two at Parbar.*] This gate, it appears from this place, was in the west quarter, and the west gate to the causey, or Shallecheth. It signifies, some think, the same with Parvar, which betokens suburbs: for it led to the suburbs, that is, that part of the city which was called Millo. Which was the valley at the west end of Mount Moriah, in which Jerusalem and Zion met; replenished with buildings in David's and Solomon's time, 2 Sam. v. 9. 1 Kings xi. 27. (See Dr. Lightfoot, in his Survey of the Temple, chap. 5. sect. 2.)

Ver. 19. *These are the divisions of the porters among the sons of Kore, and among the sons of Merari.*] These courses were made up of the Levites of these two great families.

Ver. 20. *And of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things.*] By the *treasures of the house of God*, are meant such things as were of ordinary use and employment in the temple; such as the vessels, vestments, tithes, wine, oil, and other things that were commonly used; together with such as were offered to the treasury, either as a due (as was the half shekel), or voluntarily, as money or vessels, for the repair of the house of God, and advancement of the service there. By *the treasures of the dedicated*

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things, are meant whatsoever their kings or great commanders had consecrated and dedicated for Divine uses; which lay as a stock for the temple, and monuments of their devotion.

Ver. 21. *As concerning the sons of Laadan; the son of the Gershonite Laadan, chief fathers, even of Laadan the Gershonite, were Jehieli.*] This was an eminent man of that family. (See xxiii. 7.)

Ver. 22. *The son of Jehieli; Zetham, and Joel his brother.*] See xxiii. 8. where he is called Jehiel.

Which were over the treasures of the house of the Lord.] From hence Dr. Lightfoot gathers, that as some of the *treasures of the house of God* were under the care and charge of the porters, (see ix. 26.) so the rest, and the treasures of *dedicated things,* were committed to the care and charge of other Levites, who were neither porters nor singers.

Ver. 23. *Of the Amramites, and the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites.*] Several persons of these families were employed as they that are mentioned in the foregoing verse.

Ver. 24. *And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures.*] This is the sole honour, that we read of hitherto, conferred upon any of the posterity of Moses; one of which was advanced to a great authority, being the overseer of all the treasures, and their officers. By *treasures,* I suppose, is here meant those of the house of the Lord; for another was over the dedicated things, (ver. 26.)

Ver. 25. *And his brethren by Eliezer; Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son.*] These, I suppose, were under Shebuel, as their chief ruler.

Ver. 26. *Which Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things.*] Here is another of Moses's posterity (by his younger son) preferred to a great office: to have the charge of those things which were dedicated for the service of God, in which his brethren were to assist him.

Which David the king.] Out of his great piety, had dedicated in abundance, to the building of the temple, (xxii. 14.)

And the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds.] Such as by the counsel of Jethro (Exod. xviii.) were constituted to assist in the government of the people.

And the captains of the host, had dedicated.] The great military men imitated the rulers in the civil government in this piety: or such as are called *captains of the host,* xxv. 1.

Ver. 27. *Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord.*] As David gave a vast treasure to the building of the house, so these men dedicated a part of their spoil to the support and repair of it, as there should be occasion, after it was built.

Ver. 28. *And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah, had dedicated.*] He mentions particularly some great benefactors, to honour their memory, and to be examples to posterity. And Samuel seems to have begun, and led the way to the rest that followed. For he, I suppose, by the spirit of prophecy, foresaw the nation would be so well settled in the land, that a house would be built for the service of God: and therefore he dedicated part of the spoils, which he got in the battles he fought, while he was judge of the people of Israel. Which example Saul, Abner, and Joab, imitated. And they all took it from the ancient piety of the great patriarch Abraham, who gave the tenth of the spoils which he won to Melchisedec, God's high-priest. The like did the princes of the people of Israel, after their victory over the Midianites; as we read Numb. xxxi.

And whosoever had dedicated any thing.] There were many, no doubt, who were disposed to the same piety besides these named.

It was under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren.] He was a man of eminent probity and prudence; otherwise so great a trust would not have been reposed in him.

Ver. 29. *Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were for the outward business.*] That is, the business without the city of Jerusalem; which neither belonged to the singers, nor the porters, whose business was within the city: but what this *outward business* was, is not easily resolved. Kimchi and other Hebrew doctors think, it was to cut down trees in the woods, and to hew stones, and to see the fields ploughed, and the vineyards and gardens planted and dressed, which by devout persons had been dedicated to the service of God: but there doth not seem to be any thing belonging to such matters in these words. For though *shoterim,* or officers, might possibly have something to do in such matters, yet, what business there was in these things for the judges (on whom these officers attended) none can imagine. And this *outward business* being *over Israel,* as it here follows, it does not denote their care of the fruits consecrated by the Israelites, nor the government of those who gathered those fruits; but some authority over the Israelites themselves; such as is described in the following verse. See Bertram, de Repub. Jud. p. 126. whose opinion is approved by Conringius; which is, that they were assessors with the ordinary judges.

Over Israel.] Not over all the people of Israel, but over a part of them: for those about Jordan were under another jurisdiction, as appears by the next verse.

For officers and judges.] For such employments as are mentioned in the following verse.

Ver. 30. *And of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valour, a thousand and seven hundred, were officers among them of Israel on this side Jordan westward.*] This was a vast number: therefore their officers were of several sorts (as it follows), not only in Divine, but in civil affairs.

In all business of the Lord, and in the service of the king.] The work or *business of the Lord,* was to take care of all things belonging to religion: among which Divine employments, no doubt, this was the chief, to judge the people according to the law of God; and to see their sentence put in execution. For their judges *judged for the Lord,* as Jehoshaphat tells them, 2 Chron. xix. 6. and they had officers, called *shoterim,* to see their judgment take effect. But the word *shoterim* doth not signify merely the ministers of the judges: but also such persons who had some ministry committed to them; to correct offenders, and to punish them; or to bring them before the judges to be punished by them. For they are not only joined with judges (as I have often before observed), but frequently put before them in this book: and, therefore, it is hard to find one word to comprehend the whole work of these officers; who were

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employed both in peace and in war, as our learned Nic. Fuller observes, in his Miscellanies, lib. ii. cap. 20.

As for *the business of the king,* some think, it was the gathering his tribute, or perhaps publishing his orders and commands, and the like. (See Grotius, de Jure Sum. Pot. circa Sacra, p. 390.)

Ver. 31. *Among the Hebronites was Jerijah the chief, even among the Hebronites, according to the generations of their fathers.*] He was the principal person among the sons of Hebron, as we find before, xxiii. 19.

In the fortieth year of the reign of king David, they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valour at Jazer of Gilead.] In the last year of king David's reign, not only these things mentioned in this chapter were established, but all the other ordinances which we read of in the foregoing, as the Hebrew commentators observe. And his care extended itself to the utmost parts of his dominion, where he sought for men fit to be put into these offices, on the other side of Jordan: and found many persons of great courage at Jazer in Gilead, and the territory belonging to it; among whom Jerijah was the chief: Jazer was a city given to the children of Merari, (Josh. xxi. 39.)

Ver. 32. *And his brethren, men of valour, were two thousand seven hundred chief fathers, whom David made rulers over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.*] This was a great number to be employed in so small a country; when on the other side of Jordan (besides those under Chenaniah) there were but one thousand and seven hundred. But the reason was, that they lived a great way from Jerusalem, and therefore needed more to inspect, and admonish them of their duty, lest they should forget their relation to the temple, or grow sluggish in the worship of God, or embrace the religion of their neighbours, as Pellicanus observes.

For every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king.] It was the more necessary, there should be such a number of officers among them, to keep them in their obedience to the king, as well as in their duty to God. For there was danger of their desertion from their sovereign, who lived at a great distance, and was separated from them by the river Jordan. And nothing could be more pernicious, as he likewise observes, than the rending of the kingdom, and neglect of the Divine service.

From these words it appears very plainly, as Johannes Vorstius notes, (in his dissertation de Synedriis Hebræorum, sect. 36.) that the same persons took care of the things or causes pertaining to God, and those concerning the king. For nothing hindered that one and the same college of judges might judge both kind of things, whether spiritual, as we distinguish, or civil. And he thinks, no interpretation of the *things of God,* and the *things of the king,* is so probable, as that which I have given before: that by the *things of God,* are meant such things as might be judged by the Divine law; and the *things of the king,* such as could not be determined by the law, but were left to the judgment of the king. Who could not abrogate the ancient laws, being bound to study the book of the law all the days of his life, (Deut. xvii.) and judge according to it. But all things being not there defined, or not so clearly and plainly that they could be determined by those laws, the king, or those whom he entrusted in his stead, gave sentence in such matters, and could make new laws, provided they did not contradict the old.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1. *NOW the children of Israel after their number, to wit, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers, that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course were twenty and four thousand.*] After the settlement of ecclesiastical affairs, here is an account given how the militia, as we may call it, of the kingdom was settled in such order, that it might be serviceable. They were distributed into twelve legions, consisting each of twenty-four thousand men; who were commanded by one of the *chief of the fathers:* under whom there were *captains of thousands,* such as we now call *colonels,* which were twenty-four in every legion, commanding a thousand men. And then *centurions* under them, or *captains of hundreds;* and under them inferior officers. Each of these generals attended, with the legions, one month, for the security of the king and kingdom: at the end of which they marched off, and another legion, with their general, succeeded. So that their course came but once in a year, for one month, which made it no considerable burden to them: there being so many valiant men then in the nation, that without much damage such a number might be in arms, for so short a season. Pellicanus thinks, this order was instituted in the beginning of David's reign, but was interrupted by many wars he had abroad; and not renewed till his last years, when he established it again, and left his kingdom to Solomon thus governed. See Bertram, de Repub. Jud. p. 133. who observes, that after this we never read of the Cherethites and Pelethites; these troops being settled in their room.

Ver. 2. *Over the first course, for the first month, was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel: and in his course were twenty and four thousand.*] Now he sets down the names of the chief commander of every legion: and Jashobeam seems to have been the first of his mighty men, mentioned xi. 11. 2 Sam. xxiii. 8.

Ver. 3. *Of the children of Perez was the chief of all the captains of the host for the first month.*] The forenamed Jashobeam was of the children of Pharez, the son of Judah: which tribe had the honour to have the first chief commander chosen out of it.

Ver. 4. *And over the course of the second month was Dodai an Ahohite, and of his course was Mikloth also the ruler: in his course likewise were twenty and four thousand.*] This Dodo (as he is called in 2 Sam. xxiii. 9.) was another of David's mighty men: who had for his lieutenant (when he was absent) Mikloth; who, we may suppose, is therefore here mentioned, because he was a person of great eminence, and had some considerable command in this course.

Ver. 5. *The third captain of the host, for the third month, was Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a chief priest.*] Or rather, *a chief prince,* as the Hebrew word *cohen* often signifies: (See upon 2 Sam. viii. 18. xx. 26.) for it is certain, neither Benaiah nor his father was high-priest, or second priest; but Abiathar and Zadok were in those offices.

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And in his course were twenty and four thousand.

Ver. 6. *This is that Benaiah, who was mighty among the thirty, and above the thirty.*] He was one of David's worthies, who had done such mighty acts, that this Divine writer did not think fit here to mention him, without a mark of honour set upon him. (See 2 Sam. xxiii. 20. 23.)

And in his course was Ammizabad his son.] He was his deputy, when his father could not attend this duty himself; having another office of great dignity, wherein he served as captain of the Cherethites and Pelethites, (2 Sam. viii. 18.) Of whom, I observed before, we never read after the time of David: but it is likely were kept up while they lived, though there was no need of them, after these courses were settled.

Ver. 7. *The fourth captain, for the fourth month, was Asahel the brother of Joab.*] This confirms Pellicanus's opinion, that David instituted these courses in the beginning of his reign: for Asahel was killed while David reigned in Hebron, before he was king over all Israel, and settled at Jerusalem. He also was one of David's worthies, (2 Sam. xxiii. 24.)

And Zebadiah his son after him.] He had the honour to succeed his father in this great command, when he was slain.

Ver. 8. *The fifth captain, for the fifth month, was Shamhuth the Izrahite,* &c.] It is very probable, that this was that valiant man called Shammah, 2 Sam. xxiii. 11. and Shammath in this book, xi. 27.

Ver. 9. *The sixth captain, for the sixth month, was Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,* &c.] He is mentioned among the thirty mighty men in 2 Sam. xxiii. 26. and in this book, xi. 28.

Ver. 10. *The seventh captain, for the seventh month, was Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim,* &c.] He is called the Paltite in 2 Sam. xxiii. 26. and, for the honour of that tribe, he is said here to be of the *children of Ephraim.*

Ver. 11. *The eighth captain, for the eighth month, was Sibbecai the Hushathite of the Zarhites,* &c.] One of that family that was eminent in the tribe of Judah descended from Caleb, (ii. 53.) He slew one of the sons of the giant, in a battle with the Philistines, (2 Sam. xxi. 18.)

Ver. 12. *The ninth captain, for the ninth month, was Abiezer the Anetothite, of the Benjamites.*] He also is mentioned among the thirty mighty men in 2 Sam. xxiii. 27.

Ver. 13. *The tenth captain, for the tenth month, was Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zarhites,* &c.] One of the same mighty men, (2 Sam. xxiii. 28.)

Ver. 14. *The eleventh captain, for the eleventh month, was Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim.*] Who is also there mentioned, ver. 30. but here it is added of what tribe he was.

Ver. 15. *The twelfth captain, for the twelfth month, was Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel,* &c.] He is called Heled in this book, chap. xi. 30. and Heleb in 2 Sam. xxiii. 29.

Ver. 16. *Furthermore, over the tribes of Israel.*] Besides the twelve great captains beforementioned, who commanded, each of them, twenty and four thousand men; every tribe had a ruler, (who are called *the princes of the tribes of Israel,* ver. 22.) who had the chief authority among them, under the king.

The ruler of the Reubenites was Eliezer the son of Zichri: of the Simeonites; Shephatiah the son of Maachah.] He reckons up the tribes in order according to their birthright, by Leah.

Ver. 17. *Of the Levites; Hashabiah the son of Kemuel.*] He is mentioned before, (xxvi. 30.)

Of the Aaronites; Zadok.] They were not a distinct tribe, but of a distinct order, from the rest of the Levites: and therefore had a peculiar chief to preside over them, *viz.* Zadok. Who (as Bertram thinks) had the chief authority at the tabernacle in Gibeon, as Abiathar had at Jerusalem, where the ark was.

Ver. 18. *Of Judah; Elihu, one of the brethren of David.*] Called Eliab in 1 Sam. xvi. 6.

Of Issachar; Omri the son of Michael.] He was the fifth son of Leah, and therefore is reckoned next to Judah, who was the fourth, (Gen. xxx. 17, 18.)

Ver. 19. *Of Zebulun; Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah.*] He was the next son of Leah, (Gen xxx. 20.)

Of Naphtali; Jerimoth the son of Azriel.] Though Dan was the first-born of Bilhah, (Gen. xxx. 6.) yet that tribe is put last, and Naphtali, who was the next son, put before him. For what reason we cannot tell.

Ver. 20. *Of the children of Ephraim; Hoshea the son of Azaziah: of the half tribe of Manasseh; Joel the son of Pedaiah.*] This is meant of that half tribe, which had its portion on this side Jordan, near to Ephraim.

Ver. 21. *Of the half tribe of Manasseh in Gilead.*] On the other side Jordan, where the Reubenites and Gadites were.

Iddo the son of Zechariah.] It doth not appear of what family he was, but it is likely one of that tribe.

Of Benjamin; Jaasiel the son of Abner.] It seems the family of Abner, who was the greatest man in the kingdom of Israel, continued in high authority after his death.

Ver. 22. *Of Dan; Azareel the son of Jeroham. These were the princes of the tribes of Israel.*] That is, of those tribes beforementioned. But Gad and Asher are omitted, of which we can give no certain account: perhaps they were under the government of the ruler of some neighbouring tribe. For Asher, dwelling in very narrow bounds between Naphtali and Zebulun, might be under the command of him that governed either of them: and Gad, some think, was comprehended under the Reubenites.

Ver. 23. *But David took not the number of them.*] That is, of Israel, whom he had spoken of before.

From twenty years old and under.] But only of those who were above the age of twenty years.

Because the Lord had said he would increase Israel like to the stars of the heavens.] This was the reason, Pellicanus thinks, that God was so angry with David for numbering the people: which he had promised should be so many, that they should not be numbered. Which promise God would have to be believed, without attempting to prove the truth of it. But these words seem to me to confute that opinion: for they rather signify, that David forbore to number all the people, because he would not question that promise, and contented himself with an account of those that were fit to go to war, xxi. 4. (See my notes upon 2 Sam. xxiv. 10.)

Ver. 24. *Joab the son of Zeruiah began to number, but he finished not.*] For he did not number those of Levi and Benjamin; as we read before in this book, chap. xxi. 6.

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Because there fell wrath for it against Israel.] This seems to import, that before Joab had finished his account the plague began; which put a stop to his proceedings.

Neither was the number put in the account of the Chronicles of king David.] An account of the number as far as he went, was given by Joab to the king: but the king being sensible of his error, would not have it recorded in the public registers of the kingdom, as other things of daily occurrence were. Yet the memory of it is preserved in these holy books, to teach all posterity not to put their trust in the arm of flesh.

Ver. 25. *And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel: and over the storehouses in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the castles, was Jehonathan the son of Uzziah.*] The former of these was the principal officer in the exchequer, as we now speak, who received the king's money from the under-officers, and was accountable for it; and lived at Jerusalem, where he issued it out, according to the king's orders. But there was another in the country out of Jerusalem, who received the tribute of all kinds, which the people were to pay him: which he laid up in storehouses, that were built in several places for that purpose.

Ver. 26. *And over them that did the work of the field, for tillage of the ground, was Ezri the son of Chelub.*] Besides the tribute paid by the people of corn, wine, oil, &c. the king had land of his own; where he kept servants to till the ground. And this person was set over them, to see they were not idle, and that they were honest in gathering the fruits of the earth, and sending them to the storehouses.

Ver. 27. *And over the vineyards was Shimei the Ramathite.*] He looked after the vine-dressers.

Over the increase of the vineyards for the wine-cellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite.] His office was to see the wine pressed out of the grapes, and carried into the cellars; where it was laid up.

Ver. 28. *And over the olive-trees, and the sycamore-trees that were in the low plains, was Baal-hanan the Gederite.*] This shews that David was a great husband, as we speak, and had ground proper for all sort of fruits; which was managed by his own servants. For, as I have often observed, the greatest men in those times studied the improvement of their ground, of what sort soever it was.

And over the cellars of oil was Joash.] It appears, from many places, that a great part of their revenue lay in oil: which required great care, as wine did, in the looking after it.

Ver. 29. *And over the herds that fed in Sharon was Shitrai the Sharonite: and over the herds that were in the valleys was Shaphat the son of Adlai.*] He had great store of cattle also in his pastures, particularly in Sharon, which was a place noted for its fruitfulness, as we read in the prophet Isaiah, chap. xxxiii. 9. xxxv. 2. And so St. Jerome testifies, "Omnis regio Saron," &c. *all the region of Saron*, about Lydda, Joppa, and Jamnia, was apt for feeding of flocks. (See Isa. lxv. 10.) There was another Sharon besides this near the Mediterranean, which was in the east beyond Jordan (as I observed upon chap. v. 16. of this book), where the Gadites inhabited, who abounded in cattle: and therefore were planted by Moses in this region, and in Bashan, which was another rich country for pasture. (See L'Empereur, upon Bava-kama.) And therefore here David, it is likely, bred a great many cattle, both in the mountains and in the valleys; and had particular officers to look after them, they being very many. For here, as he observes out of Maimonides, there were great numbers of calves bred, which women had the care of, and were brought from hence to other places to be sold.

Ver. 30. *Over the camels also was Obil the Ishmaelite.*] An Ishmaelite was the fittest person to look after the breed of camels, because that country abounded with them, and they best understood their nature. And this person seems to have had his name from his office. For as *ibil*, in Arabic, signifies a *camel*, so *abal*, and *abil*, a *keeper of camels*: as Bochart notes in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2.

And over the asses was Jehdeiah the Meronothite.] This was a great part of men's riches in old times; for we find Ana feeding his father's asses in Gen. xxxvi. 24. In which book we find them reckoned among the wealth of the ancient patriarchs: and the Israelites took no less than threescore and one thousand of them from the Midianites, Numb. xxxi. 34. And in this book we read of two thousand taken from the Hagarites, (chap. v. 21.) And when the Jews returned out of the captivity of Babylon, they were become so rich, that they brought away with them six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses; as Nehemiah relates, chap. vii. 69.

Ver. 31. *And over the flocks was Jaziz the Hagarite. All these were the rulers of the substance which was king David's.*] The *flocks* of sheep, no doubt, were very numerous; but among all the flocks and herds there is no mention made of swine, as Bochartus observes. Nor had the patriarchs any that we read of, when mention is made of their possessions. Nor had Job any in Arabia, though he had a vast number of other cattle. Nor did the Israelites ever take any of these as spoil from their enemies. And therefore Gadara, where swine were kept in Judea (as we read in the gospel), was a Greek city, not a Jewish, as Josephus tells us. (See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. i. cap. 51.)

Ver. 32. *Also Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counsellor, a wise man, and a scribe.*] He was one of the privy-council; being a man of great wisdom, and also skilful in the law: for so the word *sopher* (which we render *scribe*) signifies. A very learned author thinks it signifies a *secretary of state*, or rather a *chancellor*.

And Jehiel the son of Hachmoni was with the king's sons.] He also, no doubt, was a man of great understanding, being a tutor, as we speak, or governor to the king's sons.

Ver. 33. *And Ahithophel was the king's counsellor: and Hushai the Archite was the king's companion.*] Ahithophel seems to have been president of the council: but Hushai was his favourite (being called David's friend), in whose company he most delighted, and whom he trusted with his greatest secrets.

Ver. 34. *And after Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar.*] After Ahithophel had made away himself, these two were the principal counsellors; as Kimchi and other Jewish doctors understand these words. But others think the meaning is, that next to him these two were accounted the ablest men that David advised withal: but *after him*, for he was esteemed the man of greatest prudence.

And the general of the king's army was Joab.] The Targum hath a strange exposition of this verse, which is this: When there was war to be made, they consulted Ahitho-

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phel, and after that they asked counsel of *urim* and *thummim* by Jehoiada, the head of the Sanhedrin; and by Abiathar the high-priest: and so the Cherethites and Pelethites, by the authority of *urim* and *thummim*, went to fight under the command of Joab, the general of the army. In the exposition of which there are a great many foolish descants, which I shall not mention.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1. *AND David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes.*] These seem to be the same, one being the explication of the other: and they are those persons mentioned ver. 16, 17, &c. of the foregoing chapter.

And the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course.] That is, those great commanders, over four-and-twenty thousand apiece, mentioned in the beginning of the foregoing chapter.

And the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds.] The commanders of every one of those thousands, with the centurions who commanded the several companies, consisting of a hundred.

And the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons.] Who are mentioned also in ver. 25, 26, &c. of the foregoing chapter: and appear by this to have been considerable persons.

With the officers.] Who were about his person.

And with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men.] Those who were eminent for their services in war, of whom he had spoken in chap. xi. xii.

Unto Jerusalem.] All these he called to attend him in the chief city of the kingdom, that he might commend Solomon to them as his successor, and this government which he had settled. (See Bertram, de Repub. Jud. p. 150.) This seems to have been a distinct assembly from that mentioned chap. xxiii. 2. being more general, and consisting of many persons, who were not then in such offices as are here named.

Ver. 2. *Then David the king stood upon his feet, and said.*] He was sitting in his throne, I suppose, when they came in, but then stood up in respect to so great an assembly, and that he might be the better heard. When he first declared Solomon to be his successor, and caused him to be anointed, he lay upon his bed, being very palsic and decrepit, as we read 1 Kings i. But intending now to have him anointed again, in the midst of his princes and great commanders, (chap. xxix. 22.) whom he could not assemble, when on a sudden he commanded him to be anointed before; he roused up himself, and rose from his couch, and came out of his chamber, and made orations, and gave advice for things to come, as Dr. Lightfoot observes.

Hear me, my brethren, and my people.] He calls the great men his brethren, both because they had a share in the government with him, and to express his affection to them. It is likely they were attended by some other persons, whom he calls *my people*.

I had in mine heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord.] A fixed place, where the ark might be settled, and not carried about, as it had been hitherto, (2 Sam. vii. 1.)

And for the footstool of our God.] Here the conjunction *and*, as our Mr. Mede observes, is exegetical, and the same with *that is:* according to which expression, the prophet Jeremiah saith, (Lam. ii. 1.) that the Lord had cast *down the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool* (that is, the ark of the covenant, which was their glory), *in the day of his anger*, book i. p. 500. For the Divine Glory sitting upon the wings of the cherubims, over the mercy-seat, (Psal. lxxx. 2.) his feet, as we speak after the manner of men, rested upon the ark: and therefore the Targum thus paraphrases it, *The footstool of the throne of glory.* And thence it is sometimes called, *The ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who sitteth upon the cherubims*, (1 Sam. iv. 4.)

And had made ready for the building.] Laid up great treasures, which he designed to defray the charges of the building. (See chap. xxii.)

Ver. 3. *But God said unto me.*] In the Targum, The *Memra, Word of the Lord.*

Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.] See my notes upon chap. xxii. 8. To which I shall here add, that bloodshed was accounted a thing so heinous, that though one had killed another only accidentally, yet he was bound to flee for it to a city of refuge, or else he might have been killed himself. And among the ancient Greeks, (as Petitus shews, in his book of the Attic Laws, lib. vii. p. 512.) he that killed another involuntarily, was banished from his country for a year. But David is here forbidden to build God a temple, merely because he had been engaged in war and bloodshed, though it was on a pious account. And thus also among the ancient Greeks (as Grotius observes), they stood in need of an expiation, who, without any blame, had defiled their hands in blood. And, accordingly, among the Greek Christians there was a canon, long observed in that church, which kept men from the holy communion for a time, who had killed an enemy in any war. (See lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 25. sect. 9.) But Osiander, considering this passage in Grotius, thinks, that in these words, David's warring and bloodshed are not alleged, "ratione alicujus vitii," &c. *upon the account of any blemish*, which hindered him from building a house for God, but merely upon the account of the vast business wherein he was engaged: for, being employed continually in warlike actions, he was not at leisure for such a building; which was to be the work of peace and quietness. David also is expressly said to have managed the wars of the Lord, being but his instrument to punish the enemies of his people Israel: and therefore could not be blemished by being thus employed to God, nor made incapable thereby to build his temple. For he gloried and triumphed in these wars, and in the victories he got: for which he sung praise to God, Psal. lx. Add to all this, that the account which Solomon gives to Hiram, why his father did not build God a house, was, that he was otherwise employed, (1 Kings v. 3.) But I leave this to better judgments.

Ver. 4. *Howbeit the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever.*] See 1 Sam. xvi. 13. Psal. lxxviii. 68.

For he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler.] See Gen. xlix. 10.

And of the house of Judah the house of my father; and

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among the sons of my father he liked me, to make me king over all Israel.] For till his days it was not known out of what family of Judah a king should be chosen, from whom the Messiah should come.

Ver. 5. *And of all my sons (for the Lord hath given me many sons) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel.*] For he was beloved of God from his birth, (2 Sam. xii. 25.) and plainly designed by God to be his successor, (2 Sam. vii. 13. and here in this book, chap. xxii. 9.) So that David sware he should reign after him, and accordingly performed it, (1 Kings i. 17. 35.) This he declares now to them all, when he was going out of the world: that they might reverence Solomon as a person placed upon the throne by Divine appointment; and not out of any partial and fond affection of his to him, preferred before his elder brethren.

Ver. 6. *And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.*] See 2 Sam. vii. 13. and this book, chap. xxii. 9.

Ver. 7. *Moreover, I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments, and my judgments, as at this day.*] The last words import, that hitherto Solomon was very towardly (as we speak), and gave great hopes he would continue steadfast in his obedience to God, as his father David had done.

Ver. 8. *Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord.*] Who were here present by their representatives: to whom he now addresses his speech, that they might give the same exhortation to their neighbours.

And in the audience of our God.] Who was present in all their public assemblies, as I have noted upon Judg. xx. 1. (See there.)

Keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God.] It is not enough to know the will of God, if we do not *keep* it; that is, observe his commands, and live in the practice of our duty. But that we may know it, it is necessary to *seek* it; that is, to inquire after it, and study the laws of God. For no man (as Grotius here observes) shall be excused by a supine ignorance.

That ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever.] It was in vain to expect the continuance of God's favour to them, who had brought them into this good land, unless they continued steadfast in his obedience. This was the only way to settlement in their possessions.

Ver. 9. *And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father.*] To *know* God is, in Scripture language, to acknowledge and love him. As God is said *to know the way* of the righteous; that is, to approve and love it, (Psal. i. *ult.*) Solomon had the greater reason to do this, because God had been so very gracious to his father David, and chosen him, before all his brethren, to be his successor.

And serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind.] His love was to be expressed by obedience to God, and that entirely and cheerfully: out of choice, not by constraint; not to gain the good opinion of men, but the favour of God. For hearty piety, and not merely the outward appearance of it, is the surest support of a prince's power and authority: and will dispose his subjects to love and reverence him as sincerely as he doth God.

For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.] He presses him with two arguments unto sincerity in his obedience. The first is in these words; because God cannot be deceived with external services; for he looks into the hearts, and discerns the most secret motions there: which cannot be hid from him, but he is privy to every thought, and to the very beginning of them.

If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.] This is the other argument; God is not tied to any man, but upon condition of his hearty obedience. As he behaves himself towards God, so God will deal with him.

Ver. 10. *Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary.*] That is, for the ark to dwell in, for that was the principal furniture of the sanctuary. The Targum thus expresses it, *The Memra, Word of the Lord, hath chosen thee,* &c.

Be strong and do it.] Being a young man, he might be discouraged from undertaking so great work: but he bids him go about it strenuously, because God had chosen him to do it.

Ver. 11. *Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof.*] Abarbinel is very confident that the word *ulam,* which we translate *porch,* is a general word used in this place for the whole house. The description of which David gave Solomon, with all the apartments belonging to it: especially of the *houses thereof,* which were two: the outward, called *the holy place,* and the inward, called *the holy of holies,* which were distinct houses, being separated by a partition: and accordingly the former is called *the greater house,* (2 Chron. iii. 5.) being much larger in its dimensions than the other. At the entrance of which there was a porch, the model of which David gave him, as well as of the houses.

And of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof.] There were several rooms against the walls of the house round about, as we read 1 Kings vi. 5. which are here called by several names, according to the use wherein they were employed. And the forenamed Abarbinel here observes, out of Middoth, and Tamid, and other books, that the temple was built like a high tower, reaching up to heaven, there being three upper stories one above another, and the first story three times higher than that of Moses, *viz.* thirty cubits.

And of the place of the mercy-seat.] Where that should be placed, in the *holy of holies.*

Ver. 12. *And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit.*] In the Hebrew, *of all that he had in the Spirit with him;* that is, *inspired into him.* It being a house for God to dwell in, it was fit that it should not be of a mere human, but of a Divine contrivance, as the tabernacle built by Moses was. Therefore God suggested to David by his Spirit, how he would have it made in all the parts beforementioned, and in those that follow: for those words refer to both. (See ver. 19.)

Of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about.] How large the courts should be, and how many, and what rooms adjoining to them, was all ordered by a special direction from God.

Of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things.] From the last words most

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are of opinion, it may be concluded, that in these places all the utensils belonging to the tabernacle which Moses made, and the tabernacle itself (which was no longer used after Solomon's temple was built), were laid up and preserved. By which, perhaps, was signified, as Constantine L'Empereur conjectures, (upon Middoth, p. 87.) that all the ceremonies of Moses should one day be decently laid aside, and something better come in their room.

Ver. 13. *Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the Lord.*] He disposed of the courses of the priests and Levites (beforementioned) by the same Spirit, and how they should be employed, and what vessels they should use in God's service.

Ver. 14. *He gave of gold by weight for things of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; silver also for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service.*] He gave materials also, in a just proportion to the instruments that were to be made, either of gold or silver.

Ver. 15. *Even the weight for the candlesticks of gold, and for the lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof; and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, both for the candlestick, and also for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick.*] By this we learn that there were candlesticks of silver, as well as of gold. The former of which were lesser, to be carried in their hands from place to place, as there was occasion. But the latter were fixed in the sanctuary, and in Solomon's house were ten in number, (1 Kings vi. 49.)

Ver. 16. *And by weight he gave gold for the tables of shew-bread, for every table; and likewise silver for the tables of silver.*] There was but one table for the shew-bread: but there were several others attending upon it, whereon were set such vessels as belonged to it. For, as he made more candlesticks than were in the tabernacle; so, it appears by this, he also augmented the tables, which were no less than ten, (2 Chron. iv. 8.)

Ver. 17. *Also pure gold for the flesh-hooks, and the bowls, and the cups: and for the golden basons he gave gold by weight for every bason; and likewise silver by weight for every bason of silver.*] Assigning such a portion of gold or silver to every bason, as would make it as large as he proposed. Many of the Jews, by the Hebrew word *kepuri* (which we translate *basons*), understand *spoons*, which had the figure of oxen and lions on the head of them; which they imagine was the beginning of Solomon's offence. But the word rather imports some vessel, wherein they received the blood of the sacrifice *of expiation*.

Ver. 18. *And for the altar of incense refined gold by weight.*] It was covered with gold, as the cherubims were, 1 Kings vii. 49.

And gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubims, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord.] It seems David contrived these two cherubims, besides those which Moses had made. Of which see what I have noted upon 1 Kings vi. 23. 28. They are called the *chariot*, because God is said not only *to sit*, but *to ride upon the cherubims*, (Psal. xviii. 10.) as the Lord of hosts: and therefore they are described in Ezekiel, as having wheels on which they ran. The other made by Moses were most properly his seat, but these represented him as filling the whole house.

Ver. 19. *All this, said David, the Lord made me to understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.*] God made him understand all this so plainly and distinctly, as if it had been written on his mind as the ten commandments were upon the tables of stone in the mount. But some of the Jews think the meaning is, that God revealed these things first to some of the prophets, Samuel, (iv. 22.) or Nathan, or Gad, who delivered all to David in writing, as the mind of God. However it was, God was pleased thus himself to give instructions about the structure of the temple, and all belonging to it; that it might breed in the people's mind a greater reverence, when they came to worship him there: and, as Joseph de Voysin observes, the Jews in Beracoth say, that their minds might be lifted up when they came to the temple, from earthly things, to things spiritual and celestial.

Ver. 20. *And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong, and of good courage, and do it.*] He repeats what he had said before, (ver. 10.) the more to excite and encourage him to this work, which was to do the work of God.

Fear not, neither be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.] He thought that he might possibly fear disturbance from enemies abroad, of which David had a great many: but he bids him be confident, he should not be disquieted in his work; which should go on prosperously, by the blessing of God, till it was finished. Of which he might be the more assured, if he reflected how God had blessed David himself all his life long.

Ver. 21. *And, behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites, even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God: and there shall be with thee, for all manner of workmanship, every willing skilful man for any manner of service; also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment.*] It is a probable conjecture of Conradus Pellicanus, that he now presented Solomon with a list of all the courses of God's ministers, as God had directed him to establish them; assuring him, that God would dispose them to be serviceable unto him in all that he had to do for the carrying on of the work. Which should have the help and assistance of all other skilful persons, whom he would make willing to further it: and that he would make all the princes and the people obedient to him in all things. This was one reason, no doubt, of calling this assembly together, that they might be engaged to be aiding to Solomon in promoting so pious a work.

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1. *FURTHERMORE, David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God.*] He stirs them up to the assistance of his son, by these considerations, that he was a person chosen by God, not by him, for this work: and yet he needed their help, because he was but a youth, (see 1 Kings iii. 7.) and the work itself was to be very magnificent, suitable to the majesty that was to dwell

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therein, *viz.* the Lord himself; who dwells not (as the apostle speaks) *in temples made with hands:* but was present there by a glorious light, which represented his majesty.

Ver. 2, *Now, I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God, the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.*] We read of his great preparation for this building before, (chap. xxii. 14, &c.) only nothing is said there concerning *precious stones;* the use of which, in the ornament of any part of the temple, is not known. Ludolphus, speaking of the word *phuc*, which we translate *glistering*, saith, that as David provided all things for the fabric of the temple, so he provided for the clothing of the priests with rich garments, and also with such things as were good for bodily health, as this was, which was not only κοσμητικὸν, *for ornament*, but θεραπευτικὸν, *for medicine and preservation of health.* But perhaps *phuc* being famous among those things which women used for setting off their beauty, it may possibly here be a metaphorical word, for all such stones as may set off the building. (See his Commentary upon the Ethiopic History, lib. i. cap. 7. n. 51.)

Ver. 3. *Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house.*] Besides what he had devoted and dedicated to this use, he gave, out of what remained for his own occasions, a further sum for the building of the house, which is mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 4. *Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir.*] The gold of Ophir, here mentioned, was that which came out of Arabia, where, Bochartus hath proved, there was a country of that name abounding with gold. For in David's time the Ophir of India was not known, Solomon being the first that attempted a long voyage thither. So are we to understand the word Ophir in the book of Job, (xxii. 24. xxviii. 16.) For in his time they had not learned to traffic into those far-distant countries, where the other Ophir in India was. (See my notes on 1 Kings ix. 18.) This gold here mentioned, was of a purer sort than that in chap. xxii. 11. which was coarser than the gold of Ophir.

And seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal.] There are two things, which Dr. Lightfoot hath remarked in these two verses. One is, that it is said, this preparation was above what he had prepared for the holy house, and yet he saith he had prepared it for the house of God. The other is, that mention is made here of silver to overlay the house withal; whereas it is evident, that within the house itself all the overlaying was of gold. Therefore it is thus to be understood, that besides the store of gold that David had provided for the gilding of the house, both in the holy and most holy place; he had also laid by a stock, both of gold and silver, to gild the chambers over the porch (for there were divers upper-chambers, the height of it being a hundred and twenty cubits), and to beautify the side-chambers, and the other rooms that were about the courts. All this gold and silver amounted to such a vast sum of our money, that it is not easy to give an account of it. (See Calvisius, ad Annum Mundi 2933.)

Ver. 5. *The gold for things of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers.*] That there might be enough to pay all sort of workmen their wages, as well as to provide them materials to work withal.

And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?] The Hebrew phrase *to fill his hand* (as it is in the margin) signifies to make an offering; unto which he excites them by his example, as a thing which would be very grateful unto God.

Ver. 6. *Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers over the king's work, offered willingly.*] All those great men, mentioned chap. xxvii. made their cheerful contributions.

Ver. 7. *And gave, for the service of the house of God, of gold, five thousand talents and ten thousand drams; and of silver, ten thousand talents; and of brass, eighteen thousand talents; and one hundred thousand talents of iron.*] What every particular person gave is not here recorded; but the whole amounted to these sums, which was very great.

Ver. 8. *And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite.*] For he and his sons were keepers of the treasure of God's house, (chap. xxvi. 21, 22.) and were appointed to receive such offerings.

Ver. 9. *Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly.*] They that made the offering rejoiced; for they did it with a good will, and not by constraint.

Because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord.] This is the virtue which St. Paul calls ἁπλότης, *singleness of heart:* which hath respect purely to the service of God, the honour of religion, and the good of his church, (2 Cor. viii. 2. ix. 11, 13.)

And David the king also rejoiced with great joy.] It was a singular comfort to him in his old age, to see the people so well disposed, and his exhortation so effectual upon their hearts; which gave him a good hope this work would not fail to be speedily accomplished.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.*] All this he ascribed to the grace of God, whom he therefore blessed and praised, for giving them such a heart.

Ver. 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.*] This is a most noble declaration of the sense he had of the Divine excellences and perfections, with a thankful acknowledgment of his immensity, power, goodness, eternity, and majesty, which are the properties or attributes of God. The Targum, and the Talmudists, apply these to the wonderful works of God, in this manner:—*Thine, O Lord, is the greatness,* for thou createdst the world; *and the power,* for thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, and carriedst them through the Red Sea; and revealedst thyself in glory upon Mount Sinai, to give the law to thy people; and obtainedst victory over Amalek, Sihon, Og,

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and the Canaanites; and madest the sun and the moon stand still, *by the spirit of thy glory*, till thy people were vindicated of their enemies. For all things, both in heaven and in earth, are the work of thy hands; thou supportest and rulest all things; and thou art exalted above all the angels in heaven, as well as all the kings upon earth.

Ver. 12. *Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all: and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*] The Targum thus paraphrases it: The riches of the wealthy, and the glory of kings and dominions, are given them by thee; thou rulest over all, and they are in thy power: who art able to multiply, and strengthen all things; that is, to increase those to great numbers who are diminished, and to strengthen those who are feeble and weak.

Ver. 13. *Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.*

Ver. 14. *But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?*] In the Targum it is thus paraphrased: *Who hast given such plenty, that we are able to offer these gifts.* He should have added, and also given us a heart to part with them for thy service.

For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.] We only return to thee what thine own hand hath blessed us withal, as the Targum expresses it. And so the ancient Christians were wont to say at their offertory, τὰ σὰ ἀπὸ τῶν σῶν, *thine from thine:* that is, thy own goods, from thy own people. In like manner we ought to acknowledge God in all spiritual things; referring every good thought, good purpose, good work, to his Divine grace, from whom we receive it; beseeching him, as David doth here in this prayer, (ver. 18.) to preserve it in us.

Ver. 15. *For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.*] He acknowledges that they were not proprietors of that good land wherein they dwelt, but only his tenants; who held all they had of him; and that but a very short term; after which they must leave all, as their fathers had done. The words may be thus paraphrased, in short: *We have but the use of these things for a little while, and so have parted with no great matter unto thee.* Those words, *as a shadow*, the Targum thus paraphrases: *As the shadow of a bird which flieth through the air, so are our days upon the earth:* that is, soon gone, as the Psalmist speaks.

Ver. 16. *O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared, to build thee a house for thine holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.*] He could not often enough repeat his sense of this, that they had given him nothing but what was his own; which he had most bountifully bestowed on them.

Ver. 17. *I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things.*] But the highest satisfaction was, that God had bestowed upon him a heart, to do what he had done willingly, with a sincere respect to the service of God, and not out of vain-glory. For the truth of which he appeals to God himself, who could not be deceived with false shows and pretences.

And now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.] It was a great additional comfort to him, that God had given such a heart unto his people.

Ver. 18. *O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.*] He could not desire a greater blessing for them, than that he who had given them such a pious heart, would preserve them in the same good disposition: and confirm and establish them therein. So the last words are better translated in the margin, *establish their heart unto thee.* Which the Targum paraphrases, *dispose their heart to fear thee.*

Ver. 19. *And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.*] To have a due respect to all God's precepts (in the observation of every one of which, *perfectness of heart* consists) he knew would be the best security for the performing what David designed. For then he would not be disobedient to his father's dying words.

Ver. 20. *And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the king.*] They worshipped both with the same gesture, but with a different mind; God with religious worship, the king with civil: giving God thanks for all his benefits, and thanking the king for all the care he had taken, during his reign, for their prosperity. But some think, this worship was not paid to David, but to Solomon; it being the manner thus to acknowledge the king, when he was enthroned. So they bowed their knees to our Saviour, in mockery of him, as a pretended king.

Ver. 21. *And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings unto the Lord, on the morrow after that day.*] For the ark was now at Jerusalem, where this great congregation was assembled, (chap. xxviii. 1.) and therefore they offered peace-offerings and burnt-offerings to God in that place, on the morrow after their meeting: for there was not time to do it on that day, when the foregoing things were done.

Even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel.] That is, together with the numerous burnt-offerings, a great many peace-offerings (which are here meant by *sacrifices*), sufficient for the entertainment of all the Israelites, who were there present, to feast upon; as the manner was, and as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 22. *And did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness.*] For the greatest part of peace-offerings was given to the persons that offered them, to entertain their friends withal, as hath been often observed. And they are said to eat and drink *before the Lord*, because it was a sacred feast, kept before the ark at Jerusalem, the place which God had chosen, according to the law, Deut. xii. 11, &c.

And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time.] This is supposed to have been done after David's death, when Solomon was anointed for himself, as reigning *pleno jure, in subjection to none:* as he was anointed the first time by David's command. But there are great men of another opinion; that he was twice anointed while David lived: first, in the presence of a few of David's ser-

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vants, as we read 1 Kings i. and now, in the presence of all the great men of Israel, the princes of the tribes, captains of thousands and hundreds. (See Bertram, de Repub. Jud. p. 130, 131.) And, indeed, we are led to this by the connexion with the foregoing words: for the persons who now made him king the second time, were those beforementioned, who sacrificed and feasted thereupon with great joy: after David's long speech to them. Dr. Lightfoot, indeed, observes, that there is mention three times of Solomon's being made king: twice in this book, chap. xxiii. 1. and here in this place; and in 1 Kings i. So that there may be a question made, whether he was made king three times, or only twice. But this place seems to settle the doubt; for when, upon the aspiring of Adonijah, he was anointed, it was the first time that David shewed who should succeed him: see 1 Kings i. 21. 27. and that must be concurrent, or the same, with that making him king mentioned in this book, chap. xxiii. 1. and this anointing in the midst of the princes and great commanders, was the second time. Abarbinel is of the same opinion, that he was anointed at first before a few; and now more publicly before the whole nation.

And anointed him unto the Lord to be the chief governor.] After the death of David, who, perhaps, now resigned the government of the kingdom to him, finding he had not long to live.

And Zadok to be priest.] This hath inclined many to think the anointing forementioned was after the death of David: because Abiathar was not put out of his office till the beginning of Solomon's reign. But I see no reason why we may not think he was anointed to be priest, as Solomon was to be king, in David's lifetime: though he was not actually put into the office till after he was dead, when Abiathar was thrust out. It was necessary he should be anointed, because the succession to the high-priesthood, in the line of Eleazar, had been long interrupted; and Abiathar, of the line of Ithamar, was still alive. This reason the Jews give why he was anointed; which was not necessary, they say, but in this case: it being sufficient otherwise, only to clothe him with the priestly vestments. But see Selden, de Success. in Pontif. lib. ii. cap. 9. who will incline one to be of another opinion.

Ver. 23. *Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord.*] So the throne of this kingdom is called, because this was God's land, and Israel his people, over whom he still remained their king: and Solomon reigned over them, not by inheritance, but by his special appointment. The Targum thus expresses it, *He sat upon the royal throne, according to the word of the Memra, Word of the Lord.*

As king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.] From the beginning of his reign, his people were all obedient to him: whereas, it was a long time before Saul could be settled on his throne; and it was longer before all Israel submitted to David.

Ver. 24. *And all the princes, and the mighty men.*] All the soldiery, as well as the heads of the tribes, and the great commanders.

And all the sons likewise of king David.] Who were then alive.

Submitted themselves unto Solomon the king.] Sware allegiance to him. For so the Hebrew phrase signifies, *they gave the hand under Solomon.* For putting the hand under the knee or the thigh of a person, was a token of subjection to him: and was anciently used, when they solemnly promised any thing to a superior, by an oath; (Gen. xxiv. 2. xlvii. 29.) which custom, if it did not continue in use in Solomon's days, yet that which was signified by it, was expressed in the ancient phrase.

Ver. 25. *And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.*] Which appears from the foregoing books, which shew, that neither David, nor Saul, nor any of the judges (who governed before them), lived in such splendour, as was in the court of Solomon.

Ver. 26. *Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel.*] That is, this is a brief account of what David did, during his reign, especially in the latter end of it.

Ver. 27. *And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.*] See 2 Sam. v. 5.

Ver. 28. *And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour.*] Abundantly satisfied, that he had lived long enough, in as great plenty and glory as he could desire.

And Solomon his son reigned in his stead.] Having this particular satisfaction, to see his son sit on his throne, likely to reign in greater glory than he had done. This was the Lord's doing, who disposed the hearts of all the great men, and his elder brethren, and the whole kingdom, to submit to him, who was but a young man.

Ver. 29. *Now the acts of David the king, first and last.*] A larger account of all that he did, from the beginning to the end of his reign.

Behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.] Here are three distinct titles given to those three persons: Samuel being called *roeh*, and Nathan is called *nabi*, and Gad is called *choseh*. But whether they have distinct significations, denoting several ways of receiving Divine inspirations, or several degrees of it, I am not able to determine. But this we may certainly affirm, with Theodoret (in his preface to the book of the Kings), that the prophets, besides the edition of their prophecies, published also very frequently the history of their own times. And Samuel began to write the life of David, which Nathan and Gad finished: out of which these things here recorded were extracted.

Ver. 30. *With all his reign and his might.*] That is, how he governed his people, and how he warred with their enemies; and got glorious victories over them: with all the rest that he did, both as a prophet and as a king.

And the times that went over him, and over Israel.] All the troubles which he endured, and which befel the people of Israel; (which are called *times* in Psal. xxx. 16.) or, more simply, the meaning may be, all the revolutions that were in public affairs, in his days.

And over all the kingdoms of the countries.] That is, the neighbouring countries, such as the Philistines, Moab, Amalek, Syria, Damascus, the Ammonites, &c. The loss of which history is very much bewailed; but God knows better than we, what was fit to be preserved for the use and benefit of his church.

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THE

SECOND BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES.

As there are some things here omitted, which are recorded in the first book of the Kings; so there are several things contained in this book, of which no mention is made there; particularly in the history of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. And many other things there mentioned, are here more fully and clearly explained; as will be observed in the acts of Abijah, Asa, Joash, and other kings of Judah: upon which account St. Jerome saith of this book, It is such, and of so great use, that he who, without it, will pretend to the understanding of the prophets, will expose himself to scorn.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *AND Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom.*] After the death of Adonijah and Joab, he was confirmed in his authority and government.

And the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.] In the Targum it is paraphrased, *The Word of the Lord was his helper, and raised him to a great height of glory.*

Ver. 2. *Then Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers.*] Before that great assembly, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, in the midst of which he was anointed, went home, Solomon discoursed with them about his intentions of going to Gibeon to worship God, by offering a great sacrifice, and desired them to accompany him.

Ver. 3. *So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon.*] This verse shews, that this was the thing about which he spake unto them. (See 1 Kings iii. 4.)

For there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, had made in the wilderness.] But it was there without the ark, which was in the city of David, while the tabernacle was in Gibeon. How these came to be separated, so that the ark was without the tabernacle and its vessels; and the vessels, and the altar with the tabernacle, without the seat of the glory of God, is not easy to be resolved. Conradus Pellicanus supposes, that even then, in those days, God would have them to know, he did not regard the ceremonious worship, when the people were under the government and instruction of such men as Samuel and David: and they were free from idolatry. Then the Lord did not exact so strictly the legal services, as he did in times of peace and tranquillity, when they were most necessary for the people; lest, after their custom, when they lived in ease and prosperity, they should fall into superstition, and admire the rites of the gentiles. And with such questions as these he thinks the Jews may be very strongly urged: How came it to pass that, in the days of Samuel and David, the legal worship was not observed more precisely? How came the ark to be separated from the altars, which were made for the ark, and not the contrary? Who dispensed with David to build another tabernacle for the ark, and neglect that built by Moses? And how came Solomon to sacrifice in another place, than that which the Lord had chosen?

Ver. 4. *But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.*] See 2 Sam. vi. 2. 17.

Ver. 5. *Moreover, the brazen altar that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the Lord.*] One would think that this altar did not stand in its right place, till Solomon set it where it used to stand: but the words may be translated as in the margin, *was there* before the tabernacle.

And Solomon and the congregation sought unto it.] I think this is better translated by Victorinus Strigelius, *Solomon and the congregation were wont to frequent it;* with sacrifices by which they sought the favour of God.

Ver. 6. *And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before the Lord, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation.*] This is said to be *before the Lord,* though the ark was not there, because God was pleased graciously to accept the sacrifices offered before the place, where he was wont to dwell, though wanting the token of his glorious presence.

And offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it.] He offered them by the ministry of the priests. And *burnt-offerings* here signify (as Pellicanus with great reason thinks) the sacrifice of peace-offerings, the general name being put for the special. For it is not reasonable to think, a thousand offerings were wholly burnt upon the altar: but, in all probability, he made a feast for all that were there present, as had been done when this great assembly offered so freely at his inauguration, (1 Chron. xxix. 22.)

Ver. 7. *In that night did God appear to Solomon.*] Immediately after the offering of these sacrifices.

And said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.] See 1 Kings iii. 5. This was a declaration that he accepted his prayers which accompanied those sacrifices, and would grant whatsoever he desired.

Ver. 8. *And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.*] An admirable example unto those who make petitions unto God, that they should in the first place thank him for the great benefits they have received, (1 Kings iii. 6.)

Ver. 9. *Now, O Lord God, let thy promise unto David my father be established, viz.*] That God would be a father to him, and make him his son, (2 Sam. vii. 14.)

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For thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.] See 1 Kings iii. 8.

Ver. 10. *Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people.*] This is a proverbial speech, for governing the people, both at home and abroad, in peace and in war. (See Numb. xxvii. 17. Deut. xxxi. 2.)

For who can judge this thy people, that is so great?] Among such a numerous people, he knew there would be so many, and so various, and many times difficult causes brought before him, that it would be impossible to hear them and judge aright, without a Divine spirit. (See upon 1 Kings iii. 9.)

Ver. 11. *And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king;*

Ver. 12. *Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.*] These two verses have been sufficiently explained in the same chapter; (1 Kings iii. 11—13.) only it may be observed, he doth not say he would give him *the life of his enemies*, because he was to be a peaceable king.

Ver. 13. *Then Solomon came from his journey to the high place that was at Gibeon to Jerusalem, from before the tabernacle of the congregation, and reigned over Israel.*] We put in these words, *from his journey*, which was not needful, for the words may be translated exactly, *Solomon came from the high place*, &c. and so it follows, *from before the tabernacle.* For the particle *lamed* signifies not only *to* but *from.* So R. Jonas, whom Kimchi calls a famous grammarian, saith that it is here put for *mem*, i. e. *from.* But Kimchi himself is author of our translation, who is followed by Junius, and Tremellius, and others, but comes to the same purpose.

Ver. 14. *And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.*] See upon 1 Kings x. 26.

Which he placed in the chariot-cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.] The *chariot-cities* were such wherein there was good pasturage for the horses.

Ver. 15. *And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones; and cedar-trees made he as the sycamore-trees that are in the vale for abundance.*] See there, ver. 27.

Ver. 16. *And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen-yarn: the king's merchants received the linen-yarn at a price.*

Ver. 17. *And they fetched up, and brought forth out of Egypt, a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty: and so brought they out horses for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, by their means.*] These two verses are there also explained. (See 1 Kings x. 28, 29.) From this place the famous Bochartus gathers, that the chariots of Egypt in Solomon's time were drawn by four horses: for the tribute which was exacted for a chariot, was four times as much as was paid for a single horse. (See his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 9.)

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AND Solomon determined to build a house for the name of the Lord.*] Wherein the Lord should be worshipped: as his father David had designed and directed.

And a house for his kingdom.] A royal palace for himself, and those who should succeed him. But he finished God's house before he began his own.

Ver. 2. *And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them.*] Here are three hundred more than are mentioned in the book of the Kings: concerning which difference, see what I have noted there, (v. 16.) and need not be repeated here.

Ver. 3. *And Solomon sent to Huram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him a house to dwell therein, even so deal with me.*] Hiram (as he is called in the book of the Kings) first sent to him, to congratulate his succession to the throne, and then Solomon sent to him: as I have noted there. (See 1 Kings v. 1.)

Ver. 4. *Behold, I build a house to the name of the Lord my God.*] That is, he purposed to build, as it is expressed 1 Kings v. 5. and he had also disposed things so, that he was ready to go about it.

To dedicate it to him.] For his worship and service.

And to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shew-bread.] So this bread is called in Numb. iv. 7. because it stood before the Lord continually, being renewed every week, as we read Exod. xxv. 30. and other places.

And for the burnt-offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God.] He reckons up several parts of the Divine service, which was there to be performed: Hiram, as I have elsewhere observed, being no stranger to the God of Israel.

This is an ordinance for ever to Israel.] Which God himself had appointed.

Ver. 5. *And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods.*] It was no large structure which he built, but very magnificent, suitable to the glorious majesty of him that dwelt therein.

Ver. 6. *But who is able to build him a house, seeing the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain him?*] He would not have Hiram imagine that he had such low notions of God, as to think he could be confined and comprehended in any house, though ever so large, being immense beyond all conception.

Who am I then that I should build him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?] It would have been a high presumption then for him, or any man else, to build him a house, for any other end, but only for his worshippers to assemble there; he being pleased in a special manner to be present in that place. The Targum thus paraphrases this, "The heavens are the throne of his glory, the earth is his footstool, the abyss, and all people are supported by the Spirit of his Word." Which carries in it a notion which the author had of the ever-blessed Trinity.

Ver. 7. *Send me now therefore a man cunning to work*

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in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide.] There were admirable artists in all these works at Tyre: whom he desired to be sent to him; that they might assist those whom David had provided, but were not so skilful as those of Tyre.

Ver. 8. *Send me also cedar-trees, fir-trees, and algum-trees, out of Lebanon.*] Or *almug-trees;* concerning which, see what I have noted upon 1 Kings x. 11. To which may be added, that Beckius hath lately conjectured, This was a tree brought originally out of Arabia, as the prefix *al* notes. And then it was brought out of that Ophir which was in Arabia, and planted in Lebanon. For there, this place tells us, these trees grew; as well as cedars and firs.

(For I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon); and, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants.] The Tyrians were more expert in cutting down and hewing timber (they dealing much in it), and therefore he desires to entertain them as his principal workmen, with whom he should join.

Ver. 9. *Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great.*] In the Hebrew, *great and wonderful.* This relates not so much to the bigness of it (though, taking in all the courts belonging to it, it was of large extent), but to the admirable contrivance and riches of it.

Ver. 10. *And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat.*] That is, of wheat ground, or fine flour, as R. Jonas, a famous grammarian, expounds it; whom many Christians follow.

And twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.] All this was provision for the workmen; for whose subsistence Solomon took care, during their labour: besides what he gave to Hiram every year for his household. (See upon 1 Kings v. 11.) What this measure, called *corus*, was, is uncertain: but many learned men think it the same with an omer, which was the most ancient word. For we never find the other used in the books of Moses, nor in the prophets; but only in Ezekiel, (xlv. 14.) and in the books of the Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra. But Josephus and the LXX. often have the word *corus* instead of omer, which was the largest measure of dry things, containing, as Epiphanius saith, thirty bushels.

Ver. 11. *Then Huram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the Lord hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them.*

Ver. 12. *Huram said moreover, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that he might build a house for the Lord, and a house for his kingdom.*] From these two verses, Victorinus Strigelius thought it certain, that Huram was a proselyte to the true religion: because he first of all owns the God of Israel to be Jehovah, the maker of heaven and earth; for none but the Israelites called God by that name, and when they would distinguish him from idols and all creatures, they confess him to be the Creator of the world, as Huram here doth. And, secondly, he congratulates the Israelites the happiness they enjoyed under such a king, which was the effect of his love to God and his church. And, lastly, he declared his love to the church, not only in embassies and letters, but in real acts of kindness, sending to Solomon materials to build the house of God, and artificers the best in the world. But the first of these reasons is not good; for, as my most learned friend, Dr. Alix, hath observed to me, the name of Jehovah was known to the Tyrians from the time of Gideon, as we learn from the words of Sanchoniathon.

Ver. 13. *And now I have sent a cunning man (endued with understanding) of Huram my father's.*] A man of great skill and long experience, being the principal workman employed by his father. So the Targum seems to understand the word *Abi* to signify a *master* or *chief workman.* But Beckius upon this place thinks it most probable that Abi was his surname, as we call it: and translates this verse, *He sent him a man of great skill;* viz. *Huram Abi.* For it was very common among the eastern people, to call men by the name of Ab, and Abi, or Aba, and Abu, as he observes. And thus Luther translates these words, *Huram Abi;* to whom may be added Emanuel Sa, a person very skilful in this language.

Ver. 14. *The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre.*] The Targum saith she was *a woman of the tribe of Naphtali;* because it is said so in 1 Kings vii. 14. and therefore he reconciles these two places; by *a daughter of Dan,* he means of a man called Dan, who was of the tribe of Naphtali: which being near to Tyre, she married one of that nation. Or, as Jarchi and Kimchi will have it, he was a Jew, but dwelt to Tyre: as Obed-Edom was called the Gittite, because he dwelt in Gath, but was a Levite. (See my notes upon 1 Kings vii. 14.)

Skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him.] These last words argue this man to have been a great artist, who could contrive any thing that was propounded to him, though never wrought before.

With thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father.] This seems another argument, that Huram was of the true religion, because he honoured David with the name of his lord; as he doth Solomon in the next verse. Or, as others think, he was become tributary to them; his country very much depending upon them for corn.

Ver. 15. *Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, and the oil, and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants.*] For their support in their labour.

Ver. 16. *And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need; and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa, and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.*] The Hebrew word *rapsodoth* (which we translate *floats*) is of the same signification with *daberoth,* (1 Kings v. 9.) as a learned Jew notes: By which is meant, timber bound together, which was drawn through the sea, and through rivers. Such floats were used, especially in the river Tigris (as Beckius here notes out of a Hebrew author), which was so swift, that vessels were wont to be overturned by the stream: and therefore they employed these floats alone, made of reeds tied close together; upon which both men

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and burdens went down the river. (See my notes upon 1 Kings v. 9.)

Ver. 17. *And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found a hundred and fifty thousand, and three thousand and six hundred.*] These were the relics (as Kimchi thinks) of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, mentioned afterward, chap. viii. 7. But they were not idolaters; for then David would not have suffered them to dwell in the land: but they worshipped God alone, though they did not embrace the Jewish religion wholly, by being circumcised. Those David had numbered, that he might know their strength and their condition. Which did not proceed from such vanity, as moved him to number his own people, but out of a prudent care, that they might be distinguished from Jews, and be employed in such work as he did not think fit to put upon the Israelites. (See 1 Chron. xxii. 2.)

Ver. 18. *And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a-work.*] This he had said before, ver. 2. but now relates of what condition they were, who were put to these servile employments. They that were the overseers (whom the LXX. call ἐργοδιώκται) were, I suppose, of the children of Israel.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *THEN Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah.*] See what I have noted concerning Moriah upon Gen. xxii. 2. To which may be here added, that part of this mountain was in the tribe of Judah, and part of it in the tribe of Benjamin: so that the temple is ascribed to them both. To Judah, in Psal. lxxviii. 68, 69. to Benjamin, Deut. xxxiii. 12. For the greatest part of the courts was in the tribe of Judah: but the altar, the porch, the most holy part of the temple, where the ark and the cherubims were, in the tribe of Benjamin.

Where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the thrashing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.] The Targum here derives the sanctity of this place from many noble things that were done there in ancient times. For in this place, saith he, Abraham worshipped the name of the Lord, and here he offered up his son Isaac, but he was delivered by the *Memra*, the *Word* of the Lord, and a ram substituted in his place. Here Jacob prayed when he fled from his brother Esau; and here the angel appeared to David, and ordered him to offer sacrifice in the thrashing-floor of Ornan. By which appearance and sacrifice this mountain was consecrated to be a place where the temple should be built. (See 1 Chron. xxi. 26.) But Maimonides (in his treatise of the building of the temple) carries this a great deal higher. For here, saith he, Noah built an altar when he came out of the ark (as Abraham did when he offered his son); yea, here Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices, as Adam the first man had done before them. And more than that, he will have it, that he was created in this place; whence the saying of their wise men, *Man was made in the very place of his expiation.* But this is unworthy of Maimonides, who is not wont to follow such conceits as this, which is borrowed from a foolish book called Pirke Eliezer.

Ver. 2. *And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.*] See 1 Kings vi. 1. In the preceding winter it was not fit to build, and in the first month the *paschal feast* hindered, as Jarchi here observes: and Dr. Alix takes to have been a sabbatic year, in which the people were free from the tillage of their ground.

Ver. 3. *Now these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God.*] He had been instructed by David his father, who gave him a model, according to which he built it. (See 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, &c.) The Targum translates these words very clearly, which in the Hebrew are a little obscure, *These are the dimensions of the foundation of the temple, which Solomon began to build.* So in our margin we translate the word, not *instructed*, but *founded.* And thus, Beckius thinks, it is most properly to be understood; because Solomon did not receive from his father a delineation of the whole fabric of the temple, but only of the porch, and of the courts, and some other things: as the forenamed place tells us.

The length by cubits after the first measure was threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits.] He projected the sanctuary and the oracle both together; and in their first description they were to be in length sixty cubits: that is, forty for the sanctuary, and twenty for the most holy place. Or, as some think, by the *first measure*, is here meant that measure which Moses followed in building of the tabernacle: for, in process of time, the cubits altered, and were larger. (See 1 Kings vi. 2.) But this is doubtful.

Ver. 4. *And the porch that was in the front of the house, the length of it was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits.*] So we read expressly, 1 Kings vi. 2. that *the breadth was twenty cubits.*

And the height was a hundred and twenty.] This is a very different account from that in the book of the Kings, where it is said to be thirty cubits. But Abendana hath briefly summed up what their authors say to reconcile these two places. Some think it probable, that the porch was but thirty cubits high, but the whole temple higher. Thus Kimchi. Others, that the porch and all were of the same height: but from the foundation to the roof was but thirty cubits; though above the roof there were ὑπερῷα, *upper-rooms*, which were ninety cubits high. (See upon 1 Kings vi. 3.) And, indeed, it is not likely, that this house was lower than the second temple, which, by the command of Cyrus, was to be threescore cubits. (Ezra vi. 3. and see Josephus, lib. vii. cap. 8.)

And he overlaid it within with pure gold.] As he did the rest of the house.

Ver. 5. *And the greater house he ceiled with fir-tree, which he overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm-trees and chains.*] By the *greater house* he means the sanctuary, or holy place: which was larger than the most holy, as was before noted.

Ver. 6. *And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty.*] This shews the use to which the precious stones, that were dedicated by David, and by his princes, were employed; (1 Chron. xxix. 2. 8.) which served not merely for the garments of the high-priest, but for the house itself, which was garnished with them. Though I do not

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know, but the observation of Bochartus may be true, that these stones are called *precious stones*, though they were common, because they excelled the rest in greatness, fineness, and in their polishing. (Hieroz. par. ii. lib. v. cap. 7.)

And the gold was gold of Parvaim.] It is a great mistake of Abraham Mylius, and others, who take this place to have been Peru: which the great man now mentioned hath proved to be Taprobana, (see upon 1 Kings ix. 28.) which was called Parvaim, and, with a small change, Parvam, and Provan: from whence he conjectures came the name of Taprobana; which is compounded of *Taph* (which in Arabic signifies a *shore* or *coast*) and *Parvan*, (lib. ii. Phaleg. cap. 28.) The Jews, after their manner, say the gold was called the gold of Parvaim, because it was of a deep red colour, like the blood of *parim*, that is, *bullocks*, and signifies the most excellent gold; as L'Empereur notes upon Middoth: though others of them say it was a place.

Ver. 7. *He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubims on the walls.*] See 1 Kings vi. 21, 22. 29.

Ver. 8. *And he made the most holy house, the length whereof was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits: and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents.*] The very same is said 1 Kings vi. 20. only here is added the quantity of gold, which he expended upon this place, which was very great.

Ver. 9. *And the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold.*] Each nail, I suppose, whereby the plates of gold were fastened to the boards, cost fifty shekels.

And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.] These seem to be the chambers mentioned 1 Chron. xxviii. 11. of which David gave him a model. But Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that over the holy place there were no chambers at all in the temple of Solomon, but it was all open to the roof. Over the most holy place, indeed, there was an upper room of ten cubits high; but why that should be called *chambers*, in the plural number, and why it should be overlaid with gold, since there was none came into it, nor any way to come there, is not easy to apprehend. And as for the side chambers that were on the outside of the house, there was no reason they should be overlaid with gold, since they were places wherein their corn, and wine, and tithes, and first-fruits, and such-like things, were laid up. Therefore, by the Hebrew word *eljoth*, we are not to understand *upper chambers*, but *the upper floor*, or *the roof*, of the holy and most holy places; which were overlaid with gold every where; both the floor on which they trod, and the walls round about, and the roof over-head. (See his Temple Service, chap. 15. sect. 3.)

Ver. 10. *And in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image-work.*] I do not know why we thus translate the last words, for the Hebrew, which we translate *image*, hath nothing of that signification in it: unless we take the word *zaazum* to be the same with *zeeazim*, which some of the Jews say, signifies their faces were like to boys'. And accordingly many understand these words, They had the figure of youths, or boys. But Beckius, upon the Targum, in this place, seems to me to have given a more rational account of the word, which he derives from the root *zaa*, and translates it the *work of motions*, or moveable work, for they stood upon their feet, (ver. 13.) as ready to move. In which he follows Forsterus and Buxtorfius.

And overlaid them with gold.] For they were made of olive-wood, and were not like those of Moses, of beaten gold. (See upon 1 Kings vi. 23. 28.)

Ver. 11. *And the wings of the cherubims were twenty cubits long; one wing of the one cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing was likewise five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub.*

Ver. 12. *And one wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing was five cubits also, joining to the wing of the other cherub.*

Ver. 13. *And the wings of these cherubims spread forth themselves twenty cubits.*] See these three verses explained, 1 Kings vi. 24—26. where the height of these cherubims is also set down.

And they stood on their feet.] See 1 Kings vi. 26.

And their faces were inward.] In the Hebrew, *towards the house*: that is, towards the inner house, or holy place, as Jarchi expounds it: whose words are, Their heads were not erect, that they should look outwards; but they bended down, that they might look one upon another.

Ver. 14. *And he made a veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon.*] That is, the veil before the most holy place; which is the partition mentioned in 1 Kings vii. 21.

Ver. 15. *Also he made before the house.*] Before the entrance into the sanctuary.

Two pillars of thirty and five cubits high.] They were not each of them thus high, but both of them together, as it is explained 1 Kings vii. 15.

And the chapiter that was on the top of each of them was five cubits.] In the form of a crown, as the Targum expresses it. (See 1 Kings vii. 16.)

Ver. 16. *And he made chains, as in the oracle.*] See 1 Kings vi. 21.

And put them on the heads of the pillars; and made a hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains.] There were a hundred in two rows, two hundred in all. (See 1 Kings vii. 20.)

Ver. 17. *And he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz.*] See 1 Kings vii. 21. The Targum on these words makes this commentary; He called the one Jachin, because Nachon, the kingdom of the house of David, was *established*; and the other Boaz, from the name of the patriarch of that royal house of Judah, from whom all their kings were derived.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *MOREOVER, he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof.*] The making this altar so many cubits high, may seem to contradict God's command, Exod. xx. 26. But see what I have noted there, to shew how the ascent might be so contrived, that the priest's nakedness should not be discovered. The making it of brass also was, no doubt, by the direction of God, who told David how such things should be made, (1 Chron. xxviii.) as L'Empereur very well observes.

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Ver. 2. *Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.*] This and the following verses are explained 1 Kings vii. 23.

Ver. 3. *And under it was the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about; ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about.*] These oxen are called knops in 1 Kings vii. 24. which were little protuberances, or bunches, round about the lips of the laver, in the figure of oxen. There were ten of them in every cubit, and the circumference being thirty cubits, there were three hundred of them in one row; and they being cast in two rows, one under another, were six hundred in all.

Two rows of oxen were cast, when it was cast.] They were not fastened on afterward, but cast together with the vessel itself. So Kimchi and Jarchi; the latter of which thus explains it: They were not joined to it by nails or solder, but all cast together with the sea.

Ver. 4. *It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking towards the north, and three looking towards the west, and three looking towards the south, and three looking towards the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.*] See upon 1 Kings vii. 25.

Ver. 5. *And the thickness of it was a hand-breadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; and it received and held three thousand baths.*] See this account reconciled with that in 1 Kings vii. 26. The Targum here thus paraphrases: *Three thousand baths of things dry, and two thousand of things liquid.* But others better explain it, that the quantity of water which was commonly in it was two thousand baths; but if it were filled up to the top it would hold three thousand.

Ver. 6. *He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt-offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in.*] See there, 1 Kings vii. 38, 39.

Ver. 7. *And he made ten candlesticks of gold.*] See upon 1 Kings vii. 49.

According to their form, and set them in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left.] Those words, *according to their form,* are thus translated by the Targum, *as was convenient or agreeable to them.* Or the meaning may be, *according to the pattern which David gave him.*

Ver. 8. *He made also ten tables, and placed them in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left; and he made a hundred basons of gold.*] See upon 1 Kings vii. 48. Some have observed, that there was the very same furniture made by Solomon for the most holy place that was made by Moses; but in the holy place there was an augmentation made of ten candlesticks and ten tables. But they should have remembered, that Solomon also added two cherubims, and of a larger size, to the most holy place, which were not there before.

Ver. 9. *Furthermore, he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass.*] See 1 Kings vi. 36. where the court of the priests is called *the inner court,* it being next the sanctuary: and by the *great court* here is meant the court of the people, to which he made doors.

Ver. 10. *And he set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south.*] See my notes upon 1 Kings vii. 39.

Ver. 11. *And Huram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basons. And Huram finished the work that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God.*] See there, 1 Kings vii. 40. He did not stir from the work, but finished it all before he left Solomon's service.

Ver. 12. *To wit, the two pillars, and the pommels.*] Or, *the globes,* as we now speak, and as the Targum translates it.

And the chapiters which were on the top of the two pillars; and the two wreaths to cover the two pommels of the chapiters which were on the top of the pillars.] This is there explained, 1 Kings vii. 41.

Ver. 13. *And four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths,* &c.] See ver. 42.

Ver. 14. *And he made bases,* &c.] See ver. 43.

Ver. 15. *One sea, and twelve oxen under it.*] See ver. 44.

Ver. 16. *The pots also, and the shovels, and the flesh-hooks, and all their instruments, did Huram his father make to king Solomon, for the house of the Lord, of bright brass.*] In 1 Kings vii. 45. it is said, *which Hiram made:* and that is the meaning here; for the words are best translated *Hiram Abi,* or Abif, *did make.* See upon chap. ii. 13. which seems more easy than other expositions which may be given of the words. For some think Solomon calls him *his father,* out of great respect to him; or, because he was the inventor of all this excellent work, (as in Gen. iv. 20, 21.) or it is a short speech, for *Hiram and his father.*

Ver. 17. *In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay-ground between Succoth and Zeredathah.*] See 1 Kings vii. 46.

Ver. 18. *Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance.*] More for ornament and grandeur, than for necessary use.

For the weight of the brass could not be found out.] See 1 Kings vii. 47.

Ver. 19. *And Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God.*] That is, for the sanctuary.

The golden altar also, and the tables whereon the shew-bread was set.] One table only was made by Moses, but Solomon made ten, (ver. 8.) for the greater convenience of the priests in their ministration: that they might have a table at hand, whereon to set the bread which they took off, when they set on new upon the table of shew-bread. But it is not improbable, that *tables* in the plural are put for *table* in the singular, and that he speaks of that on which the bread stood before the Lord. Which, I suppose, was of gold, as the other were of silver.

Ver. 20. *Moreover, the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner.*] Which God had appointed in the law of Moses.

Before the oracle, of pure gold.] Here the Targum calls the oracle, *the house of expiations:* because into this most holy place the high-priest went with the blood, to make atonement on the great day of expiation.

Ver. 21. *And the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, made he of gold, and that perfect gold.*] The Hebrew word *miklot,* which signifies *perfection,* denotes gold most purified, as Kimchi saith their doctors expound it. But he thinks it signifies simply, all these vessels were of gold.

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Ver. 22. *And the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers, of pure gold.*] See upon 1 Kings vii. 50.

And the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy place, and the doors of the house of the temple, were of gold.] They were not entirely of massy gold, but of wood, (as we read 1 Kings vi. 31, &c.) covered with plates of gold, (ver. 35. and see 1 Kings xviii. 16.)

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *THUS all the work that Solomon made for the house of the Lord was finished: and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God.*] See 1 Kings vii. 51. David, we read 1 Chron. xxii. 14. made such vast preparations for building of this house, that there was more than could be spent in the work. What remained, therefore, Solomon would not employ to his own use, but laid it up in the treasures of God's house.

Ver. 2. *Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is in Zion.*] See 1 Kings viii. 1.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king.*] That is, all the persons forementioned.

In the feast which was in the seventh month.] See 1 Kings viii. 2. The feast of tabernacles, which they kept seven days; and the feast of dedication, which lasted as many, (chap. vii. 9.)

Ver. 4. *And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark.*] That is, they whose office it was to carry it.

Ver. 5. *And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle; these did the priests and the Levites bring up.*] See 1 Kings viii. 3.

Ver. 6. *Also king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude.*] See 1 Kings viii. 5. The observation of Victorinus Strigelius upon this history is very pious: That nothing is more lovely in human things, than such concord as here appeared among all orders of men; both of teachers and learners, magistrates, soldiers, and people, who were all combined to promote the service and honour of God. Such unity ought to be studied by Christian people, that we may be all one, as our Saviour prayed.

Ver. 7. *And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, to the oracle of the house, in the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.*] The very same words are in 1 Kings viii. 6. (See there.)

Ver. 8. *For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.*] And this verse also is the same with 1 Kings viii. 7.

Ver. 9. *And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle, but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day.*] Or, *they are there*, as the margin hath it, out of 1 Kings viii. 8. where there are the same words. And when that book was written they were exactly true; but when this author transcribed them into this book, after the captivity, there were then neither staves nor ark remaining: therefore he only relates how Solomon settled things. (See my notes there.)

Ver. 10. *There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.*] These words also are there explained. (See 1 Kings viii. 10.)

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place.*] Whither they carried the ark, and set it in its place.

For all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course.] As David had appointed in the ordinary service at the temple. But upon this extraordinary occasion they all attended (though it was not their course), at least as many as could, and were sanctified to do all the duties of this great day. For, as Kimchi observes, there were such a multitude of sacrifices offered, that the service of them all was necessary.

Ver. 12. *Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps.*] According to their several families, as the Targum well explains it; *viz.* those of the family of Asaph, &c.

Stood at the east end of the altar.] Where the Talmudists say there were two desks for them to stand in and sing. One of which had fifteen steps, on which they sung those songs called the Songs of Degrees, or Steps. For there is no better account, L'Empereur thinks, can be given of that name.

And with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets.] Who joined with the Levites, it appears by the next verse, in praising God.

Ver. 13. *It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord.*] When they were all ready, as one man, to make with one voice a loud sound.

And when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying.] As soon as they began to sound, and play on the instruments, and sing the following words.

For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.] Many think they sung the whole psalm, which thus begins, *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good*, &c. And so the LXX. in this place, ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ Κυρίῳ, &c. and the Vulgar in like manner.

That then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord.] In the Hebrew there is nothing answering to the word *even:* but the whole may be thus plainly rendered, *The house was filled with the cloud of the house of the Lord.* That is, with the cloud that was wont to be in the most holy place, and was the token of the gracious presence and favour of the Divine Majesty among them.

Ver. 14. *So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.*] See 1 Kings viii. 19. It is a pious reflection which Victorinus Strigelius makes upon this place: Which admonisheth us, saith he, first, of the presence of God in

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his church; and, secondly, of the abrogation of the Levitical worship. It is a most sweet promise of our Saviour, *Where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be there present in the midst of them.* Thus when the Levites here sung his praises, the house of God was filled with a cloud, which was the token of his presence: and when the auditors of the apostles prayed, (Acts iv. 31.) the whole house where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost: but the Levitical priests being unable to discharge their office, after the majesty of the Lord filled the house; it was a plain signification that their ministry and way of worship should cease, when the Messiah came, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *THEN said Solomon, The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.*] When Solomon saw that token of the Divine presence, he made this speech to the priests. See 1 Kings viii. 12. and the following verses; for there is little in this chapter but what is there explained: the sense, and commonly the very words, being the same. The paraphrase of the Targum upon these words is very remarkable, which is this: "The Lord would have his Schechinah, or glorious presence, to reside in his city Jerusalem, in his sanctuary, which I have built to the name of his Word; and, behold, a thick cloud covereth it." This notion of God's dwelling in darkness was among the heathen (who hence learned it), for Justin Martyr observes, that Orpheus, and another ancient writer, call God Πάγκρυφον, *altogether hidden.* And the Lacedemonians, who pretend to be of kin to the Jews, had a temple dedicated to Ζεὺς Σκοτεινὸς, *Jupiter the dark,* as Strabo relates out of Pausanias. (See Meurs. Miscell. Lacon. lib. i. cap. 1.)

Ver. 2. *But I have built a house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.*] See there, 1 Kings viii. 13.

Ver. 3. *And the king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel (and all the congregation of Israel stood).*] Who were in the great court before the house. (See there, ver. 14.)

Ver. 4. *And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled that which he spake with his mouth to my father David, saying.*] The same with what is there said, ver. 15.

Ver. 5. *Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel.*] The last words of this verse are very different from those 1 Kings viii. 16. where it is said, *but I chose David to be over my people Israel.* Till whose time there was no settled succession of a ruler, that he and his posterity should reign over them; but God raised up judges out of what tribe and family he pleased: and when he made Saul king, did not continue that dignity in his family, as he did to David.

Ver. 6. *But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.*] But now he declared both the city wherein he would dwell, and also the person and family whom he would have to govern Israel.

Ver. 7. *Now, it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.*

Ver. 8. *But the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build a house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart.*

Ver. 9. *Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house; but thy son, which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.*

Ver. 10. *The Lord therefore hath performed his word that he hath spoken; for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built the house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.*] All these four verses are in the same words, 1 Kings viii. 17—20. (See there.) I shall only therefore observe here, how the Targum translates the last words of this verse; *built a house to the name of the Word of the Lord God of Israel.* In which he makes the Word a distinct person from the Lord God of Israel, but Lord God also; else he would not have built a house for his name, that he might be there worshipped and served.

Ver. 11. *And in it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, that he made with the children of Israel.*] There is no difference between these words and those 1 Kings viii. 21. but that there he saith, *I have set there the place of the ark;* which is the same in effect with these words, which signify he had put the ark in the most holy place.

Ver. 12. *And he stood before the altar of the Lord, in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands.*] See upon 1 Kings viii. 22.

Ver. 13. *For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven.*] This verse is added to what we read in the book of the Kings: and, as Solomon Jarchi observes, hath relation to what goes before, *in the presence of all Israel.* For he was advanced higher than they, that he might be seen and heard of all.

Ver. 14. *And said, O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and shewest mercy unto thy servants that walk before thee with all their hearts.*] See 1 Kings viii. 23. where there are the same words.

Ver. 15. *Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him; and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.*

Ver. 16. *Now therefore, O Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me.*] These two verses, with very little difference, are in 1 Kings viii. 24, 25.

Ver. 17. *Now then, O Lord God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken unto thy servant David.*

Ver. 18. *(But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!)*] See there, ver. 26, 27. I shall only add the gloss of Kim-

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chi upon the last words, "Thou art rather the place of this world, and comprehendest all things, than the world the place of thee, which cannot comprehend thee. Wherefore then have I built this temple? it was only that thy gracious presence might dwell there, hearing the prayers which shall be made in this place." So the next words import.

Ver. 19. *Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee.*] See there, ver. 28.

Ver. 20. *That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth towards this place.*] Those words, *that thine eyes may be open*, the Targum expounds, By his Divine providence and protection, in this place of the residence of his gracious presence, as the words there are.

Ver. 21. *Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make towards this place: hear thou from thy dwelling-place even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.*] See 1 Kings viii. 30.

Ver. 22. *If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house.*] See there, ver. 31. Whereby it appears, that a man who was to purge himself of any trespass, whereof he was accused against his neighbour, by an oath, was to do it at the temple, before the altar of God, from whom he expected remission of sin.

Ver. 23. *Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.*] See there, 1 Kings viii. 32.

Ver. 24. *And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house:*

Ver. 25. *Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them, and to their fathers.*] These two verses are, in a manner, the very same with those 1 Kings viii. 33, 34.

Ver. 26. *When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them.*] This and all the rest to ver. 32. are the same, in a manner, with 1 Kings viii. 35, 36, &c. And therefore see the explication of them there: and in ver. 29. he desires, that all prayers, whether for private or public concerns that were made here, might be heard.

Ver. 27. *Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance.*

Ver. 28. *If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore, or whatsoever sickness there be:*

Ver. 29. *Then what prayer, or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house:*

Ver. 30. *Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men);*

Ver. 31. *That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.*

Ver. 32. *Moreover, concerning the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched-out arm; if they come and pray in this house:*

Ver. 33. *Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and may know that this house, which I have built, is called by thy name.*] These two verses are there also explained, in ver. 41—43. Unto which I shall here add this pious reflection which Dr. Jackson makes upon them: "Solomon knew the goodness of God to be so great, that it could not be a whit lessened towards Israel, how far soever it was extended towards other people. Happy had it been for that nation, if their charity had been like this of their heavenly Father. But it was their seeking to engross God's promised blessings to mankind, which brought that grievous curse upon them, under which they groan at this day."

Ver. 34. *If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee towards this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name:*

Ver. 35. *Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.*

Ver. 36. *If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near;*

Ver. 37. *Yet if they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captives, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly;*

Ver. 38. *If they return to thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray towards their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and towards the city which thou hast chosen, and towards the house which I have built for thy name:*

Ver. 39. *Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling-place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.*] All these verses are, with some small variation in a few words, and a large addition to the last verses, in 1 Kings viii. 44—50.

Ver. 40. *Now, my God, let (I beseech thee) thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.*] He sums up all these words, beseeching him, that the prayer which was presented to him here, for any blessing, of what sort soever it was, might be graciously accepted by him.

Ver. 41. *Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy rest-*

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ing-place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.] These words are part of Psal. cxxxii. 8, 9. with a little alteration. Wherein he beseeches God to take up his habitation here, together with his ark (whereby such wonders and miracles had been wrought), and stir from hence no more. And, then, that he would defend his priests, who ministered to him here; that they might obtain his blessings for others: so that all the people might rejoice in his great bounty to them. The Targum here translates the first words after a remarkable manner: *Now therefore, before the Lord God, rest in thy glory, thou, and the ark of thy strength.* Upon which words an unanswerable question is made by Beckius to the Jews; Who is this *thou*, who, according to their paraphrase, rests before Jehovah? Their mouths are stopped, unless they acknowledge another Jehovah, that is, the Word of God (as he is commonly called in the Targum), the second person in the ever-blessed Trinity.

Ver. 42. *O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed.*] Since he had appointed Solomon to be king of his people, he hoped God would have a regard to his humble petition. For as to *look upon* one, or *lift up the countenance* upon him, is to have a kind respect to him; so to *turn away the face*, is to reject and refuse him.

Remember the mercies of David thy servant.] This is another argument for hope, that his prayer would be granted: because God had such a great kindness for David, that he had made very large and most gracious promises unto him, and his seed after him.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *NOW, when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house.*] See 1 Kings viii. 11. This is added to what is recorded in that book, to shew God's gracious acceptance of Solomon's prayer and sacrifices; to give him assurance he would be present in this place, and grant all their petitions. Of which he gave two demonstrations: one by fire sent down from heaven to consume the sacrifices; the other by the glorious cloud filling the whole house. By the former of these, the first sacrifice that we read of in Scripture (that of Abel), it is generally thought was declared to be acceptable unto God, (Gen. iv. 4.) And when the tabernacle was erected, and Aaron consecrated, there was the same testimony given of God's presence there, as here at the consecration of the temple, Lev. ix. 24. (See what I have there noted, and in other places.) I shall only farther add, that the like miraculous token of God's acceptance was shewn, when Elijah contested with the priests of Baal, (1 Kings xviii.) and when David offered sacrifice in the thrashing-floor of Araunah, (1 Chron. xxi. 26.) which had relation to what was now done: for David sacrificed in the very place where the temple was built; and therefore by both these miracles God declared he would be worshipped in this place. They differ only in this, that by the first God admonished David where the temple should be built: and by this he approved and consecrated it when it was built. Dr. Jackson most judiciously adds, that thus was the consecration of the Son of God to his eternal priesthood confirmed by the apparition of the Holy Ghost in a flame of fire; which was the accomplishment of the appearance of Aaron's consecration, and of this at the consecration of the temple.

Ver. 2. *And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house.*] See Exod. xl. 35. 1 Kings viii. 11. But another great man (Dr. Alix) thinks it pertinent here to observe, that there was no such thing in the second temple: though the Lord Christ was to appear in it, and make the glory of the last house greater than the first. For the appearance of the flames of fire on the day of Pentecost was not in the temple, but in Jerusalem: when the Messiah was exalted to his heavenly sanctuary, and the temple devoted to destruction by the Romans.

Ver. 3. *And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house.*] Here was a great assurance that God would be present in this place, in that the glory of the Lord not only *filled the house*, but appeared *upon the house:* so that all the people might see it, and not only have the word of the priests for it. By this they were satisfied that it was God's house, where he would accept their sacrifices, hear their prayers, and bestow his blessing upon them. There is no mention here made of the cloud, as in the book of the Kings; but that is comprehended, as Abarbinel observes, in the *glory* and the *fire*, which were in the cloud. It came down at the first like a cloud, and then broke out in such a light and splendour, as they were not able to behold: and a flame came out upon the altar, and consumed the sacrifices that lay upon it.

They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped.] They bowed down to the middle of their body, and fell prostrate upon the floor, which was the most profound adoration. These were two distinct acts of worship (bowing and falling flat on the face), but here are joined together upon this great occasion. As Dr. Hyde observes in his Relig. Vet. Persarum, cap. 1. where he notes out of Maimonides, that the pavement was kept very clean: it being unlawful for any one to come into the court with their shoes on their feet, or so much as to spit there.

And praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.] They praised and gave thanks to God (as they had great reason to do, the fire from heaven and the cloud of glory being manifest tokens of God's presence among them) in the same words which the priests had used, who sung the eighty-sixth psalm. (See ver. 13.)

Ver. 4. *Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the Lord.*] They had offered sacrifices before; but now they renew them, and offer more in acknowledgment of this new assurance of God's love unto them.

Ver. 5. *And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep.*] See 1 Kings viii. 63. where it is said, he offered only twenty thousand oxen; which was a vast number, but not incredible: nor are these two places inconsistent, as I have there shewn.

So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.] Thus the dedication of the temple ended.

Ver. 6. *And the priests waited on their offices; the Levites*

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also with instruments of music of the Lord.] They are called musical instruments of the Lord, because David had made them, as it here follows, *to praise the Lord withal, because his mercy endureth for ever.* (See 1 Chron. xv. 16.)

When David praised by their ministry.] For they sung the psalm of praise which he composed 1 Chron. xvi. 7, &c. In the Hebrew the words are *behallil Dabid bejatham,* with the *hallel* (that is, the hymn of praise) which David had put into their hands for that purpose.

And the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.] For that was the common posture of worship, whether in prayer or praises.

Ver. 7. *Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord: for there he offered burnt-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings, because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt-offerings, and the meat-offerings, and the fat.*

Ver. 8. *Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt.*

Ver. 9. *And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly; for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days.*] These verses, and the next, are explained in 1 Kings viii. 64—66.

Ver. 10. *And on the three-and-twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.*] The Targum thus glosses upon the last words of this verse, which express the joy of the people: For the goodness of the Lord, shewn *unto David* in the opening of the doors of the sanctuary; and *unto Solomon,* whose prayer God had accepted, and vouchsafed his glorious presence, in the house he had built; and *unto his people Israel,* in his gracious acceptance of their sacrifices, and sending down fire from heaven to consume them.

Ver. 11. *Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the Lord, and in his own house, he prosperously effected.*] See 1 Kings ix. 1.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night.*] See 1 Kings ix. 2.

And said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice.] As appeared by the fire which came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice at the consecration of this house.

Ver. 13. *If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people.*] Famine and pestilence were two sore punishments, wherewith God afflicted them for their sins: and the former of them was caused sometimes by want of rain, and sometimes by locusts, who ate up what the earth produced for their sustenance.

Ver. 14. *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*] He had petitioned for the Divine favour and clemency upon no other condition.

Ver. 15. *Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.*] Some take these phrases to signify, that he will always discern, whether they were such as they ought to be; but they rather have the same sense with the next verse, that he would have a gracious respect to them, and testify it by hearing their prayers, as he desired, chap. vi. 40.

Ver. 16. *For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.*] See this explained 1 Kings ix. 3.

Ver. 17. *And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments.*] See there, ver. 4.

Ver. 18. *Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.*

Ver. 19. *But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them;*

Ver. 20. *Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a by-word among all nations.*

Ver. 21. *And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and unto this house?*

Ver. 22. *And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.*] This and the foregoing verses are the same with those 1 Kings ix. 6—9. and there have been explained.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass (at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the Lord, and his own house).*] See 1 Kings ix. 10.

Ver. 2. *That the cities which Huram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there.*] This is a short relation of what is more largely told in the book of the Kings, chap. ix. 12, 13. only here we are further informed, that these cities being restored to Solomon, who had given them to Huram (who disliked them), Solomon built them so, that his own subjects became the inhabiters of them.

Ver. 3. *And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it.*] This country lay between Euphrates, which was the eastern bounds of it; and Damascus, which was the western, as Bochartus hath demonstrated in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 7.

Ver. 4. *And he built Tadmor in the wilderness.*] See an account of this in 1 Kings ix. 18.

And all the store-cities which he built in Hamath.] All the cities wherein he laid up provision for war, were in this country of Hamath-zobah, as well as Tadmor.

Ver. 5. *Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities, with walls, gates, and bars.*]

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Only one of these cities is mentioned in the book of the Kings, *viz.* the nether. But both of them were built before, and he now only repaired, enlarged, beautified, and made them strong places. (See 1 Kings ix. 17.)

Ver. 6. *And Baalath, and all the store-cities that Solomon had.*] That is, elsewhere as well as in the land of Hamath.

And all the chariot-cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and throughout all the land of his dominion.] See 1 Kings ix. 19.

Ver. 7. *As for all the people that were left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which were not of Israel,*

Ver. 8. *But of their children, who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel consumed not, them did Solomon make to pay tribute until this day.*

Ver. 9. *But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but they were men of war, and chief of his captains, and captains of his chariots and horsemen.*] These three verses are the same with 1 Kings ix. 20—22.

Ver. 10. *And these were the chief of king Solomon's officers, even two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people.*] How this agrees with the book of the Kings, where it is said they were five hundred and fifty, see upon 1 Kings ix. 23.

Ver. 11. *And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David.*] Where she first dwelt, (1 Kings iii. 1.)

Unto the house that he had built for her.] See 1 Kings vii. 8.

For he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come.] All houses into which the ark had come, were not thereby made holy, for then the house of Obed-Edom would have been so. But where it had been settled so long, as it had been in David's house, and had a tabernacle made for it, there was a special regard to the place, where it had made its abode: and Solomon would not suffer a stranger (for so his wife was, though proselyted) to keep her court there. For it is not likely, she, and all her servants, had embraced the law of Moses, though they had renounced idolatry; and so might many ways defile a place, which had been made sacred by a Divine presence in it: many other reasons are given by interpreters, to which I refer the reader: and only add, that Abarbinel thought it sufficient to say, that it would have sounded very ill, to hear the people say, that Pharaoh's daughter dwelt where the ark of God had inhabited. And he looks upon this as an argument, that the heart of Solomon continued hitherto right with God, and had no intentions to commit those sins he afterward did: and therefore God at this time vouchsafed him the gift of prophecy.

Ver. 12. *Then Solomon offered burnt-offerings unto the Lord on the altar of the Lord, which he had built before the porch.*] That is, he settled the daily sacrifice at the temple.

Ver. 13. *Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year; even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.*] He took care the law of Moses should be strictly observed, which prescribed what offerings should be offered every day, (Exod. xxix. 38, 39.) and at several other solemn times, here mentioned, (Exod. xxiii. 14. and other places.)

Ver. 14. *And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required.*] Next of all he took care to confirm and establish the orders which David had made, for the regular attendance of the priests and Levites upon the service of God. Who were but few in the days of Moses, in comparison of what they were now; and therefore David disposed them so, that all confusion might be avoided: and also assigned them new employments, in singing the hymns which he composed, and playing upon musical instruments, whereby he made the service of God more beautiful and cheerful. (See 1 Chron. xxiv. xxv.)

The porters also by their courses at every gate.] These words shew that the porters were distributed into twenty-four courses, as well as the priests and Levites: though this order of David's be not there expressly mentioned. (See what I have noted upon 1 Chron. xxvi. 27, 28.)

For so David the man of God commanded.] He is called by the name of the *man of God*, as Moses was; because after Moses there was none like him, so divinely inspired, to raise the public worship of God to a higher pitch, by his heavenly hymns; and to direct the manner of its performance in such order, that God was served (if I may use here those words of his) *in the beauty of holiness.* For though Solomon, as Strigelius observes, was a very wise man in natural knowledge, and in political affairs, and in moral and Divine things; yet he was much inferior to David in piety, and in the gift of prophecy; as the book of Psalms alone is sufficient to testify: in which there are so many glorious predictions of the Messiah.

Ver. 15. *And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites, concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures.*] Whatsoever had been ordered by David in all other matters, Solomon settled them, and the priests and Levites obeyed him.

Ver. 16. *Now, all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of the Lord, and until it was finished: so the house of the Lord was perfected.*] Care was taken, that there should be no stop to the building of God's house: because all materials were prepared before he began it; and every thing projected how it should be done, in every part of it.

Ver. 17. *Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth, at the sea-side in the land of Edom.*] After he had finished all those great works of the house of the Lord, and his own house, and built many cities, as before recited; he designed to improve navigation, which the Jews did not much understand. And for that end he went to these places, on the Red Sea. (See 1 Kings ix. 26.) Eloth (as is observed by the learned Nic. Fuller in his Miscellanies, lib. iv. cap. 20.) lay nearest to him, which appears from Deut. ii. 8. where we read that the Israelites passing by the country of Edom, came first to Eloth and then to Ezion. But Solomon went first to Ezion, though further off, because there was Ναυπήγιον, the place where ships were built and fitted

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up: which Solomon made haste, with the greatest diligence and speed, to inspect, and see in what forwardness they were.

Ver. 18. *And Huram sent him, by the hands of his servants, ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to king Solomon.*] Besides those ships which Solomon had built, Huram sent more, who brought able seamen with them to manage the whole fleet. See there, ver. 27, 28. where only four hundred and twenty talents are said to be brought: of which I have there given an account, and shewn it doth not disagree with this place.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *AND when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.*

Ver. 2. *And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not.*] There is little in this chapter, but what is related in 1 Kings x. where see concerning these two verses, ver. 1—3. I shall only add, that the hard questions she came to ask, were not the curious inquiries into the secrets of natural things, or new political matters, but about things pertaining to piety, and the service of God. For our Saviour saith, she came to hear the *wisdom of Solomon*, and should therefore rise up in judgment against that generation, who would not learn of him: and in 1 Kings x. 1. it is said, the fame she heard of Solomon was *concerning the name of the Lord:* which moved her to this journey.

Ver. 3. *And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built,*

Ver. 4. *And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cup-bearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.*

Ver. 5. *And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom.*

Ver. 6. *Howbeit, I believed not their words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the one-half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard.*

Ver. 7. *Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.*] All that is contained in the foregoing verses, is related in the same words (with very little difference) in 1 Kings x. 4—8. where see what I have noted.

Ver. 8. *Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God.*] In these words she says a great deal more than is there related ver. 9. for she here calls the throne of Israel the *throne of the Lord:* and acknowledges Solomon to be made *king for the Lord his God;* that is, not only to rule by his authority, and as his viceroy, but for his glory, and to promote his religion.

Because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice.] See upon 1 Kings x. 9.

Ver. 9. *And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon.*

Ver. 10. *And the servants also of Huram, and the servants of Solomon, which brought gold from Ophir, brought algum-trees and precious stones.*

Ver. 11. *And the king made of the algum-trees terraces to the house of the Lord, and to the king's palace, and harps and psalteries for singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah.*] This and the two foregoing verses are explained in 1 Kings x. 10—12.

Ver. 12. *And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants.*] The last clause, concerning his presents (*viz. besides that which she had brought unto the king*), is expressed much otherwise in 1 Kings x. 13. where the words are, *besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty.* What is here explained to have been done, to requite her for the great presents she had made the king.

Ver. 13. *Now, the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold.*] See there, ver. 14.

Ver. 14. *Besides that which chapmen and merchants brought: and all the kings of Arabia, and governors of the country, brought gold and silver unto Solomon.*] See there, ver. 15.

Ver. 15. *And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of beaten gold went to one target.*

Ver. 16. *And three hundred shields made he of beaten gold; three hundred shekels of beaten gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.*] See both this and the foregoing verse there explained, ver. 16, 17.

Ver. 17. *Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold.*

Ver. 18. *And there were six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, which were fastened to the throne, and stays on each side of the sitting-place, and two lions standing by the stays.*] These and the following verses are explained in 1 Kings x. 18—21. where there are the same words; only here is mention made *of a footstool of gold,* which is not taken notice of there.

Ver. 19. *And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.*

Ver. 20. *And all the drinking-vessels of king Solomon were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was not any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon.*

Ver. 21. *For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Huram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.*] See 1 Kings x. 22.

Ver. 22. *And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.*

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Ver. 23. *And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart.*

Ver. 24. *And they brought every man his present; vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.*] See of these verses 1 Kings x. 23—25.

Ver. 25. *And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots.*] See 1 Kings x. 26. and what I have noted there to make this place and that agree together.

And twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the chariot-cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.] See there. It is evident that in David's time they had no horses: for Absalom, when he had lost the battle wherein he perished, rode upon a mule to make his escape; and David ordered his own mule to carry Solomon to be anointed. And indeed the country did not produce them: but Solomon being able to make great expenses, had them brought out of Egypt, and maintained this number of chariots; which resembled those of the Grecians; that is, they were small, with two wheels a-piece, carrying a man or two, standing or leaning forward. The following kings could not be at this charge; but upon occasion sent for succour from Egypt, and then mention is always made of their horses.

Ver. 26. *And he reigned over all the kings, from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.*] That is, they were tributaries to him. (See 1 Kings iv. 26.)

Ver. 27. *And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones.*] This is an hyperbolical expression, signifying such abundance of it, as exceeded all belief.

And cedar-trees made he as the sycamore-trees that are in the low plains in abundance.] This is a wild fig-tree, with which those countries abound; bearing fruit not unlike to figs, but much sweeter, and have no little seeds in them. And being not so good as others are little esteemed, but commonly sold only to the poorer sort of people, as Leon Rawholf informs us in his Travels, par. i. chap. 4.

Ver. 28. *And they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands.*] Such as Cappadocia, which was famous for a noble breed of horses. (See 1 Kings x. 28.) But Egypt is here especially mentioned, because it was nearer, and no place afforded more. From whence, even till the captivity, they sought for supplies, as appears by Zedekiah's sending ambassadors to Egypt, requesting horses from thence, (Ezek. xvii. 15.)

Ver. 29. *Now, the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer, against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?*] In the first book of the Kings it is only said, that his acts were written in the book of the Acts of Solomon. (See chap. xi. 41.) But here we are told the particular books wherein they were recorded. And the last of these authors (*viz.* Iddo) wrote also the acts of Rehoboam, chap. xii. 15. of this book: and some suppose he lived till the time of Asa, chap. xv. 1. where he is called Obed. Howsoever that be, it appears by this, that the prophets, as I noted before, were also historians, who gave an account of what passed in their times: out of whose work this short history was extracted. And Abarbinel is of opinion, that there were two books or catalogues written of the acts of Solomon; one, De Rebus Prioribus, of what passed in the beginning of his reign, giving an account of his great buildings, and of the splendour wherein he lived, and the prosperity he enjoyed; and these were written by Nathan: the other, De Rebus Posterioribus, giving an account of what passed in the latter end of his life; how he doated upon women, and fell into idolatry, and was threatened with terrible punishments, and had several adversaries raised against him, &c. which were all written by Ahijah the Shilonite. And some of these things were also recorded by another author, Iddo; who wrote concerning the acts of Jeroboam, which could not be related without touching upon some part of Solomon's reign. These three did not join to make one book, but severally and distinctly gave an account of such things as occurred to their knowledge; out of which, it is probable, Ezra took many things, which he hath supplied in this book.

Ver. 30. *And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.*

Ver. 31. *And Solomon slept with his fathers; and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.*] These two verses are the last words of 1 Kings xi. 42, 43.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *AND Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king.*

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat (who was in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king) heard it, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt.*] See 1 Kings xii. where this chapter is so fully explained, that little is to be added here.

Ver. 3. *And they sent and called him.*] The Targum well translates it, *for they sent*, giving a reason why he returned from Egypt.

So Jeroboam and all Israel came, and spake to Rehoboam, saying,

Ver. 4. *Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee.*] This verse is the same in sense with 1 Kings xii. 4. and so are those that follow, with those that follow there; where see them explained. I shall only add, that if this complaint of Solomon's hard usage of them was true, it is probable that when he was corrupted by the love of money and strange women, and fell into idolatry, he also oppressed his subjects; being unable to maintain such great expenses, as so many wives and concubines, and building them places for religious worship (besides other things beforementioned) put him unto, without greater treasures than he had heaped up to support them. At least they began to be exhausted, which tempted him to these ill courses to keep them full.

Ver. 5. *And he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days. And the people departed.*] The rest of this chapter is so much the very same, not only in sense, but also in words, with what we had before in the book of the Kings, that I shall not transcribe it.

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CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *AND when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam.*

Ver. 2. *But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,*

Ver. 3. *Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying,*

Ver. 4. *Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house; for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the Lord, and returned from going against Jeroboam.*] These four verses I have explained in my notes upon 1 Kings xii. 21—24.

Ver. 5. *And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defence in Judah.*] That is, he strengthened his frontiers against the ten tribes that were revolted from him.

Ver. 6. *He built even Beth-lehem, and Etam, and Tekoa.*

Ver. 7. *And Beth-zur, and Shoco, and Adullam.*] We are told in 1 Chron. iv. 32. that Etam was a town in the tribe of Simeon: therefore this shews that some portion of that tribe adhered to the house of David, after Jeroboam made this rent in the kingdom.

Ver. 8. *And Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph.*

Ver. 9. *And Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah.*

Ver. 10. *And Zorah, and Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and in Benjamin fenced cities.*] It is apparent from hence, that by *building cities of defence*, (ver. 5.) is meant only repairing and fortifying them: for they were built before, but perhaps he now enlarged some of them, and made them more capacious.

Ver. 11. *And he fortified the strong holds, and put captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine.*] These strong holds, I suppose, were in the heart of his country: which he furnished with good garrisons and provisions; that they might be able to maintain a siege, in case their enemies should make an irruption into his country.

Ver. 12. *And in every several city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.*] Who were two warlike and valiant tribes, by whose assistance he made every one of these cities a magazine; out of which, upon occasion, soldiers might be furnished with arms. Which was a necessary precaution in doubtful times, for the preservation of his kingdom.

Ver. 13. *And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts.*] So the tribe of Levi was added to the tribe of Judah; though not all the cities wherein they dwelt: which they were forced to leave, when they would not conform to the idolatrous worship which Jeroboam had set up. The tribe of Simeon likewise was so intermixed with Judah, that, in all probability, more cities of it besides that beforementioned, if not all, became one body with it; which made Judah a very powerful kingdom.

Ver. 14. *For the Levites left their suburbs, and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem; for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord.*] After the right manner, according to the law of Moses. For they refused to offer sacrifices before his calves in Dan and Beth-el: and he would not let them go to do their duty at Jerusalem, the place which the Lord had chosen; and therefore they left their dwellings and possessions, and went to live there. He mentions Jeroboam's sons as well as himself; because they were his principal counsellors, and assistants in the change he made in religion.

Ver. 15. *And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.*] See 1 Kings xii. 28, 29, &c. A new religion being set up by Jeroboam, devised out of his own head, wherein he ordained a solemnity in the eighth month, which was not of God's institution, all that he did was profane. The priests profane, the feasts profane: and so were the sacrifices and the whole worship. And therefore he calls (as Bochartus well observes) the objects of their worship *devils* and not *gods:* and the ministers of this religion he calls not *cohen, priests*, but *chemarim:* (Hos. x. 5.) and their solemnities, instead of the *feast of God*, he calls the *day of their king* (Hos. vii. 5. because instituted by their king, and not by God); and the place of worship, instead of Beth-el, he calls Beth-aven, (Hos. x. 5. 8.) that is, not the *house of God*, but the *house of wickedness*, or of *idolatry*. For the ointment (as he speaks) being turned into deadly poison, the inscription ought not to remain upon the pot or box, wherein it was contained. (See his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 34. p. 357.) There is a late writer, indeed (Antonius van Dale), who labours to persuade us, that the word *seirim* (which we translate *devils*) signifies no more than *goats;* which were worshipped in Egypt: from whence Jeroboam lately coming brought this worship along with him. But who can think the Israelites would have been drawn to adore so filthy a creature? which was worshipped by the Egyptians, as several other hairy creatures were, and the image of them held in great veneration (Pan being represented below in that form), as Bochartus hath observed: yet signified also *demons*, which appeared in that shape. Thus the ancient interpreters, the Chaldee, the Syriac, the Arabic, and all the Jews, understand it, as the same learned man hath largely shewn, in the same book, lib. ii. cap. 53. p. 643.

Ver. 16. *And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers.*] The good example of the priests and Levites moved many pious people to quit their habitations and estates, rather than forsake, or not have the exercise of their religion.

Ver. 17. *So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.*] Though the number of people that came to him out of all the tribes, added great strength to Rehoboam's kingdom; yet his power was chiefly owing unto God: who protected and assisted them, as long as he and his people continued in the way of his predecessors, David and Solomon. From which last words some conclude Solomon was a penitent, because he is mentioned here as an example of true piety, as well as David. But it cannot be certainly inferred hence, because this may relate only to the greatest part of his reign, before he lapsed in his old age, and forsook the law of Moses. The book of Ecclesiastes is a better proof of it,

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which the Jews generally think was written when he was old: wherein he sensibly expresses the vanity of all earthly things; and particularly speaks with great detestation of bad women, by whom he had been seduced, (Eccles. vii. 26.) Here it is to be observed, that the corruption of Judah and Israel began in the fourth year of Rehoboam; (see xii. 1.) and from thence begin the three hundred and ninety years of their iniquity, mentioned by Ezekiel, iv. 5. which lasted to the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Ver. 18. *And Rehoboam took him Mahalath, the daughter of Jeremoth the son of David, to wife.*] We never read of Jeremoth among the sons of David, but only here. Some think he was by a concubine, who is not named.

And Abihail, the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse.] His grand-daughter; for he was David's eldest brother.

Ver. 19. *Which bare him children; Jeush, and Shamariah, and Zaham.*] He speaks, I suppose, of the latter of these wives, who bare him these children.

Ver. 20. *And after her he took Maachah, the daughter of Absalom, which bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith.*] This wife was his first cousin (as we call such persons), being the daughter of his uncle: if this be meant of Absalom the son of David. But it is evident this was another person of the same name of Gibeah, which was in the tribe of Benjamin, (xiii. 2.) whereas Absalom the son of David was of Judah.

Ver. 21. *And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters).*] So great was their desire of having abundance of children in those days, that they entrenched upon the law of God, who commanded their kings should not multiply wives. But David indulged himself in it, and Solomon a great deal more: and so did Rehoboam and Abijah, who had both of them a numerous issue. For virginity in those days was not accounted a virtue: and the greatest unhappiness in a married estate was barrenness.

Ver. 22. *And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, to be ruler among his brethren.*] He was his eldest son by his beloved wife, whom he put in authority over all the rest, which he had by her, and by his former wives.

For he thought to make him king.] Such power, I have observed before, they then challenged: and in order to it, he seems to have committed unto Abijah the management of all affairs under himself.

Ver. 23. *And he dealt wisely, and dispersed all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin.*] Upon which words Kimchi glosses very well: He thought seriously of this thing, and, fearing a rebellion, broke all his sons (that is, did not suffer them to live together), and dispersed them into all parts of the country under his government, that he might confirm the kingdom in the hand of his son Abijah. Thus Abraham anciently sent his sons which he had by Keturah into other countries, that they might not be troublesome to Isaac, who he intended should be his heir: and thus Jehoshaphat did in following times after this, (xxi. 3.)

Unto every fenced city.] Of which, I suppose, he made them governors-in-chief, and committed a great care to them: these cities being frontier places, as I observed ver. 5. where, it is probable, he had trusted persons to watch and observe them, that they entered not into any combinations to defeat his design.

And he gave them victual in abundance.] He provided for them amply, that they might not be discontented, but live at their ease.

And he desired many wives.] This might possibly be for his children, that they might in their several governments live very pleasantly. But, considering his temper, most interpreters think it was for himself: being not satisfied with those wives he had already, but still desiring more.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself.*] When he thought himself safe, and out of all danger.

He forsook the law of the Lord.] His evil inclinations began to appear; which he derived, it is likely, from his mother, who was an Ammonitess. (See 1 Kings xiv. 21.)

And all Israel with him.] See 1 Kings xiv. 22—24.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass, that, in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem (because they had transgressed against the Lord).*] See 1 Kings xiv. 25. Their apostacy was in the fourth year of his reign; (after they had been three years obedient, xi. 17.) therefore God speedily corrected them, that he might reduce them to his service, before they were settled in their impiety.

Ver. 3. *With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people were without number.*] That is, the footmen in his army.

That came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.] There is no doubt the Lubims were the people of Lybia, a famous country in Africa, adjoining to Egypt. And the Sukkiims are the people called Troglodytes, who lived near the Red Sea: and had that name Troglodytes, because they dwelt ἐν τρώγλαις, *in caves and dens of the earth:* which is the very signification of the Hebrew word *Succha;* which in that language imports not only *tabernacles,* but also *caves* or *dens,* as in Psal. x. 9. Job xxxviii. 40. From this people there was a town, upon the coast of the Red Sea, called *Succhæ:* and at this day, with a little alteration, *Suachen,* as Bochartus observes in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 29. As for the people called *Cush* (which we translate *Ethiopians*), they were either those to the south of Egypt, or the Scenitæ in Arabia: for I have observed elsewhere it was a name common to both. (See the same most learned author in the same book, cap. 33.)

Ver. 4. *And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah.*] Where the sons of Rehoboam were governors: who, perhaps, there perished.

And came to Jerusalem.] The frontier towns being taken, nothing hindered his coming hither. For, trusting to his fenced cities, he had raised no army to oppose Shishak: or, if he had, they durst not oppose his progress.

Ver. 5. *Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak.*] As to a place of more safety than the country; or, perhaps, to consult what to do, in a time of so great danger.

And said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, Ye have forsaken

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me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.] The Chaldee translates this, *Ye have forsaken my fear;* that is, his worship, and turned to idols: therefore God gave them up into the power of an idolater.

Ver. 6. *Whereupon the princes of Israel.*] They are called *the princes of Israel,* because there were many Israelites among them; and they had all lately been comprehended under this name.

And the king humbled themselves; and they said, The Lord is righteous.] Sorrowfully confessed that the Lord had most justly punished them for their sins.

Ver. 7. *And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak.*] Their humiliation prevailed with God so far, that he moderated his anger, and respited the destruction which was coming upon them: promising he would not suffer Shishak to do so much mischief as he designed. Yet he seems to intimate, that if they went on to provoke him, he would use some other hand to ruin them.

Ver. 8. *Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.*] He resolved to let them feel the difference between him and all other lords and masters: and how much more happy they were while they continued to worship and serve him, than when they fell under a foreign yoke.

Ver. 9. *So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem.*] Which was basely yielded up to him, ἀμαχητὶ, *without striking a stroke,* as Dionysius Halicarnassus speaks. Who is thought by learned men to have respect to this place, when he saith, that Sesostris made an expedition into Palestine, Λαβὼν ἀμαχητὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν αὐτῷ, *taking all the men there without fighting.* And it was to be ascribed only to the great goodness of God, that he did not possess himself absolutely of the whole country, and make it a province subject and tributary to the king of Egypt. For unless God had diverted him, he might have done what he pleased: it being in his power to extirpate the Jewish nation.

And took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all; he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

Ver. 10. *Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house.*

Ver. 11. *And when the king entered into the house of the Lord, the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard-chamber.*] These three verses have been explained in 1 Kings xiv. 25—28. Only from hence may be gathered, that the golden shields were made for state, to be used by his guard when they attended him to the house of the Lord: this being the use of the brazen shields which were made in their stead.

Ver. 12. *And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether.*] When he saw his danger he humbled himself, before Shishak came to Jerusalem: and after he had taken and ransacked it, he humbled himself still more. And thereby diverted that utter destruction, which such an army might have brought upon him, and which their sins deserved. For it appears, by the language of the prophet, God was most highly provoked by the defection of Judah so suddenly from him, *to pour out his wrath* upon them.

And also in Judah things went well.] They began again to prosper. But the words in the Hebrew being, there were *good things in Judah,* they may be understood of the reformation made in the whole kingdom; many good things being found among them, in the midst of their corruption. For the priests, I suppose, kept up the worship of God in its purity, and many good people joined in it; especially such as had fled from the idolatry of Jeroboam.

Ver. 13. *So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned.*] He repaired the fenced cities which Shishak had taken; and recovered so much strength, that he reigned with some authority.

For Rehoboam was one-and-forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there: and his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.] See 1 Kings xiv. 21.

Ver. 14. *And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord.*] This seems to signify, that after his humiliation for his sins, he relapsed again into them (though it may relate to his first provocation); and the reason is here given, because his heart was not intent (as the Targum expounds it) to seek instruction from the Lord.

Ver. 15. *Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet?*] Which was extant when Ezra made this short abstract out of it. For prophets, as I observed before, wrote the history of their own times; as Jarchi says, they did their own prophecies.

And of Iddo the seer, concerning genealogies.] The Targum hath it, *Genealogies of the house of David:* which he set down in the history he wrote of things done in his time.

And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.] See 1 Kings xiv. 30.

Ver. 16. *And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.*] As he had designed in his lifetime. (See chap. xi. 22, 23.)

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *NOW, in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah.*] See 1 Kings xv. 1.

Ver. 2. *And he reigned three years in Jerusalem (his mother's name also was Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah).*] He gives a different account above, xi. 20, 21. for there his mother is called Maachah, and her father's name is said to be Absalom: and so we read 1 Kings xv. 2. The Targum, therefore, to reconcile these two places, adds a long gloss, in these words, Because she was his legal wife, her name was changed from Maachah to Michajaha, which was a more honourable name: and the name of her father changed into Uriel, that no mention might be made of the name of Absalom. But this reason is frivolous, for she is said to be the daughter of Absalom in the place abovenamed. Therefore a better account of this is given by Jarchi and by Kimchi, who say, that her entire name was Michaiah Maachah; and her father's entire,

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name was Uriel Absalom. (See what I have noted upon 1 Kings xv. 2.)

And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.] See 1 Kings xv. 7.

Ver. 3. *And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour.*] Here was such a vast army brought into the field, that the whole strength of both sides was engaged in the controversy, about the restoring the kingdom of Israel to the house of David, who had but half the number of men that was on Jeroboam's side; but thought they had the better cause, and seemed by Abijah's speech to have put such trust in God for succour, that they doubted not of success.

Ver. 4. *And Abijah stood upon Mount Zemaraim, which is in Mount Ephraim.*] It seems Abijah had entered into the country of the Israelites, and there drew up his army, on the hill afterward called Samaria.

And said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel.] A great many might hear his voice from so advantageous a place; but all the eight hundred thousand could not. But he desired what he said might be reported to them; and it is very likely he desired a parley before they fought, to see if they could accommodate matters without shedding blood.

Ver. 5. *Ought you not to know.*] They did know, but he means they ought to consider and acknowledge.

That the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and his sons by a covenant of salt?] See concerning this expression, *covenant of salt*, Numb. xviii. 19. The Targum here expounds it, *as the waters of the sea*, which never alter their saltness. But it rather signifies a solemn covenant made by sacrifice, which was always salted, (Lev. ii. 13.)

Ver. 6. *Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and has rebelled against his lord.*] Though he had the warrant of a prophet to take the kingdom, yet his own ambition first led him to it; as we may gather from 1 Kings xi. 27.

Ver. 7. *And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial.*] Such, one would think, his principal partakers were, who so easily changed their religion, that it shewed they regarded neither God nor man, as the word Belial signifies. (See my notes upon 1 Kings xii. 24.) And here it may be further noted, that the high offenders of all sorts are called by the name of *children of Belial*. As those ungodly men, who, like a torrent, came upon David with all manner of violence, are called the *floods of Belial*, (2 Sam. xxii. 5.) and the sacrilegious sons of Eli, (1 Sam. ii. 12.) and the filthy beasts of Gibeah, (Judg. xix. 22.) and blood-thirsty men, (2 Sam. xvi. 7.) and perjured persons, (1 Kings xx. 10.) and pernicious counsellors, (Nahum i. 11.)

And have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young.] He was one-and-forty years old when he came to his kingdom, but not bred up to military affairs; in which he was raw and inexperienced, in a time of long peace.

And tender-hearted.] This doth not so much aggravate their crime, as reflect upon his father; who wanted courage, as this phrase signifies. But if we take it in this sense, Abijah overshot himself: for Rehoboam gathered a great army, and would have fought, if God, by his prophet, had not forbidden him. And if that was his meaning, that he had a tender regard to God's commands, and yielded immediately to them, he spake the truth: for he was fearful then to offend God, and so could not withstand them, as it here follows.

Ver. 8. *And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David.*] But he would not have them think that God would always be of that mind, and let them quietly enjoy what they had usurped. For the kingdom which he governed was not set up by such vain persons as advanced Jeroboam; but the Lord himself: whom they should not be able to withstand.

And ye be a great multitude.] Or, *though* you be far more in number than we; being two to one, (ver. 3.)

And there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods.] It may be better translated, *but there are with you*, &c. *i. e.* you have forsaken the Lord, and worshipped other gods (for so the golden calves were esteemed by God), and therefore your vast forces will do you no service.

Ver. 9. *Have you not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites.*] This they could not deny, whatsoever they might pretend against the charge of *forsaking the Lord*.

And have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands?] Without any regard to the family they were of, and out of any part of the country. (See 1 Kings xii. 31.)

So that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams.] Any one that could make this expense might consecrate himself to be a priest.

The same might be a priest of them that are no gods.] The Targum expresses it thus, *is the priest of him that is not the Word of the Lord.* By which it appears (as from innumerable other places) the Divine Word was the God of Israel, worshipped in the most holy place.

Ver. 10. *But as for us, the Lord is our God.*] So it follows in the Targum, *Unto us the Word of the Lord is our helper, he is our God.*

And we have not forsaken him.] Not quite departed from him: though in some part Abijah (who spake these words) had done evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father had done; and his heart was not perfect with God. (1 Kings xv. 3.)

And the priests, which minister unto the Lord, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business.] The service of God was orderly performed in his house, by such only as were appointed to it by himself.

Ver. 11. *And they burn unto the Lord, every morning and every evening, burnt-sacrifices and sweet incense: the shew-bread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold, with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening.*] There was nothing omitted, either day or night, which the law required: and he mentions these things thus particularly, that he might put the Israelites in mind how the worship of God was with great solemnity kept up in Judah, which in some years the Israelites had not seen, and perhaps had forgot. But he mentions here only one candlestick, and its lamps, because, as some think, Shishak had carried away the rest.

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Or rather, because Solomon had made the other ten candlesticks for ornament, so that they had not lamps in them every night, which burnt only in the great candlestick made by Moses, from evening until morning. (Lev. xxiv. 2, 3.)

For we keep the charge of the Lord our God; but ye have forsaken him.] The Targum here again thus expresses it, *We keep the charge of the Word of the Lord our God.* This gives us reason to think, that Abijah kept up the public worship of God very regularly: though he did evil in the sight of the Lord privately.

Ver. 12. *And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you.*] Upon the sounding of which Moses promised they should "be remembered before the Lord, and saved from their enemies," (Numb. x. 9.) This seems to be added as an amplification of their strict observance of the law of God in all things, in war as well as in peace, which gave them a good hope that he would be with them. And here it may be noted, that it doth not appear, that the priests were forbidden any functions in a civil life: for they went to war, and performed the office of trumpeters in the army, as well as in the temple.

O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for you shall not prosper.] So he concludes his speech, that, if they fought, it was not so much against him, as against the Lord whom their fathers worshipped and they had forsaken, and therefore should not succeed. None of the great captains and commanders, whose speeches are recorded in heathen authors, ever spoke more movingly than this king of Judah did.

Ver. 13. *But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them.*] We read of no answer to this speech, but Jeroboam seems to have been so much touched with it, that he would not trust to his numbers, but used policy: and, like a great captain, laid an ambush behind the army of Judah, while he faced them with his main body, drawn up in battle-array. For he had such a prodigious multitude with him, that he had men enough to spare upon any design, and more than enough to fight also.

Ver. 14. *And when Judah looked back.*] Hearing a great noise, it is like, behind them.

Behold, the battle was before and behind.] Which put them into sore distress.

And they cried unto the Lord, and the priests sounded with the trumpets.] They were not dismayed, but implored help from God; which the priests gave them hopes to obtain. For *the sounding with the trumpets*, was an imploring of the Divine aid, which God had promised (as I before noted) when they sounded.

Ver. 15. *Then the men of Judah gave a shout.*] To terrify their enemies, by this token of their confidence, that they should have the victory.

And as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.] This is thus expressed by the Targum: When the alarm sounded, the Word of the Lord caused Jeroboam and all Israel to fall, and to be slain by Abijah. For to *smite*, commonly signifies in Scripture language to *kill*.

Ver. 16. *And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hands.*] They seem not to have struck a stroke, but to have been so dismayed, that they run away; and in the chase were slain in vast numbers.

Ver. 17. *And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.*] This is the greatest slaughter that we ever read of in any story, as Bochartus observes: but it is not incredible, when we consider that God fought for them, and chastised the idolatry of the Israelites to such a degree, that the Jews killed a hundred thousand of them, more than they had in their own army. So Josephus also long ago observes, that there never was such a slaughter heard of, either among the Greeks or barbarians.

Ver. 18. *Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time.*] Very much humbled, but not made subject to the house of David.

And the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers.] It was not by their own valour that they obtained this great victory; but by their leaning (or relying) *upon the Word of the Lord God of their fathers*, as the Targum expresses it.

Ver. 19. *And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him.*] He followed his blow (as we speak), and did not content himself with beating them in the field, but pursued the Israelites into their country, and possessed himself of some of their cities.

Beth-el with the towns thereof.] From whence, it is likely, Jeroboam removed the golden calf, unto some place of greater safety: or else the destruction of it would have been mentioned.

And Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephraim with the towns thereof.] There was a city, as well as a tribe called Ephraim, John xi. 54. which some think was the same with Ophrah.

Ver. 20. *Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah: and the Lord struck him, and he died.*] Some have made it a doubt, who it is of whom it is said that God *struck him*. And in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 21, the Jews say it was Abijah: for Jeroboam lived a long time, but Abijah reigned only three years: God not granting him a longer life, because of his ingratitude for so great a victory; or, as others will have it, because, when he took Beth-el, he did not destroy nor carry away the golden calf, but let it remain, although he had reproached the Israelites with it, (ver. 8.) But it is uncertain, as I said, whether it was there when the city was taken: and the next verse plainly shews, that Abijah while he lived was mighty: and therefore it was Jeroboam who was struck, and died a year or two after this blow. And as long as he lived, after this defeat, some think he was full of anguish, and such pain in his bowels, as Jehoram had, (chap. xxi. 19.) Thus Abarbinel, and many others.

Ver. 21. *But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters.*] Not after this victory, but before he was king, in the time of his father; for he lived not long after this success.

Ver. 22. *And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo.*] In the Targum it is, *they are written in the Midrasch of the prophet Iddo:* that is, in his *Commentary*, as we translate the Hebrew word here, in the margin of our Bible. (See chap. xii. 15.) This king was a very wise man (as appears by the excellent oration abovementioned); and in

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familiar conversation dropped many remarkable *sayings*, like the proverbs of Solomon: which Iddo thought worthy to be recorded and transmitted to posterity.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.*] There was no war declared, but only some private bickerings between his subjects and Baasha's. (See 1 Kings xv. 16.)

Ver. 2. *And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God.*] See concerning this verse and the next, in 1 Kings xv. 11, 12.

Ver. 3. *For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves.*] By this it appears, that though Abijah maintained the public worship of God, (as I observed, chap. xiii. 11.) yet there were also strange gods worshipped in some places.

Ver. 4. *And commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.*] I suppose he set forth royal edicts, requiring the people to worship the Lord alone, and to observe all the laws of Moses.

Ver. 5. *Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places.*] There were high places in the open fields, (mentioned before, ver. 3.) and also in the cities, which were all taken away by him.

And the images.] In the Hebrew the *sun images*, as we translate it in the margin. Certain it is, that the word *hamnanim* imports something belonging to the sun, which Buxtorf renders *Solares statuæ, sun-statues;* because, saith Jarchi, they were set on the tops of houses, and so exposed to the sun. Whence Junius and Tremellius called them *subdiales statuæ*. But Abarbinel thinks they were in the form of the sun, made after the similitude of that globe, and worshipped by those who took the sun for their god. Others think they were temples built for the worship of the sun: which the Vulgar Latin follows.

And the kingdom was quiet before him.] Nobody made opposition to him.

Ver. 6. *And he built fenced cities in Judah.*] On the frontiers of his kingdom.

For the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the Lord had given him rest.] The Targum thus explains it, *Because the land of Israel rested, neither did they more war against him in those years.* That is, the Israelites and their king made no attempt upon him, nor endeavoured to vindicate the late great loss they had received, by the singular providence of God over him. But the meaning may rather be, that *the land of Judah* (which he is speaking of), which had hitherto endeavoured to reduce the ten tribes to the obedience of the house of David, now attempted nothing, nor was assaulted by them or others.

Because the Lord had given him rest.] Of which he made this good use, in providing for war in the time of peace.

Ver. 7. *Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls and towers, gates and bars.*] But he shewed his wisdom in this also, that he did not go about this work without the advice of his council, and the elders of Judah.

While the land is yet before us.] Which the Targum thus expounds, *While the inhabitants of the land are subdued to us:* or, as Jarchi, *While the kingdom is established before us.* That is, while it is in our power, as this phrase signifies.

Because we have sought the Lord our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side: so they have built and prospered.] None gave him the least disturbance till he had finished his works.

Ver. 8. *And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand, and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valour.*] He was provided also of a great army, if there were any occasion to use it, as well as of places of defence. Some think he raised these men after he heard Zerah intended an invasion upon him: but it rather signifies his great care to have an army in readiness, when he saw no danger of any enemy.

Ver. 9. *And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian.*] King of the Arabians, as Cush here signifies: and must necessarily be so understood in chap. xxi. 16. and 2 Kings xix. 9. See what I have there noted; and Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 2. where he shews they were a very powerful nation.

With a host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots, and came to Mareshah.] A city upon the borders of Judah, (Josh. xv. 44.)

Ver. 10. *Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.*] He did not stay till he entered his country, but went to fight him upon the frontiers of it.

Ver. 11. *And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said.*] Before he began to fight, he implored the help of Heaven; which he did, I suppose, in the face of all his army, that they might look up to God as their strength and salvation.

Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power.] Or, as the Targum renders it, *There is none besides thee, who helpest both the strong and the weak.*

Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude.] In the Targum it is, *We rely upon thy Word, in the name of thy Word we go forth.* That is, by his authority, in confidence of his power, and in the defence of his kingdom and religion.

O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.] Nothing could more inspire them with courage, than to believe he looked upon their cause as his own, while they owned him for their God.

Ver. 12. *So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah: and the Ethiopians fled.*] As the Israelites had done not long before, (chap. xiii. 15.)

Ver. 13. *And Asa, and the people that were with him, pursued them unto Gerar.*] This was a city of the Philistines, who, it is likely, were their allies and confederates in this war.

And the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the Lord, and before his host.] The victory was so entire, that they could not rally their forces to renew the fight. It is not said what number were slain, but the word *destroy* signifies that very many perished; for they fought against the Lord and his host, who made a great destruction among them.

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And they carried away very much spoil.] From the men that were slain in the field of battle, and those that run away and left their baggage behind them: for he speaks in the next verses of the spoil of their cities, and of the fields about them.

Ver. 14. *And they smote all the cities round about Gerar.*] Into which, it is likely, the Ethiopians fled.

For the fear of the Lord came upon them.] Seeing so vast a host defeated, they had no courage to defend themselves.

And they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them.] Partly by their own riches, and partly by the booty which the Ethiopians afforded them.

Ver. 15. *They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.*] The abundance of camels which they had shew they were Arabians. And the Scenitæ and Nomades (as Bochartus observes) did not live all the year in the open air, but had tents both for themselves and their cattle in winter time. And they that dwelt in tents are opposed to those who lived in the open field, who are said ἀγραυλεῖν. Thus Esau and Jacob are distinguished; the former of which is said to be *a man of the field*, and the other to *dwell in tents*, (Gen. xxv. 27.)

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *AND the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded.*] Some think he was also called Obed, (ver. 8.) but had the name of Azariah given him, to distinguish him from his father.

Ver. 2. *And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The Lord is with you.*] As appeared by the late glorious victory they had obtained by his help, (chap. xiv. 13.)

While ye be with him.] While you continue to worship him alone.

And if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.] He would not have them presume of his continued favour, if they forsook his worship and service: and therefore admonishes them to stick close to him, otherwise he would forsake them. The Targum thus expresses it, *The Word of the Lord is your helper, while you walk in his ways*, &c.

Ver. 3. *Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God.*] The Targum explains it very clearly: *There have been many days since the house of Israel departed from the house of David, because of Jeroboam: in which they have not worshipped the true God, but the golden calves.*

And without a teaching priest, and without law.] For all the priests were gone into the land of Judah: and the Israelites neglected the study of the law, as the Targum explains the last words. But there are a great number of learned men who will have these words, and those that follow, relate to the times of the judges; when they were more manifestly in such a condition as is here described. And truly Campegius Vitringa hath learnedly asserted this opinion, in his book de Synagoga Veteri, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 6.

Ver. 4. *But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.*] If we follow the common interpretation, which respects the present and future state of Israel, these words should thus be translated; *If in their trouble they had turned*, &c. *they should have found him.*

Ver. 5. *And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries.*] We do not read of such troubles hitherto in the kingdom of Israel; therefore the words must be translated, *In those times* (if they continue to displease God) *there shall be no peace*, &c. No quiet, no safety; but they shall be infested both by external wars and intestine discords. Which was fulfilled, as we find in their history, 1 Kings xv. xvi. &c.

Ver. 6. *And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city.*] These words also must be translated in the future tense, *Nation shall be destroyed of nation*, &c. Where by *nation* is meant tribe: one of which fought against another, in those times, when there was no certain settled succession in the kingdom; but whosoever killed their king, hoped to make a party to help him to get into the throne.

For God did vex them with all adversity.] For God shall set them one against another, with mutual slaughters, and all those evils that accompany civil wars. The Targum here again translates it, *The Word of the Lord*, &c.

Ver. 7. *Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak.*] To root out idolatry; which had brought such calamities upon the Israelites, and would still bring more.

For your work shall be rewarded.] As they might learn from their late great victory over idolaters.

Ver. 8. *And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet.*] A short expression, being as much as *the son of Obed the prophet*. Though some think the father prophesied as well as the son, and foretold the same calamities: the more to awaken them, and confirm them in the belief of what Azariah said.

He took courage.] This explains the foregoing words, *be strong therefore*, to be meant of an undaunted resolution to abolish idolatry: which required great courage, when so many were addicted to it, and had practised it both in the days of Rehoboam and Abijah.

And put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from Mount Ephraim.] Or, which had been taken, *viz.* by Abijah.

And renewed the altar of the Lord that was before the porch of the Lord.] At the entry of the court of the priests.

Ver. 9. *And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: (for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance.*] Though the Simeonites had their portion out of the tribe of Judah, when the land was divided by Joshua, yet it appears from hence, as well as from other places, that they joined themselves to the rest of the Israelites, when the kingdom was rent by Jeroboam. But now great numbers of them came over to Asa: which they might easily do, for one side of their tribe adjoined to Judah, as the other to Dan.

When they saw that the Lord his God was with him).] The Targum here again renders it, *When he saw the Word of the Lord was his helper.*

Ver. 10. *So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem, in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.*] This seems to have been a voluntary assembly by common agreement, rather than by the king's commandment or invitation. Unless we suppose it to have been at one of the

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great festivals, when they were bound by God to go up to Jerusalem.

Ver. 11. *And they offered unto the Lord the same time.*] In the Hebrew, in that *day*. Which the Targum takes to have been in the *feast of weeks;* which in the New Testament is called Pentecost; which was kept in the third month, called Sivan.

Of the spoil which they had brought.] From Zerah, and from the cities they took about Gerar.

Seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.] Which they offered besides the appointed offerings at the feast. And they seem to have been partly burnt-offerings, in acknowledgment of God's goodness for their great victory: and partly peace-offerings, in eating of which they made the following covenant.

Ver. 12. *And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul.*] Engaged themselves, by a solemn oath, to worship the Lord alone, and professed to do it sincerely, and with entire affection to him. But this doth not signify that Asa had no fault: for it appears, by the next chapter, that he had a great many.

Ver. 13. *That whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death.*] If any body did, either publicly or privately, worship any other god, they agreed the sentence of the law should be executed upon him, which was death, (Deut. xvii. 2.)

Whether small or great, whether man or woman.] That is, without any respect to persons; no consideration being had of any one's dignity, nor the weakness of their sex moving pity and compassion.

Ver. 14. *And they sware unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.*] These were expressions of the joy mentioned in the next verse, wherewith they took this oath. The difference between trumpets and cornets it is not worth inquiring after: the former seem to have been made of metals, the other of horns or wood.

Ver. 15. *And all Judah rejoiced at the oath.*] The main body of the people: and though there might be some idolaters secretly lurking among them, yet they all gave those outward tokens of their joy to see the worship of God thus established.

For they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire.] That is, they professed to do this most sincerely and heartily; and many of them, no doubt, did, at that time, resolve to worship God alone, though afterward they apostatized from him.

And he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about.] They reaped the happy fruit of this reformation, in the great peace which they enjoyed, without disturbance from any of their neighbours.

Ver. 16. *And also concerning Maachah, the mother of Asa the king.*] His grandmother, as the Targum observes: it being usual in Scripture to call such their parents, (Exod. ii. 18.)

He removed her from being queen.] This was a great testimony of the uprightness of this king, that he would not suffer such a near relation to retain her idols, or any authority: his love to God overcoming his affection to his parents. (See 1 Kings xv. 13.) Jacobus Capellus thinks this stirred up Baasha to make war upon him: for having lived peaceably with him a long time, upon this he broke out into hostility. (Histor. Sacra et Exot. ad Annum Mundi 3053.)

Because she had made an idol in a grove.] Or rather, an *Asherah*, or *Astarte*, for so *Laasherah* is translated by the LXX. And, in all probability, Astarte, the famous goddess of Syria, was the deity which was worshipped by Maachah, as Mr. Selden observes in his de Diis Syris, Syntagm. ii. cap. 2. And thus Abarbinel upon Jer. xliv. makes Asherah to be the same with the *queen of heaven* there mentioned, *viz.* the moon.

And Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron.] He destroyed it with the utmost contempt, (1 Kings xv. 13.)

Ver. 17. *But the high places were not taken away out of Israel.*] It is said twice in the foregoing chapter, that he did take away the high places, (ver. 3. 5.) But that was of Judah: whereas out of the territories he had conquered in the land of Israel, we are here informed, he was not able to remove them. Or else the meaning is, that he gave orders for the taking them away every where; but they were not obeyed. Or, as others think, he took away those high places that were for the service of other gods; but let those alone where the true God alone was worshipped.

Nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.] He heartily hated all idolatrous worship as long as he lived.

Ver. 18. *And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.*] See upon 1 Kings xv. 15.

Ver. 19. *And there was no more war unto the five-and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.*] That is, as some interpret it, there was no war with the Ethiopians, or such-like people; though with Baasha he had perpetual war, (1 Kings xv. 16.) But Jacobus Capellus in the place abovenamed would have the words thus translated, *There was no war in the kingdom of Asa, till the thirty-fifth year, viz.* of the kingdom of Israel, not of Judah, or Asa: for this was the thirty-fifth year after Jeroboam rent the kingdom from the house of David. In which he follows Torniellus, as he doth Beroaldus and Junius, though he would not vouchsafe to name them. But more of this in the beginning of the next chapter.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *IN the six-and-thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah.*] The war was begun in the conclusion of the five-and-thirtieth year: and in the beginning of the six-and-thirtieth he made this invasion. But this disagrees so much with what is said in 1 Kings xv. 33. that interpreters labour hard to reconcile them. For by that place it appears, that Baasha began his reign in the third year of Asa, and reigned no more than four-and-twenty years. From whence it follows, that he was dead nine or ten years before the thirty-sixth year of Asa. It is a short way of solving this which Josephus seems to take, (lib. viii. Ant. cap. 6.) by supposing a mistake in the transcriber from the original copy, in which it was not the *six-and-thirtieth* of Asa's reign, but the *six-and-twentieth*, which was the last year of the reign of Baasha. Who died, he thinks, immediately after Ben-hadad had defeated his intentions of building Ramah. But most think

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this too bold a supposal: and therefore I gave in few words another account of this difficulty in my notes upon 1 Kings xvi. 8. *viz.* that this was the six-and-thirtieth year since the division of the kingdom, after the death of Solomon, when Israel was rent from Judah. For so many years were now past since that time; *viz.* twenty years in the reign of Rehoboam and Abijah, and fifteen of Asa's reign, when many of the Israelites came to him, (xv. 10.) Thus Seder Olam Rabba, Ralbag, Abarbinel also, with a great number of eminent modern writers, both protestants and papists: such as Junius, Piscator, Cocceius, Jacobus Capellus, Lightfoot, Mariana, Torniellus, Sanctius, Salianus, and Petavius himself, with many others. It is not said, indeed, that Baasha came up in the thirty-sixth year of the *kingdom of Judah*, but in that year of the reign of king Asa: but they make account, that the kingdom of Judah and of Asa were all one: and so they might easily be put one for the other. And whereas it is objected, that the Scripture is not wont to reckon the years of any king from any other term but the time wherein he began to reign: they produce an example to the contrary from 2 Sam. xv. 7. where Absalom is said to have gone to Hebron in the end of forty years, and there conspired against his father; which years Seder Olam reckons from the beginning of the kingdom, or the inauguration of Saul. And our Dr. Lightfoot alleges another instance in the thirty-sixth chapter of this book, ver. 9. where Jehoiachin is said to be eight years old when he began to reign: that is, said he, in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar: for he was eighteen years old, as appears from 2 Kings xxiv. 8. But this difference, I think, may be better reconciled another way, as I shall observe on that place. I shall here only add, that as this is the most ancient way of solving this difficulty, so they that go another are forced to suppose, that these words do not relate to the beginning of the reign of Asa, but to something else; for instance, to the beginning of his *wars with Israel.* Which Kimchi endeavours to make out; but I shall not trouble the reader with it: for many good men think Josephus in the right.

And built Ramah.] That is, made a wall about it, and fortified it.

To the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.] The late defection of so many of his subjects, as fell from him to the house of David, (xv. 9.) was the occasion of setting a strong guard in this place, which was the passage between the dominions of Israel and Judah, (1 Kings xv. 17.)

Ver. 2. *Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the Lord, and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying.*] This is a little more largely related in 1 Kings xv. 18. (See my notes there.)

Ver. 3. *There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.*

Ver. 4. *And Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store-cities of Naphtali.*

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.*

Ver. 6. *Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was a building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.*] These four verses are the very same (with small variation) with those in 1 Kings xv. 19—21. 29. (See my notes there.)

Ver. 7. *And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him.*] Here follows a remarkable history added to what we read in the book of the Kings: which relates the great weakness of Asa in his declining years, and God's displeasure at it.

Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God.] Who had promised great victories to him, by the prophet Azariah, if he did well, (xv. 7.)

Therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.] Whom God would have overthrown, as he did the Ethiopians, if they had continued their league with Baasha, and come to his assistance against Asa. But now the Syrians were reserved to be a scourge to his family.

Ver. 8. *Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen?*] See xiv. 9. By the Lubims are meant the people of Lybia, or the Africans beyond Egypt: who are sometimes in Scripture called Phut, and sometimes Lubim, from the Arabic word *Lub*, which signifies dry or thirsty, as Bochartus observes: for such was the country which this people inhabited, *terra sitiens* (as Lucian calls it), *a thirsty land.* They are noted by authors to have had abundance of horsemen and chariots, in which they fought, as Xenophon tells us. And Herodotus saith, the Greeks learnt from them τέσσερας ἵππους ζευγνύναι, *to yoke four horses together to draw a chariot.*

Yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand.] See xiv. 11. The words of Conradus Pellicanus upon this verse are so pious, that I think fit to transcribe them: "Asa committed a triple offence; in distrusting the goodness of God for help, and calling to his aid an infidel and impious king; when he had lately had such an experiment of God's clemency in his triumph over the king of Ethiopia. Nothing offends God so much as distrust in his goodness towards the faithful: as an entire faith and confidence in his mercy pleases him above all things. Upon which account David was so highly in his favour, though otherwise guilty of sundry crimes."

Ver. 9. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.*] He exercises a most watchful providence over those throughout the whole world, who sincerely commit themselves unto him, and depend upon him in well-doing, and will not fail to protect them. For these words, as Mr. Mede observes, are of the same import with those in the prophecy of Zechariah, iv. 11. where *the seven eyes of the Lord* are said to *run to and fro through the earth.* Which took such care of that one stone which Zerubbabel had laid for the foundation of the temple, that the work could not be disappointed, but should certainly at length be finished, (par. i. discourse 10.)

Herein thou hast done foolishly; therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.] The heart of Asa is said to have been *perfect all his days*, in the foregoing chapter, ver. 17. And so it was in the matter of the outward worship of God at the temple, of which he was there speaking. But in the

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latter end of his life he was defective in his inward trust and confidence in God: which is called *foolishness;* both because it was a sinful thing, and very pernicious. For God exposed him to his enemies, as a punishment for relying on man more than his friendship.

Ver. 10. *Then Asa was wroth with the seer.*] This was still a greater sin, to be so angry with his reprover (though he had his commission from God) as to put him in prison. But anger is no good adviser; and when men forget God, they are not themselves.

And put him in a prison-house.] In the stocks which were in the prison, as Tremellius translates it, *in domum cippi.*

For he was in a rage with him because of this thing.] For which he ought to have thanked and rewarded him.

And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time.] He enslaved them, as the Targum translates it. That is, in the latter part of his reign he grew something tyrannical. And no wonder, when he relied not upon God, but upon human power, and was full of pride and passion.

Ver. 11. *And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the books of the kings of Judah and Israel.*] Not in those books of the Kings which we have in the Bible; but in those written by the prophets, mentioned xii. 15.

Ver. 12. *And Asa, in the thirty and ninth year of his reign, was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great.*] He had the gout; which increased to such a height, that he died of it, as Pellicanus thinks. Which was a just punishment upon him, for putting the prophet's feet in the stocks: "Ut per id quod peccaverat, per id puniretur;" *that his offence might be seen in his punishment.*

Yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.] It was not a fault that he desired the help of physicians; but that he trusted to their skill, more than to the goodness and power of God: which he did not implore, but continued in his former fault, of putting confidence in man. And so Grotius thinks, he did not sin in seeking help from the Syrians, but in trusting to them more than God, and hiring them with things consecrated to God, (lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 15. sect. 9.) An excellent person whom I have often mentioned (Dr. Alix) is of opinion, that these physicians were heathens; for we never read of any before in the sacred story, but among the Egyptians: and the heathen physicians in those days were a sort of charmers.

Ver. 13. *And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one-and-fortieth year of his reign.*

Ver. 14. *And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David.*] In the Hebrew the words are, they buried him *in his sepulchres;* the plural number being used, as many think, for the singular, which is frequent in the Scripture. But the words rather respect the form of their monuments in that nation, which contained many sepulchres; that is, several cells wherein dead bodies were laid. And it is likely he made one for himself, which he added to the rest of the sepulchres in that vault, or monument.

And laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art.] To all his other offences he added this vanity (as Conradus Pellicanus thinks), that he ordered his body to be buried after the manner of the gentiles, rather than like the people of God. Though it must be confessed, it was an ancient custom to embalm bodies, which was used in the burial of Jacob. But what is here related doth not seem to be meant of any thing done to the body, but to the bed on which it lay; which, among the Romans, was very stately for great persons. (See Suetonius, in the life of Julius Cæsar, cap. 84.) For the heathens were wont to burn their goods with them, to serve them in the other world.

And they made a very great burning for him.] The Greeks and Romans burnt dead bodies, throwing frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and other fragrant things, into the fire. And these in such vast quantity, that Pliny represents it as a piece of profaneness to bestow such heaps of frankincense upon a dead body, when they offered it to their gods by crumbs, (lib. xii. Nat. Hist. cap. 18.) But the Israelites had no such custom; but from the ancient Egyptians perhaps learnt the custom, not of burning bodies, but of burning many spices at their funerals; as we find not only here, but at the funeral of Jehoram, (chap. xxi. 9.) and of Zedekiah, (Jer. xxxiv. 5.) Kimchi here says, that they burnt the bed on which they lay, and other household-stuff, that none might have the honour to use them when they were gone.

If we may believe what the Jews say in Juchasin, when Gamaleel the son of Simeon, the grandchild of Hillel (at whose feet St. Paul sat), was buried, Onkelos burnt seventy pounds of frankincense upon his sepulchre. But this is a fable invented to raise the credit of the Targum of Onkelos, which was not known till many ages after. But the best of the Jews believe this burning of sweet spices and woods was first intended, merely to prevent the offence which the smell of dead bodies might possibly sometimes give. But the vanity of some men made them exceed beyond necessity.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *AND Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel.*] The first thing he did after he came to the crown, was to put his kingdom in a good posture of defence against the king and people of Israel; who had given disturbance to his father, (xvi. 1, &c.)

Ver. 2. *And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken.*] He fortified his frontier cities, and increased the garrisons in the rest of the country, and in those cities which his father took from Israel. We do not read, indeed, of any cities that Asa took, but Abijah possessed himself of several, which Asa kept and took for his own, (xiii. 19.) and Jehoshaphat put such forces in them as might secure them to himself.

Ver. 3. *And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat.*] The Targum, according to the usual language of that paraphrast, saith, *The Word of the Lord was his helper.*

Because he walked in the first ways of his father David.] Before he committed those foul sins, in the matter of Uriah. But some read it, *of his father, and of David.* For Asa in the beginning of his reign was very pious, as David was. And thus it is some reflection upon Asa, for his offences in the latter end of his life: his son being noted

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to have followed him as he was in his *first* days, not in his old age.

And sought not unto Baalim.] Which were the gods worshipped in all the eastern countries round about them.

Ver. 4. *But sought the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.*] As he worshipped not the gods of other countries; so he did not join with the Israelites in worshipping God by the calves.

Ver. 5. *Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought up Jehoshaphat presents.*] As they used to do in those countries, in the beginning of their king's reign. (See 1 Sam. x. 27, 28. 1 Kings x. 25.)

And he had riches and honour in abundance.] Riches procure men honour; when they make such a good use of them as he did.

Ver. 6. *And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord.*] He had very generous resolutions, as Strigelius renders it, to promote the true worship of God, and all goodness: his mind being raised above all fear and discouragement.

Moreover, he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.] The meaning is plain, that those high places wherein they sacrificed to idols he destroyed, as Asa had done in the beginning of his reign: but, in the latter end, some had restored them again. There is no need, therefore, of their amendment, who fancy that, anciently, instead of *veoth, moreover,* there was *velo, he did not;* that so it may agree with 1 Kings xxii. 43. and with the twentieth chapter of this book, ver. 33. As if the meaning was, that though he was courageous above all that had been before him; yet the people were so accustomed to sacrifices in high places, that he durst not take them away. This is true, that where they offered to the true God he did not take them away: but those wherein idols were worshipped were abolished.

Ver. 7. *Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.*] He sent some that were of his council, to see the people taught; by removing all impediments, and making the people come to hear the priests and the Levites. For it had been to little purpose to take away their idols, if they had not been withal better instructed: and the priests and the Levites would not have had much authority among the people, if they had not been backed by such great persons as are here mentioned. Grotius, indeed, will have it, that these great men did themselves instruct the people: for, as the Jews observe, it was not proper to the priests and Levites, but all learned men might teach the people: and these who were of the king's council were certainly learned in the law. But the two next verses tell us, that priests and Levites were sent along with them, *who taught in Judah.* And therefore I take the meaning to be, that Jehoshaphat, being very desirous to have the people understand their duty, took this singular and extraordinary course to send some princes, together with the priests and Levites, upon this weighty business. The latter, that they might teach the people, the former to see them do it carefully, and require the people to come and receive instruction, and to be obedient to what they heard. Thus Jarchi and other interpreters explain it: "It belonged to the priests and Levites to inform the people of their duty, as it is written, Deut. xxiv. 8. and these political persons went along with them, to quicken the people to hear them, and compel them to obey them, and do according to their commands." (See Nehem. viii. 9.) Campegius Vitringa hath a large discourse to this purpose in his Synag. Vet. par. ii. lib. i. cap. 9. where he takes this to be an indication that the people in those times had little solemn public instruction; and thinks it a good proof that there were no synagogues in the country in those days, as there were in aftertimes, wherein the people were constantly instructed in the sense of the Divine law. Mr. Thorndike, indeed, rightly observes, that the words of Moses, Deut. xxiv. 8. are not rightly alleged by Jarchi to this purpose. But there is another place, Deut. xvi. 18. from whence he also concludes, (Religious Assemblies, p. 23.) that this teaching consisted in declaring the obligation of the law by the judges of it, the priests and Levites; and the princes were officers with power to enforce the execution of it. (See Malachi ii. 7.)

Ver. 8. *And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tob-Adonijah, Levites.*] These, no doubt, were eminent men among the Levites, as the two priests, Elishama and Jehoram, were, who were joined with them.

Ver. 9. *And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them.*] That they might teach with the greater authority, by reciting the very words of that sacred book. But from hence Vitringa argues, that the books of Moses were scarce among the people in those days; for if there had been then public synagogues, wherein the law had been read (as it was afterward, every sabbath-day), there had been no need of carrying a copy of the law with them; which they might have had in every synagogue.

And went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.] Which is too plain an argument, that there were not settled teachers in every city, who on all occasions instructed the people; nor doth it appear by this history, that these great men who were sent to see the people instructed, settled such constant teachers in every city, to instruct them when they were gone. The priests and Levites, no doubt, were ready to teach the people in their cities where they dwelt; and there is good reason to think, that most part of the prophets, who were the great instructors of the people, were priests and Levites. But it is as certain, that the charge of teaching the people belonged to those prophets who were not priests and Levites, as much as to those that were, as Mr. Thorndike observes in the same place.

Ver. 10. *And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.*] God took care to prevent any disturbance, while they were about this pious work, by striking a terror into all their neighbours; who, it is likely, were sensible that it was in vain to assault them, while they continued firm in their religion. For they could not but observe how much their prosperity depended on that; and that they never fell into their enemies' hands, but when they fell off from God.

Ver. 11. *Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute-silver.*] They were so far from giving him any disturbance, that some of his neighbours compli-

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mented him by presents, and voluntarily paid their tribute. Which it is likely they had neglected in the time of some of his predecessors, though imposed on them by David, who had conquered the Philistines.

And the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he-goats.] The riches of the Arabians consisted in cattle, as Fuller observes out of Strabo and Pliny, in his Miscellanies, lib. iii. cap. 16. And the Scripture informs us, how they abounded in both the sorts of flocks here mentioned, (Isa. lx. 7. Ezek. xxvii. 21.) And these, perhaps, were their tribute, they having been brought under the Jews; or rather their present, by which they sought Jehoshaphat's friendship, and put themselves under his protection.

Ver. 12. *And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store.*] He built very strong towers (as Jarchi understands it), and cities wherein he laid up provisions of wine and corn.

Ver. 13. *And he had much business in the cities of Judah.*] To settle religion, and purge out idolatry; as well as to provide for their safety, by fortifications, and whatsoever was necessary for the preservation of public tranquillity.

And the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem.] He kept the principal officers in his army near to himself; that he might advise with them upon any emergency.

Ver. 14. *And these are the numbers of them, according to the house of their fathers: Of Judah, the captains of thousands; Adnah the chief, and with him mighty men of valour, three hundred thousand.*] He mentions only the commanders-in-chief: under whom were a great number of captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, who are not named.

Ver. 15. *And next to him was Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand.*] In the Hebrew (as it is noted in the margin) the first words are, *at his hand* was, &c. Which may seem to import, that he was lieutenant-general (as we speak) to the former great man: who assisted him in the management of that army. But the following words plainly signify, that he was another commander-in-chief, having under him a great body of men, though not equal to the former. And, as the Targum translates the first words (whom Jarchi follows), he encamped near to the former.

Ver. 16. *And next to him was Amaziah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself unto the Lord; and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valour.*] Some think, he served as a volunteer, without any stipend; or that he vowed himself to the service. Kimchi thinks that he offered gold and silver to the treasury, for the service of the Lord.

Ver. 17. *And of Benjamin; Eliada, a mighty man of valour, and with him armed men, with bow and shield, two hundred thousand.*] All the former were of Judah; now he mentions those of Benjamin, and the eminent persons who commanded them.

Ver. 18. *And next him was Jehozabad, and with him a hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for the war.*] See ver. 16. If we put all these numbers of valiant men together, they make a great demonstration of the wonderful blessings of God upon Jehoshaphat: who, though he had little more than the third part of the kingdom which David had, yet went much beyond him, in proportion, in the number of able men that were subject to him. For David, when he numbered the people, found but thirteen hundred thousand; and Jehoshaphat had several bodies of good troops, which altogether amounted to eleven hundred and sixty thousand: not reckoning the garrisons, which were in the strong holds. Nor is there any thing incredible in this, for we read the like in profane histories. The great Thebes, for instance, (as Tacitus relates in his Annales, lib. ii.) furnished seven hundred thousand soldiers, of its own inhabitants alone. But it is farther observable, how God blessed the reign of these two last kings, Asa and Jehoshaphat: in that when Abijah, the father of Asa, could scarce bring into the field four hundred thousand men, (xiii. 3.) his grandson was able to muster almost three times that number.

Ver. 19. *These waited on the king.*] That is, these great men, who had such numerous forces at their command, attended the king's person always, wheresoever he went.

Besides those whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah.] He made governors of all strong places, who constantly attended their duty there: and were under the direction of the great men beforementioned. Who did not only wait upon the king, but, as Pellicanus conjectures, presided over the whole kingdom: and were ready upon any occasion to send abroad the king's orders, and take care of the public concerns.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *NOW Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance.*] So he had before this time, (xvii. 5.) but now they were more increased.

And joined affinity with Ahab.] For his son married Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, (2 Kings viii. 18. and chap. xxi. ver. 6. of this book.) His great prosperity tempted him to this affinity with an abominable idolater: having some conceit, perhaps, that he might again unite, by this marriage, the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

Ver. 2. *And after certain years.*] After there had been peace three years between Israel and Syria, as it is explained 1 Kings xxii. 1.

He went down to Ahab to Samaria.] The affinity between them was the occasion, I suppose, of this visit.

And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that were with him.] He entertained both Jehoshaphat and all his attendants with great splendour: which is not mentioned in the book of the Kings, though the substance of this chapter is the same with that above-mentioned; and is there explained.

And persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth-Gilead.] He caressed him so at this feast, and used such arguments, as prevailed with him to undertake this expedition.

Ver. 3. *And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go up with me to Ramoth-Gilead?*] What he had consented unto in the midst of their merriment, he seems now to resolve more deliberately. (See 1 Kings xxii. 4.)

And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and will be with thee in the war.] The prophet

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Hanani had given his father a caution against this, (xvi. 7.) and Jehoshaphat is reproved for it afterward, (xix. 2. xx. 37.) The Targum expounds the last words thus, *that which happens to thee, shall happen to me, in this war.*

Ver. 4. *And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day.*

Ver. 5. *Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand.*

Ver. 6. *But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?*] These three verses are the same in sense, and almost in words, with those which I have explained in 1 Kings xxii. 5—7.

Ver. 7. *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesieth good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.*] See there, ver. 8.

Ver. 8. *And the king of Israel called for one of his officers, and said, Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla.*] He seems to have thought, that Micaiah would be backward to come, because he knew the king's hatred to him; and therefore he bids the officer (who was a person of quality) quicken him.

Ver. 9. *And the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, sat either of them on his throne, clothed in their robes, and they sat in a void place at the entering in of the gate of Samaria.*] The very same we read there, ver. 10. And the Targum explains it thus; *they sat in a semicircle,* as the court of judgment used to do, that they might see one another, and all the people stood before them.

And all the prophets prophesied before them.] All the *false prophets,* as the Targum understands it, who pretended to the gift of prophecy, which the following words shew to be the meaning.

Ver. 10. *And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith the Lord, With these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed.*

Ver. 11. *And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-Gilead, and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.*

Ver. 12. *And the messenger that went to call Micaiah, spake to him, saying, Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one assent: let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good.*

Ver. 13. *And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak.*] There is no difference between these verses and those in 1 Kings xxii. 11—14.

Ver. 14. *And when he was come to the king, the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go up to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? and he said, Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand.*

Ver. 15. *And the king said to him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me, in the name of the Lord?*

Ver. 16. *Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace.*

Ver. 17. *And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil?*

Ver. 18. *Again he said, Therefore hear the word of the Lord.*] Some think he spake these words to the bystanders: but this is confuted by 1 Kings xxii. 19. where the words are, *Hear thou therefore,* speaking again to the king.

In all that follows, to the end of the chapter, there is scarce any difference between it, and what is recorded in the book of the Kings; where I have explained it: and will not here transcribe what the reader may find there.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1. *AND Jehoshaphat king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem.*] I suppose, as soon as the battle was over, he immediately went to Jerusalem; to return thanks to God for his wonderful preservation.

Ver. 2. *And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer.*] See 1 Kings xvi. 1.

Went out to meet him.] Before he came into the city: that, being admonished by him, he might be the more affected with the mercy of God towards him in his deliverance.

And said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?] As much as to say, This is contrary to common reason, which taught the gentiles to make no friendship with such as were God's enemies. So Callimachus in his hymn to Ceres, ver. 117, 118.

Δάμητερ, μὴ τῆνος ἐμὶν φίλος, ὅς τοι ἀπεχθὴς,
Ἔσται, μηδ' ὁμόστοιχος· ἐμοὶ κακογείτονες ἐχθροί.

O Ceres, he shall be none of my friend who is hated by thee; nor shall he live under my roof: such neighbours are odious unto me. Where the illustrious Spanhemius hath observed many the like sayings among the heathens; and shews how the ancient Greeks abhorred to lodge in the same house with a murderer, or other grievous criminals; with whom they would not eat, much less be with them in their sacred assemblies; looking upon them as impure creatures.

Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.] Upon which account God threatens to punish him: which some think he did by raising such numerous enemies to invade him, as we read of in the next chapter. But most of all, by suffering all his sons to be murdered by their elder brother, (chap. xxi. 4.) and his grandchildren by Jehu, (2 Kings ix. 27. x. 13, 14.)

Ver. 3. *Nevertheless there are good things found in thee.*] For the sake of which he so far pardoned his error as not to punish him in his own person, but in his posterity.

In that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.] The chief thing wherein he pleased God was by abolishing idolatrous worship: which he had done rigorously, and served God with a sincere heart.

Ver. 4. *And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem.*] Being settled at Jerusalem after his visit to Ahab, and the war with Syria, he had time to reflect upon his escape out of the late battle, and the reproof of the prophet: at which

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he was so far from being angry (as his father Asa had been, xvi. 7.) that he laid it to heart, and seriously resolved upon a farther reformation, in other matters, as well as religion.

And he went out again through the people.] He had sent out his officers before, (chap. xvii. 7.) who went out by his authority, and acted in his name, about this very business; but now he went in person, as then by his orders.

From Beer-sheba to Mount Ephraim.] The former of these had always been the utmost bound southward of the tribe of Judah: and the latter, since the division of the kingdom, had been the northern bound, as before the division was Dan.

And brought them back unto the Lord God of their fathers.] Since the last reformation, it seems, some had revolted to their former idolatry, whom he now reduced; especially those cities which his father had taken in Mount Ephraim, (chap. xv. 8.) who, being Israelites, might have been drawn in again to worship the calves.

Ver. 5. *And he set judges in the land, throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city.*] That is, in every one of these cities: or, as Bertram thinks it should be translated, *for city, and city.* That is, he placed judges in the principal cities, unto which all causes were brought from the lesser cities and villages. This was a means both to have justice done between man and man, and also to preserve them in the worship of God, when judges were ready at hand, to call those to an account who went after other gods.

Ver. 6. *And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment.*] He gave them this very solemn admonition when he settled them in their places: which the Targum thus translates, *Ye do not judge before the sons of men, but before the Word of the Lord; and his glorious presence resides among you in the act of judgment.* Which is a most illustrious testimony that the ancient Jews believed more persons than one in the Deity.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it.*] That is, Do as I command you, judge according to the law: for such as God is, such you ought to be, since you are in his place.

For there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.] He bids them remember that as the nature of God is perfectly just, so he cannot be moved to do iniquity by respect to the greatest, or pity to the meanest, or by any gift be bribed to do unjustly. Whom they ought to imitate, being entrusted by him with his authority.

Ver. 8. *Moreover, in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel.*] Many were of opinion, that as before he speaks of the courts consisting of twenty-three judges, which were settled in every considerable city of the kingdom; so here he speaks of the high court of all, consisting of seventy, called by the Jews the great Sanhedrin, sitting at Jerusalem: whither appeals were made in all causes, that could not be determined below. But if this be true, Jehoshaphat was the first that we can find who settled this excellent constitution: of which we can find no footsteps in the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, or in the foregoing kings, as I have discoursed at large upon Deut. xvi. 18. xvii. 9. (See my notes there.) And there is little in the succeeding times to persuade us of it; for Ezra and Nehemiah set up no such judicature as that the Jews call Sanhedrin. Which seems to have been wisely constituted, when they fell under the government of the Macedonian princes, from whose language they borrowed the name. Though Jehoshaphat therefore settled judges in Jerusalem, yet the number of them is not certain.

For the judgment of the Lord, and for controversies.] These words are variously expounded: some understanding by the *judgment of the Lord,* causes about sacred matters, others pecuniary matters: and by *controversies,* some understanding civil causes, others criminal and capital. It is sufficient, I think, to say, they tried all sorts of causes.

When they returned to Jerusalem.] That is, when Jehoshaphat, and those that attended him, returned from the other cities, where they had appointed judges, (ver. 5.) he constituted this supreme court in the chief city of his kingdom. I say supreme court, for there were not two of them; one for ecclesiastical, the other for civil causes, as some have imagined: but one court judged both, as Grotius hath very well proved, from the very account here given of this matter. For Jehoshaphat bids these judges try what cause soever should come to them, (ver. 10.) and adds, *between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments.* Which shews there was no kind of business in controversy, which did not come before this one court. Nor do those words ver. 11. prove the contrary, as he shews in his book, de Imperio Sum. Potest. circa Sacra, cap. 11. sect. 15.

Ver. 9. *And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.*] He gives them the same solemn charge, which he had given the other judges; (ver. 7.) that having the fear of God before their eyes, they should do righteous judgment, and not suffer themselves to be any way corrupted, for God would judge all over again.

It is a most memorable saying of Cicero, that judges, being sworn to do justice, should remember, when they come to pass sentence, "Deum se habere testem; id est, ut ego arbitror, mentem suam, qua nihil homini dedit ipse Deus divinius;" *that he hath God a witness of what he doth, even his own conscience, than which God himself hath given unto man nothing more Divine:* lib. iii. de Officiis, cap. 10. where he hath left this excellent instruction also, that a man must lay aside the person of a friend, when he puts on the person of a judge.

Ver. 10. *And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities.*] By way of appeal from the other cities: where the judges were wont to refer matters of great difficulty to this supreme court at Jerusalem, where the judges were most learned.

Between blood and blood.] When the question was, who was next of kin to an estate, and should succeed him that was deceased. So some understand the word *blood* to signify *kindred.* But Jarchi understands it of a question, whether a murder was voluntary, or a man was killed by chance.

Between law and commandment, statutes and judgments.] Some take the word *law* to be a general word, the species of which follow. So that it is as much as to say, Ye shall judge concerning all manner of laws: first, of *command-*

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ments, such as have a natural equity in them; then *statutes*, or positive laws belonging to rites and ceremonies; and *judgments*, concerning those precepts, which direct the manner of proceeding in judgment.

Ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren.] This seems to be a command, that they should not only pronounce a righteous sentence in every cause that came before them, but that they should admonish him, who was in the wrong (and all other persons in the like case), to beware of injuring their neighbours for the time to come.

This do, and ye shall not trespass.] But worthily discharge their office.

Ver. 11. *And, behold, Amariah the chief priest.*] See concerning him, what I have noted upon 1 Chron. vi. 9, 10, &c.

Is over you in all matters of the Lord; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters.] Many understand by *the matters of the Lord*, all things sacred; and by *the king's matters*, all civil and political causes. But Grotius hath judiciously observed, (in his book de Imperio Sum. Potest. circa Sacra, cap. 11. sect. 15.) that it is most agreeable to the Scripture to understand by *the things of God*, those which were defined by the law of God, and were to be judged by that law: and by *the king's matters*, such as, not being defined by the Divine law, were left to the judgment of the king. Of which kind were all deliberations about what was expedient or not expedient. And thus he observes, the most learned of the Jewish interpreters explain these words in his book, de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. i. cap. 3. sect. 20. But which way soever we distinguish the *things of God* and the *king's things*, yet one and the same court took cognizance of them both: only with this difference, that the court had different presidents according to the nature of the causes. In things pertaining to God, Amarias the high-priest sat as the first judge; in things pertaining to the king, Zebadiah, a principal person about the king, had the chair, and was the moderator. For, as the high-priest was most conversant in the law of God, and therefore fittest to direct in such matters; so the chief ruler about the king was most exercised in matters left undetermined by the law, and so fittest to preside in such consultations.

There are, indeed, very learned men who think these words plainly prove two different courts: in one of which ecclesiastical matters were determined, in the other civil; in the former of which Amarias presided; in the latter, Zebadiah. Thus Corn. Bertram, in his book De Republ. Judaica, p. 137. 139. whom Const. L'Empereur defends in his annotations on that place: and endeavours to prove out of Deuteronomy, that God himself instituted an ecclesiastical senate, distinct from the civil, p. 389. But this is not a fit place to meddle further with that controversy: I shall only say, that I think Grotius hath sufficiently confuted this opinion in the book and chapter beforementioned, de Imperio, &c. And in his annotations also upon St. Matt. v. 22. (on those words ἔνοχος ἔσται τῷ συνεδρίῳ) where he makes this paraphrase upon this speech of Jehoshaphat: "Do not despond, as not able to discharge so weighty an office, for want of such learning and knowledge as are necessary for such a work: you have excellent men to guide you with their counsel. Such is the prince of the senate Amarias the priest, a man skilled in judgment; and if any thing fall out belonging rather to civil prudence than to the knowledge of the law, Sabadias the Ishmaelite is ready at hand, who is a principal person in such kind of deliberations. And besides (as it here follows) you have the Levites their assessors, who are very well skilled in many arts."

Also the Levites shall be officers before you.] Some of the Levites were members of this great court, who sat in judgment: (ver. 8.) the rest, who were not judges, were ministers under them to see their sentence executed. But it appears by this place, that the word *shoterim* doth not here signify, as in others, mere apparators who summoned men to the court, or such officers as executed the sentence of the court; but persons of some authority, who had power to make offenders sensible of the justice of the sentence, and convince them of their error: which was a great encouragement to the judges to undertake this office, and to judge uprightly.

Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good.] He bids them not be afraid of any man: for God, who employed them, would stand by them and defend them, if they were good and upright judges. The Targum hath it, *The Word of the Lord will help you, who is good.*

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *IT came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon.*] These seem to have been the principal in this invasion: the other here mentioned (in the next verse and in ver. 22.) to have been auxiliaries. For such was the ancient way of making war, and still is to this day, to call in the assistance of their neighbours. As appears by the Romans more especially, whose armies consisted of their own legions, on whom they chiefly relied, and their auxiliaries: who agreed neither in their discipline, nor in their language, nor in their affection, as Vegetius observes in his book de Re Militari, lib. ii. cap. 2. and therefore could not do such service. For which cause (as he observes in the beginning of his third book) they took care their *Socii Militares* should never exceed the number of their own soldiers, which is a rule laid down by Livy and Tacitus.

And with them other besides the Ammonites.] It ought to be translated, *and with them the Meunims:* who were a people in Arabia, near the Moabites and Ammonites. (See my annotations upon Judges x. 12. and in this book, chap. xxvi. 6, 7. and Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 22.)

Came against Jehoshaphat to battle.] Made an invasion upon his country.

Ver. 2. *Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea.*] That is the *Dead Sea*, as it is called in Scripture.

On this side Syria.] The Targum translates it, *from the western part of Syria:* for the Dead Sea was the western bounds of that country; and it is likely the Syrians joined against him, to revenge the assistance he gave to Ahab.

And, behold, they be in Hazazon-tamar, which is En-gedi.] A place where there was a great forest of palm-trees. It seems he had but slender intelligence, for he heard not of their motion till they were upon the borders of his country.

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Ver. 3. *And Jehoshaphat feared.*] Having been lately told by the prophet (chap. xix. 2.) that God was very angry with him.

And set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.] Fasting was generally joined with prayer in times of distress: unto which he publicly called the whole nation, that they might obtain help from God.

Ver. 4. *And Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.*] The Targum translates it, *to ask mercy of him, and to beg his direction, and to hear his holy word.* For some part of the law was read upon those solemn days. Vitringa takes this to be an argument, that there were no synagogues in every city in those days. For there would have been no need they should *come out of their cities,* and all resort to Jerusalem, to fast and pray, and hear the law there; which might have been done at home in their synagogues, as well as in the temple. Though not, indeed, in such a solemn manner, as it was performed by such a vast conflux of people, in one place, to make their supplications to God, (de Vet. Synag. par. ii. lib. i. cap. 9.)

Ver. 5. *And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord.*] For there was a throne, the Hebrew doctors tell us, in the court of the Israelites, where their kings prayed to God, or spake to the people, as there was occasion. So Jehoshaphat did, and, in following times, Hezekiah and Josiah: after the example of Solomon, who began this custom, (chap. vi. 13.)

Before the new court.] The most learned in these matters confess they do not know what is meant by the *new court.* Some think it probable, that it was only some enlargement that Jehoshaphat had made of the court of the people, to render it more capacious: but others are of opinion, that it signifies the *court of the women,* which was now made distinct from the *court of the men.* (See 1 Chron. xv. 3.) Thus Constantine L'Empereur thinks that the court of the women was not built by Solomon, but added in aftertimes, Annot. in Cod. Middoth, cap. 2. sect. 5. where he disputes, that, according to the Mischna, this court when it was made did not surround the court of Israel: but the breadth of them was equal, according to the delineation there.

Ver. 6. *And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art thou not God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?*] This is the most admirable prayer that we read any of their kings made: expressing the greatest confidence in God, and representing to him the justice of their cause. He begins with an acknowledgment of God's supreme and irresistible power; which extends itself every where over all creatures in heaven and earth, who are every one of them subject to his authority.

Ver. 7. *Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?*] Then he remembers the peculiar relation the people of Israel had to him, and the promise to Abraham, and the deed of gift which he made of this country to him, and to his posterity for ever, as a reward of his fidelity to him.

Ver. 8. *And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying.*] Next to that he remembers, that they had been long possessed of this country, wherein a house had been built for his worship by Solomon: to whom God promised at the consecration of it, that he would have regard to the prayers made in that place; (see the sixth chapter of this book, and 1 Kings viii.) The Targum here again saith this sanctuary was *built to the name of thy Word;* as in the foregoing verse God is said to have driven out the inhabitants of this land *by his Word.*

Ver. 9. *If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment.*] Some translate it, *the sword of judgment,* that is, the punishing sword. But if *judgment* signify any particular punishment, distinct from the *sword,* it must be wild beasts, or captivity: for *pestilence* and *famine* are particularly mentioned in the following words. The Targum translates it, *slaughter of the sword,* which was a sore judgment.

We stand before this house, and in thy presence (for thy name is in this house), and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.] See 1 Kings viii. 38, 39.

Ver. 10. *And now, behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir.*] Some think this explains what is meant by *other besides the Ammonites,* (as we translate ver. 1.) *viz.* Edomites. So the Targum in that place, *With these the Edomites, who joined with the Ammonites.* But see there.

Whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not.] He represents, in the next place, the foul ingratitude of their enemies (added to their injustice) in invading their country, unto which they had an undoubted title: when the Israelites did not do them the least harm, as they went to take possession of it, but took the pains to march a long way about to come at it, rather than give them any disturbance in their country.

Ver. 11. *Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.*] It is a most odious thing not to make grateful returns of benefits received; but to return evil for good is the highest wickedness. Which in this case was aggravated by this, that they made an attempt not only upon the rights of the Israelites, but of God himself; whose land this was, which they held of him as their Lord.

Ver. 12. *O our God, wilt thou not judge them?*] He appeals to the justice of God, the righteous Judge, who rights those that suffer wrong, especially when they have no helper. To *judge* in this place signifies to punish, as in Exod. vi. 6. Psal. ix. 16. where these words, *the Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth,* are thus interpreted by Drusius, The Lord is known *by the just punishment which he inflicts:* in his Miscellanies, cent. i. cap. 18.

For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.] This is the last argument he uses to obtain help from God: the weak condition wherein he and his people were, which made them the objects of the Divine pity; especially since they placed all their confidence and hope in him alone. But it may seem strange that he should say they had *no might* against this multitude, when he had so many hundred thousand men at command, as are mentioned chap. xvii. 14—16, &c. To which it may be replied, that perhaps this was such a sudden invasion, that he had not time to gather a considerable body to oppose

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them: or rather he distrusted the greatest army, and acknowledged them to be of no force if God was not with them: on whom he entirely relied, and not on the number and valour of his soldiers, though both were very great.

Victorinus Strigelius hath such a devout reflection upon this prayer of Jehoshaphat, that it will not be unacceptable, I persuade myself, to the pious reader, if I here transcribe it: "In this weak and declining condition wherein the church now is, when the devil is very outrageous, because he knows his time to be short, &c. let us say daily with Jehoshaphat, We know not what to do; but our eyes are upon thee. Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. Thou art our king and our shepherd; we are thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture. Thou only art powerful, we are infirm: but thy power will be perfected in our weakness. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give the glory; for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Do not remember our iniquities, but save us for thy mercy's sake; for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: deliver us, and be merciful to our sins, for thy name's sake. Save us, O Lord our God, that we may give thanks unto thy holy name, and triumph in thy praise." Such addresses to God (so he concludes) will illustrate this prayer of Jehoshaphat better than the largest commentaries.

Ver. 13. *And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.*] The more to move the Divine compassion towards them.

Ver. 14. *Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation.*] He seems not to have been a prophet before this time: when a sudden inspiration came upon him from God, to comfort this great assembly with assured hope of deliverance, before they stirred from the place where they had prayed.

Ver. 15. *And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat; Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.*] As it was God's cause which they now asserted, so they might be assured he would maintain it, by overthrowing their enemies.

Ver. 16. *To-morrow go ye down against them.*] Jerusalem, where they now were, was situated on a high hill, and therefore he saith they should *go down* against these enemies: who are said in the next words to *come up.*

Behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook (or valley), before the wilderness of Jeruel.] God was so very gracious to them, as, by this prophet, not only to assure them of victory, but to inform them of the very time, and place, and manner of it. The time was the very next morning: the place is mentioned in the latter end of this verse, as the time is in the beginning: and the manner, in the conclusion of the foregoing verse, that it should be by the hand of God, and not by their own: who should be only spectators of the victory which God himself would give them: so it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 17. *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them.*] He repeats what he had said before (which he knew would be the greatest comfort to them), that they should have no conflict with their enemies; but only stand still in their place, and see the hand of God overthrowing them all. In which there was a notable accomplishment of Solomon's prayer, which Jehoshaphat recited.

For the Lord will be with you.] *The Word of the Lord will be your helper,* as the Targum expounds it.

Ver. 18. *And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground; and all Judah and Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord.*] The king gave most humble thanks to God, as did all the people with him, after his example.

Ver. 19. *And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites.*] Who were then waiting, in their course, at the temple.

Stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.] They sung praise to God before the army went out, as if the victory had been already obtained. And they raised their voice as high as they could, to express their full assurance of success. This, I suppose, they did by the order of Jehoshaphat.

Ver. 20. *And they rose up early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa.*] That is, the army who were to stand, and face the enemy, went forth from Jerusalem.

And, as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem.] It is likely he stood in the gate of the city, through which they marched out, and spake these words to the several companies as they passed by him.

Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.] The Targum translates it, *Believe in the Word of the Lord your God, believe his law, and his prophets,* &c. God having made them a gracious promise, expected their belief of it, and dependance on it: otherwise they had no reason to hope for victory.

Ver. 21. *And when he had consulted with the people.*] That is, with the elders and heads of their tribes, who represented the rest: without whose consent he was loath to do any thing, in a time of common danger.

He appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness.] It may be translated, *should praise his most sacred Majesty.* Though it is commonly thought he ordered them to praise the Lord with the same state, pomp, and ornament, that they worshipped in the temple: in the same habit, in that order and magnificence, wherein they appeared in the holy place.

As they went out before the army.] This was an argument of great courage and assurance, that they led on the army: declaring to their enemies, that God (whose ministers they were) was coming against them.

And to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.] This was the usual song, which they sung at the temple, (ver. 13.)

Ver. 22. *And when they began to sing and to praise.*] Before they had marched many steps.

The Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.] Or *smote one another,* as it is

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in the margin. The Targum translates it, *The Word of the Lord set ambushments*, &c. By which that paraphrast understands his angelical ministers which attended him; who smote some of them secretly, and the rest thinking it was done by their neighbours, fell upon them as their enemies. But the meaning seems rather to be, that the ambushments which they had laid against Judah, by a confusion among themselves, made by a Divine hand, fell upon a part of their own army, mistaking them for their enemies.

Ver. 23. *For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.*] They of Mount Seir were ordered to fall upon Judah, out of an ambushment; but by some mistake they fell upon the Ammonites, their own confederates: and they and the Moabites fell upon them, till they had entirely destroyed those of Seir. And when that was done, they continued in such confusion, that they fell one upon another, still imagining they were destroying the Jews: who came upon them very early in the morning, as the prophet had directed.

Ver. 24. *And when Judah came towards the watch-tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.*] Instead of meeting with any enemy to oppose them, they saw them all lie dead upon the ground. For this *tower*, it is probable, stood upon the cliff of Ziz, (mentioned ver. 16.) from whence they could behold how their army lay.

Ver. 25. *And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels (which they stripped off for themselves).*] As they found rich garments upon their bodies, so they found great treasure among their baggage (as we call it), and many precious jewels; which they brought along with them, I suppose, that they might appear the more glorious, in the triumph which they promised themselves over the Jews.

More than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering the spoil, it was so much.] They could not carry all the spoil at once, but spent three days in collecting it, and disposing of it. For there was vast provision, no doubt, which they had made for the subsistence of such a multitude; and a great many beasts for the carriages that brought it to them.

Ver. 26. *And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the Lord: and therefore the name of the same place was called The valley of Berachah unto this day.*] One cannot think, that they deferred to give God thanks for so signal a victory, till four days after it; but then they did it in a more solemn manner than they could at first: the whole body of the people assembling together, to acknowledge God's goodness to them. Which they did in such a remarkable manner, that it gave to the place ever after the name of the *Valley of Blessing*.

Ver. 27. *Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the fore-front of them, to go to Jerusalem with joy.*] This is a further instance of their thankfulness to God for their victory; that they did not return every man to his own home, after this overthrow: but first went back to Jerusalem, to bless him again for hearing their prayers, and making good his promises.

For the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies.] This they did with great joy, wherewith God had filled their hearts, by making them triumph over such powerful enemies.

Ver. 28. *And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, unto the house of the Lord.*] To express by these the greatness of their joy, and proclaim their thankfulness to God.

Ver. 29. *And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries.*] On all the neighbouring nations, who heard of this glorious victory without fighting.

When they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel.] Here the Targum hath it, *When they heard that the Word of the Lord fought*, &c.

Ver. 30. *So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet; for his God gave him rest round about.*] Here again the Targum saith, *The Word of his God gave him rest.*

Ver. 31. *And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.*] See 1 Kings xxii. 42. It is likely, his mother was a very religious woman, who had taken care to bring up Jehoshaphat in the fear of the Lord: and happy had it been for him and his family, if he had taken care to marry his son to such another woman.

Ver. 32. *And he walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it, doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord.*] Whatsoever other faults he had, he kept close to the worship of God alone: and did many other good things as the law of Moses directed.

Ver. 33. *Howbeit the high places were not taken away.*] This shews, that the meaning of those words, xvii. 6. is, that the high places wherein God was worshipped were not taken away: though those wherein idols were served were destroyed.

For as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers.] The reason of it is here given, the people could not bear it: for their hearts were not disposed to serve God exactly according to the law of Moses. But though they renounced idolatry, and worshipped none but the Lord, yet they would not have his worship, by sacrifices, restrained to one place alone, but have the liberty to sacrifice elsewhere.

Ver. 34. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the Kings of Israel.*] He was an eminent prophet in the time of Baasha king of Israel, and lived to the end of Jehoshaphat's reign. (See 1 Kings xvi. 1. 7.) He, as several other prophets, wrote the history of his own time: out of which monuments these books were collected. And his work was so highly esteemed that it was registered in the book of the Kings of Israel: which were commentaries, as Huetius thinks, of what daily passed, (Demonstr. Evang. p. 202.)

Ver. 35. *And after this.*] That is, after the Lord had given him such a glorious victory, and struck terror into all his enemies, and given him rest and quiet round about.

Did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly.] This was a great

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weakness, to make friendship with the son, when he had been so sharply reproved for joining with his father Ahab, (xix. 2.) especially since he was no better, but a very wicked idolater. And though he did not join with him in making war, but only in trade: yet God took it ill of him, and threatened to punish him for it, (ver. 37.) Into this he was betrayed by the affinity which was between them, which shews how dangerous it is to marry with idolaters.

Ver. 36. *And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Ezion-gaber.*] They were ships of Tarshish made to go to Ophir, as we learn from 1 Kings xxii. 48, 49. where I have shewn how this place and that agree. Bochart thinks there was a place called Tarshish in the Indian Ocean near to Ophir (that is, Taprobana), which the Phœnicians called by the same name with the other Tarshish, because the same commodities came from both. (See his Phaleg. lib. iii. cap. 7.)

Ver. 37. *Then Eliezer, the son of Dodavah of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works.*] In the Targum it is again, *The Word of the Lord hath destroyed thy works.* Which he laid to heart so much, that when Ahaziah afterward desired to join in some voyage with him, he would not consent: as we read in 1 Kings xxii. 49.

And the ships were broken that they were not able to go to Tarshish.] They were shattered in the very place where they were built, in Ezion-gaber. (See 1 Kings xxii. 48.)

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *NOW Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.*] By his own appointment, as appears from ver. 3. He was designed king in the seventeenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat; and crowned in the twenty-third year, and afterward reigned eight years; three with his father, and five alone. (See ver. 5.)

Ver. 2. *And he had brethren, the sons of Jehoshaphat.*] They had the same father, if not the same mother: which made his wickedness in killing them the more unnatural.

Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah.] The fourth son is distinguished in the Hebrew from the first, by the addition of *hu;* the first being called Azariah, this Azariahu.

All these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.] He was king of Israel in a large sense, many of Israel being subject to him. So Ahaz is also called, xxviii. 19. where I shall give some further account of it.

Ver. 3. *And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and gold.*] After the manner of the ancient patriarchs. (See Gen. xxv. 6.)

And of precious things.] The Hebrew word signifies any thing that is excellent in its kind; whether jewels, or garments, or fruits of the earth, as Beckius observes out of Solomon Abu Melech.

With fenced cities in Judah.] Over which he made them governors. This he did very prudently, for providing so well for them, that they might not be tempted to envy the kingdom to their brother; nor quarrel among themselves. But, as Strigelius observes out of Cicero, "Sæpe optime cogitata pessime cadunt;" *things excellently designed have often very ill event.* For these riches of theirs made their brother first fear them; and then, being wickedly covetous, he was tempted to make them away, that he might get what they had into his possession.

But the kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the first-born.] He could not but know his wicked disposition, by his inclination to idolatry: but was swayed purely by his being the first-born, to settle the kingdom upon him, though not so deserving as his brethren. For such was the power of the kings of Judah (as Conringius observes), that they took upon them to dispose of the kingdom, as if it had been their patrimony. Some think he superstitiously observed that law, Deut. xxi. 13. for sometime the younger sons were preferred to the elder, as we find in the sons of Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 30. But (as Mr. Selden shews) common usage was otherwise, lib. ii. de Successione ad Pontif. cap. 1. p. 202. where he translates these words, "Regnum autem transmisit," &c. not he *gave*, but he *transmitted the kingdom to Jehoram.*

Ver. 4. *Now, when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword.*] Being advanced to the throne, his first business was to make himself so strong, that he might be able without danger to murder all his brethren. Which he did; that neither they nor their posterity might ever pretend to the crown. Perhaps they were inclined to the true religion, and therefore he made them away; lest they should oppose him, when he went about to alter it, and bring in the old idolatry.

And divers also of the princes of Israel.] Several of the most eminent persons in the country: such as the judges, established by Jehoshaphat in Jerusalem, and in the country; lest they should revenge the death of his brethren. (See Grotius.)

Ver. 5. *Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.*

Ver. 6. *And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord.*] These two verses are the very same with 2 Kings viii. 17, 18. where see what I have noted.

Ver. 7. *Howbeit the Lord would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever.*

Ver. 8. *In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king.*

Ver. 9. *Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots.*

Ver. 10. *So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time also did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers.*] There is little difference between these four verses, and what we read in 2 Kings viii. 19—22. I shall only note here, that this was the first punishment God inflicted on him for his sin, in not following his good father, but turning unto idols.

Ver. 11. *Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah.*] For the worship of strange gods.

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And caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto.] He not only gave them a bad example, and enticed them to idolatry; but by threatenings and compulsions he endeavoured to constrain them to conform to his example.

Ver. 12. *And there came a writing from Elijah the prophet.*] It is certain Elijah was taken up into heaven in the time of Jehoshaphat: therefore Josephus and the LXX. imagine (as Grotius observes), that from thence he sent a letter. Which is no more wonderful, than that Judas Maccabæus should see in a Divine dream Onias and Jeremiah praying for the people; (2 Maccab. xv.) so that the meaning may be, that Elisha saw Elijah appear to him, and bid him write these words and send them to Jehoram. But our Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that it is not meant of that Elijah, who was carried up to heaven, but of another of his name, who sent this letter. His reason is, because he is always called Elijah the Tishbite, and never Elijah the prophet. (See him upon Luke i. 17.) But in this, I think, he is singular; and it is not true, that he is always called the Tishbite: but sometimes simply Elijah; and in 1 Kings xix. 16. God calls him *prophet*. Therefore Kimchi seems to me to have given the most natural and plainest sense of these words, in his commentary on this place: That Elijah foreseeing, by the spirit of prophecy, before he went to heaven, the wickedness of Jehoram, spake these words to one of the prophets, and charged him to put them down in writing, and send them in a letter to Jehoram, when he grew so impious as is here related; and let him know, that Elijah commanded this writing to be delivered to him: that so Jehoram being affected with it, as if it had been sent from heaven, might be moved to repent of the evil he had done. And indeed this passage will bear this sense, if we take the words *from Elijah* not to relate to the first words *there came*, but to the immediately precedent, *a writing*. He did not send a writing, but it was sent as his writing. For there is nothing in the words to intimate that this was written after his death, but delivered after his death: so that it might have been written (for any thing that appears to the contrary) by Elijah himself, before he was taken up into heaven.

Saying, Thus saith the Lord God of thy father David.] He seems to upbraid him with his degeneracy from so pious an ancestor as David was, from whom he descended.

Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah.] His sin was the greater, because both his father and his grandfather had left him an excellent example.

Ver. 13. *But hast walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab.*] He was not only an idolater himself, not only by his example corrupted others, but used his authority to draw, or rather to force them into idolatrous worship, and that of the very worst sort.

And also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself.] This seems to signify that they were pious persons, who abhorred idolatry: and therefore his sin was the more heinous in cutting them off, proceeding from enmity to God as well as to them.

Ver. 14. *Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods.*] There was no calamity that could be thought of (as Vict. Strigelius observes) which did not befall this wicked prince: whose kingdom was destroyed and depopulated by the fiercest nations; his treasures ransacked; his wives carried into captivity; his children slain; and he himself laboured under a sore disease for two years; and when he was dead had not the honour of royal sepulture, such as his ancestors had. All which calamities were threatened in the writing sent him in the name of Elijah, that he might not think they came by chance, but by the special direction of Almighty God, as a punishment for his wickedness. But why should his people suffer, who are threatened in the first place to be plagued? the reason was, because their base fear made them comply with him in his idolatry; and besides, he was punished by the loss of them.

Ver. 15. *And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels.*] A dysentery miserably tormented him.

Till thy bowels fall out.] For what should he do with bowels, who had no pity and compassion on his own brethren?

By reason of the sickness day by day.] For two years, as it is interpreted ver. 19. For *days* sometimes signifies a year: and in the Hebrew the words are *days upon days*, that is, one year after another.

Ver. 16. *Moreover, the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines.*] Who invaded him on the west side of his kingdom, as the Arabians did on the east side: who stood in such awe of his father, that they brought him presents, (chap. xvii. 11.)

And of the Arabians, that were near to the Ethiopians.] It should be translated, *that were near to the Cushites*. A people inhabiting the inmost part of Arabia, not far from Nabathea and Negid, which was then called Cush, in the confines of the territories of Babylon, which was the ancient Cush: by which name Arabia, or some part of it, is to be understood in many places. (See xiv. 9. 2 Kings xix. 9.) Whence the *topaz of Cush* must be understood of the topaz of Arabia, not of Ethiopia. In which country there are no precious stones, as Ludolphus was assured by a priest of Ethiopia, and is confirmed by our merchants. (See Dr. Hyde, in his late book de Relig. Veterum Persarum, cap. 1. p. 37. and my annotations on the place abovementioned.)

The Hebrew phrase *aljad (at hand)* is well translated *near* by us, for so it signifies plainly in other places. And Forsterus, perhaps, hath rightly observed, that the bounds and limits of countries were called *jad* (i. e. *a hand*), because a hand was there placed, to denote that there was the end of the territory, which reached no farther.

Ver. 17. *And they came up into Judah, and brake into it.*] For his soldiers were not able to defend it from this irruption on both sides.

And carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also.] Whom they slew, chap. xxii. 1.

And his wives.] All except Athaliah: who hid herself, it is likely, in some secret place, with her youngest son.

So that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.] Who is also called Ahaziah, chap. xxii. 1. and by the interposition of one letter Azariah, ver. 6.

Ver. 18. *And after all this the Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease.*] He lived to see all those

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calamities, which the prophet threatened, come upon him: and then the Word of the Lord, saith the Targum, smote him with a disease, for which there was no remedy.

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases.*] The last words seem to import, that there was a complication of other diseases, together with his dysentery: all which were very grievous, and a suitable punishment to his horrid wickedness.

And his people made no burning for him like the burning of his fathers.] See upon chap. xvi. 14.

Ver. 20. *Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired.*] Some think the meaning is, he was weary of his life, being so full of pain, as to desire to die, rather than live in such misery. But the most natural sense is, that his people did not wish he should live any longer, but were glad his reign was so short: as appeared by their contempt of him, in making no burning for him, nor burying him in the sepulchre of the kings, as it here follows.

Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.] They shewed some respect to him, but not such as expressed any esteem for him.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *AND the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead.*] They declared him king, and set him on his father's throne: but the kingdom was his of right, without the suffrage of the people.

For the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp.] Mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 16.

Had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned.] This band of men came up with the Arabians, but, it seems, acted by themselves; and killed those in cold blood, whom the Arabians had carried captive, (chap. xxi. 17.)

Ver. 2. *Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem.*] Many ways there are to reconcile this with 2 Kings viii. 26. where it is said he was two-and-twenty years old when he began to reign. (See my annotations on that place.) The shortest and plainest way is to acknowledge an error in the copyist or transcriber: for some Greek copies have here twenty-two years old; and so it is in the Syriac and Arabic translations: and our great primate Usher found it so, in a copy which he procured, at great charge, from that of the patriarch of Antioch. Piscator also acknowledges, there is no other way, that he knew, to solve this doubt.

His mother's name also was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri.] His grand-daughter, for she was Ahab's daughter, (chap. xxi. 6. and see 2 Kings viii. 26.)

Ver. 3. *He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.*] She had the greater power of him, because she had saved him, together with herself, when the other wives and children of Jehoram were carried away captive. And she is said to have advised him *to do wickedly*, because she led him into a worse idolatry than that of Jeroboam's. Which is called *the way of the house of Ahab;* not because they were the first inventors of it, but the chief establishers of it in these parts. It did not consist merely in the worship of God by an image, which was the way of Jeroboam, but in the worship of other gods beside the God of Israel: *viz.* Baal-gods, or Baalim. Supposing, either by these to have easier access to the sovereign God the Lord of hosts; or that these they might resort unto at all times, and for all matters, as being nearer at hand, and not of so high a dignity. Whereas Jehovah, the God of Israel, Most High, either managed not smaller matters, or might not be troubled with them. For such was the conceit of the heathen, that the souls of great men after death had the honour to be agents between the supreme God and men, as being of a middle nature between them; which the Greeks called demons, and the Scriptures call Baalim. (See Mr. Mede, book i. discourse xliii. 243.)

Ver. 4. *Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counsellors, after the death of his father, to his destruction.*] His father was so bad, that there was no need any other should endeavour to seduce him, while he lived: but when he was dead, his mother's kindred thought it necessary to confirm him in his idolatry.

Ver. 5. *He walked also after their counsel.*] In other matters as well as in religion.

And went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel, to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-Gilead: and the Syrians smote Joram.] Though he would not imitate his grandfather in that which was good in him, yet he followed his bad example; in joining with Ahab's son, as Jehoshaphat had with Ahab, in the like war.

Ver. 6. *And he returned to be healed in Jezreel, because of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick.*] These two verses have been explained in 2 Kings viii. 28, 29.

Ver. 7. *And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God, by coming to Joram: for, when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the Lord had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.*] See how this was done in 2 Kings ix. 21. 27. and what I have noted there.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass, that when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them.*] As they were going to Samaria. (See 2 Kings x. 13, 14.)

Ver. 9. *And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him (for he was hid in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu; and when they had slain him, they buried him: because (said they) he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.*] The story of his death is related here a little more particularly than in the book of the Kings. (See what I have noted there concerning the whole, 2 Kings ix. 27, 28.)

Ver. 10. *But when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed-royal of the house of Judah.*] See 2 Kings xi. 1.

Ver. 11. *But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king.*] *i.e.* Of the former king, Jehoram,

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Took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber.] See concerning this my annotations upon 2 Kings xi. 2.

So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not.] She was the sister of Ahaziah by the father's side, though not by the mother's: for Jehoram had many wives, as we read in the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 12. *And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.*] See in the place abovenamed what I have noted about the place wherein he was hid in the house of God: which the Targum here fancies was in the very holy of holies; into which none but the high-priest might enter, and that but once a year. But if this should pass for truth, we must not understand it of the most holy place itself, but of some chamber over it, as Beckius there observes, which will not justify this exposition; for, as I have observed before, there was no entrance into the room over it; nor is there any ground to think there was any building over it.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *AND in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him.*] It is not to be supposed that he took all the captains of hundreds that were in the nation into confederacy with him: but such whom he could depend upon, whose names are here mentioned.

Ver. 2. *And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah.*] These captains went about, and communicated the design to the Levites, as men that might be trusted with it.

And the chief of the fathers of Israel.] Some of which were under the government of the king of Judah; and others, perhaps, were known to be well affected to religion, and so were invited to give their assistance. But it is most likely that Judah is here called Israel (as in several other places), the principal men of authority of which were acquainted with Jehoiada's intentions.

And they came to Jerusalem.] To settle their resolution with Jehoiada.

Ver. 3. *And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David.*] When all the forenamed persons were assembled at the temple, the young king was produced, and they all swore to be faithful to him. See 2 Kings xi. 4. where, in the following verses, most of this chapter hath been explained already.

Ver. 4. *This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, shall be porters of the doors.*

Ver. 5. *And a third part shall be at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the Lord.*] See 2 Kings xi. 5—7. where this is delivered a little more largely.

Ver. 6. *But let none come into the house of the Lord, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites.*] Who were then in waiting in their course.

They shall go in, for they are holy.] They were consecrated to the service of God, and were bound to attend there.

But all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord.] That is, of the *house of the Lord*, as was said before, ver. 5.

Ver. 7. *And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever else cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but be you with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out.*] It appears by 2 Kings xi. 8. that part of the Levites were assigned to be the king's guard, which did not belong to their office (which was to guard the temple, and minister there); but upon this extraordinary occasion they were thus employed, as men upon whose fidelity Jehoiada might rely.

Ver. 8. *So the Levites, and all Judah, did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go out on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses.*] This is more distinctly set down in 2 Kings xi. 7. to which I refer the reader.

Ver. 9. *Moreover, Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David's, which were in the house of God.*] These seem to have been hung up as trophies in the house of God, after David's victories. (See there, ver. 10.)

Ver. 10. *And he set all the people (every man having his weapon in his hand) from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple, by the king round about.*] See there, ver. 11.

Ver. 11. *Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king: and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him.*] The same is said in 2 Kings xi. 12. only one thing is here added, that he was anointed by *Jehoiada and his sons*. Among whom Zacharias was one, whom the king most basely requited. The Targum here hath a long fable, that this was the crown taken from the head of the king of Ammon, wherein was a magnet, &c.

And said, God save the king.] They said this, with clapping their hands, as we read in the book of the Kings.

Ver. 12. *Now, when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the Lord.*] They ran from place to place proclaiming the king, and praising God, for setting him upon the throne. This is more briefly related in 2 Kings xi. 13.

Ver. 13. *And she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar, at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets; also the singers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason, treason!*] In this verse something is added concerning their expressions of joy, with instruments of music, &c. otherwise it is the same with 2 Kings xi. 14.

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Ver. 14. *Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth of the ranges; and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest said, Slay her not in the house of the Lord.*] See 2 Kings xi. 15. where this is expressed more plainly.

Ver. 15. *So they laid hands on her: and when she was come to the entering of the horse-gate, by the king's house, they slew her there.*] See 2 Kings xi. 16. For no doubt an usurper may be slain, by those who have the supreme power and authority: whether it be in the king, or the senate, or the people, as Grotius speaks. To which he adds, the tutors of young kings who are their pupils, such as Jehoiada, lib. i. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 4. sect. 8. where he very wisely subjoins, that he cannot allow any private man to have a right to kill an usurper, sect. 19. Such a one Athaliah was, for she had no right to reign, but invaded the throne, by a tyrannical force, as Schickard calls it, (cap. 1. Theor. 3. de Jure Regio.)

Ver. 16. *And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the Lord's people.*] I have explained this in 2 Kings xi. 17. where it is expressly said this covenant was made between the Lord, and the people, and the king. (See there.) Unto which I may here add, that there is no such difference between these two verses as may be imagined. For Jehoiada the priest sustaining the person of God, the covenant was made with God, not with Jehoiada, who only represented God, to whom they promised obedience.

Ver. 17. *Then all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.*] See 2 Kings xi. 18.

Ver. 18. *Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the Lord by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt-offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David.*] What is set down briefly, at the end of that eighteenth verse, that the *priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord,* is here set down more largely in this verse, and in the next. The first words of which sound thus in the Hebrew, *he put the offices, the offices of the house of the Lord, in the hand of the priests and Levites.* Who, perhaps, had been put out of their offices by the former wicked kings, or by Athaliah, and now were restored by Jehoiada, according to the regulation made by David.

Ver. 19. *And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean in any thing should enter therein.*] These also had been constituted by David. (See 1 Chron. xxvi. 1, &c.) For there is no earthly king, as Maimonides observes, whose palace is not encompassed with strong guards: and therefore much more fit was it that the dwelling-place of God, the King of kings, should be surrounded by his ministers, priests, and Levites, who should carefully watch that nothing did pollute it.

Ver. 20. *And he took the captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of the Lord: and they came through the high gate into the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom.*] He would have those who had begun this work see it accomplished: and therefore they all accompanied the king from the temple to his palace, and saw him set on the throne of his father, (see 2 Kings xi. 19.) whereby he took possession of the kingdom, to which he had been anointed in the temple.

Ver. 21. *And all the people of the land rejoiced: and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword.*] See this explained in 2 Kings xi. 20.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *JOASH was seven years old when he began to reign; and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem: his mother's name also was Zibiah of Beer-sheba.*

Ver. 2. *And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest.*] These two verses are the same with those 2 Kings xii. 1, 2.

Ver. 3. *And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.*] He did not take these two wives for the king, but for himself: which was contrary to the constant tradition of the Jews, that the high-priest was to be so pure as to have but one wife at a time: which they endeavour to prove by Scripture, from Lev. xxi. 13, 14. The Gemara Babylonica reports this, and Maimonides asserts it, (see Braunius in his Selecta Sacra, lib. iii. cap. 2.) Therefore Jehoiada is supposed to have had two wives before he was high-priest; or rather, one being dead, he took another. Or, as the Talmudists will have it, after he had divorced one he married another, as Mr. Selden observes, lib. iii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 19. But, after all, it is not certain that Jehoiada was high-priest, for he is every where called *Jehoiada the priest;* and but once only (ver. 6.) *the chief:* which doth not necessarily imply that he was the high-priest, but only a great man, because of his relation to the royal family; or because he was the chief head of one of the twenty-four families of the priests. But he seems to be distinguished from the high-priest in 2 Kings xii. 9, 10. and is not mentioned either in Ezra vii. or 1 Chron. vi.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the Lord.*] As is related something more particularly in 2 Kings xii. 4, &c.

Ver. 5. *And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said unto them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year.*] That something might be done every year, till the temple was put into good repair. What money this was that they were to collect, we are informed 2 Kings xii. 4.

And see that ye hasten the matter: howbeit the Levites hastened it not.] Things were in so bad a condition, that it required the work should be begun with speed: yet such was the negligence of the Levites, and the backwardness, perhaps, of the people to part with their money, that in the twenty-third of this king's reign nothing was done, as we are informed in 2 Kings xii. 6.

Ver. 6. *And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah, and out of Jerusalem, the collection, according to the commandment of Moses, the servant of the Lord, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle*

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of witness?] Such oblations as were freely made in Moses's time for the building of the tabernacle. (See Exod. xxxv. 5.) There was also, beside this voluntary oblation, a tax set upon them. (See Exod. xxx. 12, 13.) It is called the *tabernacle of witness*, because here were kept the *two tables* in the ark, which witnessed the covenant between God and them. (See upon Exod. xxv. 16.)

Ver. 7. *For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God.*] That is, Ahaziah, and the sons of his brethren, mentioned chap. xxii. 8. For his brethren themselves were carried captive before their father died: (chap. xxi. 17.) or, as Abarbinel expounds it, she being a *wicked woman*, played the whore with another man, by whom she had several bastards, who committed this impiety: therefore they are called the *sons of Athaliah*, their father being unknown.

And also all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord.] Which should have been employed in the reparation of it.

Did they bestow upon Baalim.] Gave them either to adorn the temples of those false gods, or to promote their worship.

Ver. 8. *And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the Lord.*] This is more largely related in 2 Kings xii. 9. (See there.)

Ver. 9. *And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the Lord the collection that Moses, the servant of God, laid upon Israel in the wilderness.*] One like to that, according as every man should freely offer.

Ver. 10. *And all the princes, and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest.*] The great men set so good an example to the people, that they cheerfully joined with them in this good work.

Until they had made an end.] Till every body had given something, or all that had a mind had offered, and they saw no more would be given: or, till the temple was repaired, and the work finished.

Ver. 11. *Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites.*] Who brought it from the gate of the house of the Lord, (ver. 8.) that the king's officers might examine what the contribution amounted unto.

And when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe and the high-priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again.] By the hands of the Levites, who brought it thither.

Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.] This is related a little more largely than in 2 Kings xii. 10. (See what I have noted there.)

Ver. 12. *And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the Lord, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the Lord, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the Lord.*] See 2 Kings xii. 11—13, &c. where this is more distinctly related. Only here we are told who put the money into the hands of those that were to oversee the work, *viz.* the king and Jehoiada, which is not there mentioned.

Ver. 13. *So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it.*] For the men were so honest, that there was no time spent in calling them to an account, how they laid out the money: which they did very faithfully, (2 Kings xii. 15.)

Ver. 14. *And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the Lord, even vessels to minister, and to offer withal, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver: and they offered burnt-offerings in the house of the Lord continually all the days of Jehoiada.*] It is likely Athaliah and her wicked sons had embezzled the holy vessels, and employed them to the service of Baalim. But till the temple was completely repaired, none of the money was converted to this other pious use, of purchasing vessels for the sanctuary, as we are distinctly told in 2 Kings xii. 13.

Ver. 15. *But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; a hundred and thirty years old was he when he died.*] He seems to have lived long after this work was finished, being well stricken in years when he undertook it. Many such examples of long-lived men are collected by primate Usher, in his Chronologia Sacra, par. i. cap. 12. p. 70.

Ver. 16. *And they buried him in the city of David among the kings.*] This shews a good disposition in the king and the people at this time, though they soon changed after he was dead and buried.

Because he had done good in Israel.] The good he had done was in Judah, which is often in this history called Israel: because they were the principal tribe among the Israelites, and were, indeed, the true Israel of God, while they continued to worship him sincerely.

Both towards God, and towards his house.] He had been an instrument in restoring the Divine worship, which now they were sensible was a great blessing: and in repairing the decays which were in the temple, and furnishing it with vessels for the Divine service.

Ver. 17. *Now after the death of Jehoiada.*] In his lifetime they durst not attempt this, for though he was old and feeble he retained great authority.

Came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king.] Some of the great men, who in their hearts continued Baalites, desired to be admitted into the king's presence, and made their addresses with great reverence, pretending the greatest devotion to his service. And so falling into discourse with him concerning the state of religion, and other affairs, desired, at last, they might have leave to worship Baal, which Jehoiada had destroyed.

Then the king hearkened unto them.] To this dangerous discourse he listened and consented to them: for fair words and flatteries easily deceive princes, as Grotius here observes: and they wanted not specious reasons to persuade the king not to be so strict, as to permit no god to be worshipped but only one. Some of the Jews fancy, that they flattered him with a conceit, that he himself was worthy of Divine honour, being wonderfully preserved six years in the house of God; as the people flattered Herod after his oration, saying, *It is the voice of a god, not of a man.*

Ver. 18. *And they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols.*] Though at the first, it is likely, these great men only worshipped Baal themselves: yet they had their emissaries who persuaded the people to join with them. So that the house of God was deserted, and they worshipped idols in the groves.

And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their

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trespass.] Which God punished by the hand of Hazael king of Syria. (See 2 Kings xii. 17, 18.)

Ver. 19. *Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them back again unto the Lord; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.*] God's goodness was wonderful in sending his messengers to reduce such a base people: whose wickedness was no less wonderful, in that they hearkened to the great men among them rather than to the prophets of Almighty God.

Ver. 20. *And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them.*] He had a Divine motion to speak publicly to the people and reprove them: which that he might do and be heard of all, he got up into a high place where they might all both see and hear him. L'Empereur, in his Annotations upon Codex Middoth, p. 80. thinks, he got up into some desk or pulpit in the court of the priests.

Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you.] This he spake with great vehemence, and, it is likely, enlarged upon this subject so long, that it raised their indignation. It is very remarkable, that though he spake by the spirit of prophecy, yet he only applied the general prediction of Moses, Deut. xxxi. 16. unto the present time: that they might all learn to have a greater regard to Moses, and continually meditate in his law; unto which if they had attended, they would have easily discerned who were true prophets and who were false.

Ver. 21. *And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king.*] Who, it is likely, was present when he reproved them; or, being told what he said, sent an order to kill him. Which shews their error, who think Joash was not an idolater himself, but only connived at the great men's idolatry, and gave them liberty to exercise it. Josephus rightly accuses him of this sin, of which if he had not been guilty, he would not sure have slain the Lord's prophet who reproved it.

In the court of the house of the Lord.] This shews that they were there assembled; of which he took the advantage to put them in mind of their duty: and, if we believe the Jews, it was upon the great day of expiation. For, as Bochartus observes, (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 1.) "Plebeius furor nullos habet limites, maxime cum religionis velum illi obtenditur;" *popular fury hath no bounds, especially when the veil of religion is thrown over it.*

Ver. 22. *Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son.*] This sin, besides the contempt of God's prophet, and of the place where he was murdered, had a horrid ingratitude in it: he being the son of him to whom the king owed his life and his kingdom. Who assisted his father at his unction, as some think, because it is said, chap. xxiii. 11. "Jehoiada and his sons anointed him." But if Jehoiada was high-priest, this son is not reckoned among the successors of Aaron in 1 Chron. vi. And therefore it is likely he was a younger son of Jehoiada: for if he had been his eldest, he would have had sufficient authority, without the spirit of prophecy, to reprove Joash for his idolatry: as Azariah resisted Uzziah when he would have usurped his office. Ludovicus Capellus therefore thinks it probable, that his brother the high-priest conniving at Joash's apostacy, this younger brother was inspired by God to reprove it. Which boldness Joash and his courtiers thought they might punish with some colour, by alleging, that he was not moved by God to it, but by his juvenile heat and rashness, which they stirred up the people to chastise. (See Chronol. Sacra, p. 285.)

And when he died, he said, The Lord look upon it, and require it.] And so he did, both by external wars (ver. 23.) and by a conspiracy against him, (ver. 25.) It is not to be thought, that he died with a spirit of revenge; but by the spirit of prophecy foretold God would punish them for their hard usage of him. Thus the apostle, 1 Tim. iv. 14. speaks of Alexander the coppersmith, who had greatly opposed him, "The Lord reward him according to his work:" which may be understood as a sentence pronounced against him.

The Jews tell a strange story in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 11. how Nebuzar-adan, when he burnt the temple, saw blood bubbling up in a certain place; and inquiring into the matter, he understood, that a priest and prophet of the Lord had been slain there, because he foretold their destruction. Whereupon he killed all the doctors of the law, but still the blood was not at rest: then all the scholars in their schools, but still it was not quiet: then all the priests, and at last many thousands of the people, but still it continued to bubble. So that he said, Zechariah, Zechariah, wouldest thou have me to destroy all the nation? and then it rested, (sect. 24.) In other books they say, there were seven transgressions upon this day, in which they killed a priest, a prophet, a judge, shed innocent blood, polluted the court of the Lord's house, and the sabbath, and the day of expiation.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, at the end of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him.*] God was very speedy in punishing this, and the rest of the wickedness they had committed.

And they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people.] Who had advised king Joash to restore the worship of Baal. This was a distinct war from that mentioned 2 Kings xii. 17, 18. Here Hazael is not said to have come up, but only his army, and that a small party. There it is not said, he took Jerusalem; but here he destroyed all the princes. There it is said, Joash diverted Hazael from him by presents; here, that they spoiled the city, and sent the prey to Syria. We are therefore thus to understand the whole: that when they did evil in the sight of the Lord, he sent Hazael to afflict them, who, we read in the book of Kings, took Gath, and set his face, as if he meant to set upon Jerusalem: whereupon Joash took the hallowed things, and thereby procured his departure from them. But in the end of the year Zechariah being murdered, this other war begun, which is here related in this book.

And sent all the spoil of them unto the king at Damascus.] Who was not here at this invasion, but contented himself to send a few forces against Judah, as the next words tell us.

Ver. 24. *For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand.*] This declared the punishment the more remarkably to proceed from the hand of God, who took away their courage, so that with a great host they could not resist a handful of their enemies.

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Because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers.] According to the prophecy of Zechariah, ver. 20.

So they executed judgment against Joash.] They left him in a miserable condition; for all punishments are called *judgments* among the Hebrews.

Ver. 25. *And when they were departed from him (for they left him in great diseases).*] Many think he was sorely wounded in the battle; which brought him into great diseases. And they increased, it is likely, by the grief and anguish of his mind, to see his country ruined: and by the hatred and contempt into which he was fallen, which encouraged his own servants (as it follows) to conspire against him.

His own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest.] This doth not denote he killed more of his sons than one; but, according to the frequent use of this language, the plural number is put for the singular.

And slew him on his bed, and he died.] Perhaps they were of his bedchamber, and so could more easily compass their design. Howsoever, he was so weak and feeble that he could make no resistance, and was so little esteemed, that his guard minded not what became of him. This bed was in his house of Millo, as we read 2 Kings xii. 21. which is said to be in the way to Silla: because there was another house of Millo, from which this is thus distinguished.

And they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings.] The same is said of Ahaz, xxviii. 27. Though the people could not punish wicked kings for their impieties while they lived; yet they set blots upon their memory when they were dead, as Grotius observes, lib. i. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 3. sect. 16. *Egregio temperamento*, as he speaks, *by a most admirable temperament:* wherewith the sacredness of the supreme power was preserved, and yet kings out of fear of future judgment were kept from altering religion. But it may be doubted whether this was done perpetually: for we find bad kings builded themselves sepulchres, (2 Kings xxi. 18. 26.)

Ver. 26. *And these are they that conspired against him; Zabad the son of Shimeath an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith a Moabitess.*] They were mongrel fellows, whose fathers were Jews, but their mothers aliens. For so the manner of this impious people was, to make marriages contrary to the law.

Ver. 27. *Now concerning his sons, and the greatness of the burdens laid upon him, and the repairing of the house of God, behold, they are written in the story of the book of the Kings.*] Some by *burdens* understand the sore punishments God inflicted on him, called in Scripture *the burden of the Lord:* others, the great tribute laid upon him by the Syrians, which was a heavy burden, and a sore punishment.

And Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.] Though the father was not beloved, it did not hinder the succession of his son.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. *AMAZIAH was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.*] See 2 Kings xiv. 1.

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.*] He followed the right religion, and worshipped God aright, but not with such sincerity as David his father did, (2 Kings xiv. 3.) See Grotius upon xxvi. 4. where he observes, his son did in fact what the law required; but not with a solid piety.

Ver. 3. *And it came to pass, when the kingdom was established to him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king his father.*] They seem to have been men of some power and interest in the court, whom he durst not meddle withal till he was well settled in his authority. (See 2 Kings xiv. 5.)

Ver. 4. *But he slew not their children: but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.*] The very same is observed there, 2 Kings xiv. 6.

Ver. 5. *Moreover, Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of their fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin.*] All that belonged to one family, he put under the command of one leader, whereby they became the more unanimous.

And he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield.] Behold here, how their iniquities had diminished their numbers, since the days of Jehoshaphat (*i. e.* in the space of eighty-two years); for this king could bring but three hundred thousand fighting men into the field, and Jehoshaphat brought near four times as many. (See upon chap. xvii. *ult.*)

Ver. 6. *He hired also a hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel for a hundred talents of silver.*] In two things he shewed his heart was not perfect with God: (as it is noted ver. 2.) for, first, he sinned in making a league with the ten tribes, contrary to what the prophet Azariah had declared, chap. xix.: and, secondly, he invited them to battle without any provocation; whereas he should have done as the Lord commanded, 1 Kings xii. 24. and left them to end their quarrels among themselves; only repelling them if they had invaded him, but no more.

Ver. 7. *But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee.*] This was the prophet Amos, father of the prophet Isaiah, if we will believe the Jews, particularly Kimchi upon this place: but this is a foolish tradition, built on a mistake that Amos the prophet was Isaiah's father.

For the Lord is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim.] In the Targum it is, *The Word of the Lord will not help Israel:* who had highly offended him by the idolatry which Jeroboam of the tribe of Ephraim introduced.

Ver. 8. *But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle; God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down.*] If he had a settled resolution not to desist, the prophet bade him go and try, whether with the greatest power he could muster up he should be able to prevail against the Lord, who could either help a few, or destroy a great many.

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Ver. 9. *And Amaziah said unto the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?*] That which stuck with him was, the money he was likely to lose; for they would not return that, if he dismissed them from his army.

And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.] This objection was presently answered, if he would but obey God, and trust in his goodness, who was able to give his faithful servants more than that came to: and, as Grotius notes, he is rich enough who is impoverished for God's sake.

Ver. 10. *Then Amaziah separated them, to wit, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again.*] This argued some goodness in him, though his heart was not perfect with God.

Wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.] Because they looked upon them as enemies of God, and durst not employ them. St. Jerome thinks they carried idols along with them.

Ver. 11. *And Amaziah strengthened himself.*] With his own men only.

And led forth his people, and went to the valley of Salt, and smote of the children of Seir.] Who dwelt in Mount Seir.

Ten thousand.] See 2 Kings xiv. 7. where this story is told more briefly: for what follows in the next verse is there omitted.

Ver. 12. *And other ten thousand left alive did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them unto the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they were broken all in pieces.*] This was a very ancient punishment among the Romans, as we learn from Livy, Plutarch, Dionysius Halicarnasseus, and others; and was used among other nations, as Mr. Selden shews, lib. i. de Synedriis, cap. 17. where he observes an illustrious example of this among the Israelites; who threw Jezebel down upon the stones out of the windows, by the command of Jehu.

Ver. 13. *But the soldiers of the army, which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle.*] The men of Ephraim, whom the prophet forbade him to join withal; and were therefore sent home.

Fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon.] They went away from Amaziah in a great rage, (ver. 10.) which instigated them to revenge the affront put upon them in this manner: taking hold of the fair opportunity which presented itself, by his war with Edom; which had drained his country of all the forces that should have opposed them.

And smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil.] Thus Amaziah was punished for having entered into a society with idolaters, though at the prophet's reproof he broke it off: and God, it is not unlikely, also suffered this calamity to fall upon him, because he used his victory over the Edomites with too much cruelty.

Ver. 14. *Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir.*] Which he should have burnt with fire.

And set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them.] A most prodigious sottishness, as the prophet shews him in the next verse. Ahaz was wiser (though very wicked), who sacrificed to the gods of those people who had overcome him: hoping they might be persuaded to help him also, (xxviii. 23.) Or, perhaps, Amaziah worshipped them for fear they should owe him a spite, and contrive some mischief against him, in revenge of what he had done against the Edomites. (See Dr. Jackson, in his book of the Original of Belief, chap. 17. parag. 5. 10.)

Ver. 15. *Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?*] Nothing need be said more to convince him of his monstrous stupidity, of which no account could be given. Unless we suppose them to have been such beautiful images, that he looked upon them till he fell in love with them, and doated upon them, so that he was bewitched into a senseless idolatry. Fabius Maximus (as Strigelius here notes) was much wiser; who, having conquered Tarentum, and being asked what should be done with their gods, "Deos iratos Tarentinis relinqui jussit," *bade them leave their gods that were angry with the Tarentines.* For what vanity is it (as he adds) to hope for any safety from those that cannot preserve themselves? but such is the madness of idolaters, that it is reproved by sober heathens.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel?*] Yes, undoubtedly, for he was made so by God; and did nothing but what belonged to his office, (Jer. i. 10.) But Amaziah thought not of this; but scornfully asked him, who made him a counsellor of state?

Forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten?] He bids him meddle no more in this matter, lest he should be provoked to deal with him as they did with Zechariah, (xxiv. 21.)

Then the prophet forbare, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.] He forbare to advise or reprove him any further, but only denounced the sentence God had passed upon him for this contempt of him, and his other sins: which came to pass, ver. 20. 27.

Ver. 17. *Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice.*] He would not be advised by the prophet, but consulted those that led him to his destruction.

And sent to Joash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu king of Israel, saying, Come, let us see one another in the face.] He was advised, it seems, without first desiring satisfaction for the damage done him, (ver. 12.) in which perhaps Joash had no hand, to make war upon him, and provoke him to battle. (See 2 Kings xiv. 8, &c. where this and the following verses are explained.)

Ver. 18. *And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.*

Ver. 19. *Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites, and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldest thou meddle to thine hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou and Judah with thee?*] See this explained there, 2 Kings xiv. 9, 10.

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Ver. 20. *But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom.*] God blinds the minds of those whom he intends to destroy for their sins.

Ver. 21. *So Joash the king of Israel went up; and they saw one another in the face, both he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Beth-shemesh, which belonged to Judah.*] For there was another Beth-shemesh in the tribe of Naphtali, (Josh. xix. 38. Judg. i. 33.)

Ver. 22. *And Judah was put to the worse before Israel, and they fled every man to his tent.*] These two verses are in the same words, 2 Kings xiv. 11, 12.

Ver. 23. *And Joash the king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, from the gate of Ephraim to the corner-gate, four hundred cubits.*] See there, ver. 13.

Ver. 24. *And he took all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom.*] The Targum here explains it, that Obed-Edom consecrated these vessels to God's service, when David brought the ark to his house; and God blessed him for his care in looking after it. But Kimchi judges better, who takes Obed-Edom to have been set over these treasures, in the custody of which his son succeeded him.

And the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria.] These hostages the Targum takes for the sons of the principal men of the city, with whom the generality of the Hebrew interpreters agree. So Jarchi; the children of Israel did not restore to Amaziah the kingdom of Judah, but upon condition, that he should give him the children of great men for a security of his fidelity, and that he should not rebel against him hereafter.

Ver. 25. *And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Joash, son of Jehoahaz king of Israel, fifteen years.*] See upon 2 Kings xiv. 17.

Ver. 26. *Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, behold, are they not written in the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel?*] See there, ver. 18.

Ver. 27. *Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there.*] He turned from God before the death of Joash; therefore this conspiracy was laid a great while before it was discovered; and then he fled to Lachish, where it took effect. Or, as Jacobus Capellus conjectures (in his Hist. Sacra et Exotica), the wars abroad put a stop to this sedition at home; but when they were over, and he returned home, and had a son, then the conspiracy was renewed again, under the specious name of being guardians to the young prince, and taking better care of him than his father was likely to do.

Ver. 28. *And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.*] That is, in the city of David, as it is explained 1 Kings xiv. 20.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1. *THEN all the people of Judah took Uzziah.*] Who was called also Azariah, 2 Kings xiv. 21. xv. 1.

Who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.] They made him king when he was sixteen years old; for his father left him an infant of four years old: so that there was an interregnum of twelve years; the kingdom being administered by a viceroy, or by the high-priest and the elders. (See Ludovicus Capellus, in his Chronologia Sacra, p. 182.)

Ver. 2. *He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.*] He repaired it, after he had retaken it from the Israelites: this being, I suppose, one of the cities, that the soldiers, whom his father Amaziah dismissed, had taken, (2 Kings xiv. 22.) and which, while he lived, he could not recover.

Ver. 3. *Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem: his mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.*

Ver. 4. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah did.*] These two verses are the very same with those 2 Kings xv. 2, 3. (See there.)

Ver. 5. *And he sought God in the days of Zechariah.*] He persisted in the true religion, as long as Zechariah lived. By whom is not meant him whose book of prophecies is extant in the Bible, for he lived three hundred years after; nor the son of Jehoiada, who was slain some years ago: but, it is probable, the son of that Zechariah, who was called after his father's name, and was eminent for his Divine wisdom.

Who had understanding in the visions of God.] It is not said he was a prophet, but that he was a man very skilful in expounding the ancient prophecies, and giving instruction out of them, as Grotius understands it.

And as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.] Of which he gives instances in the following verses.

Ver. 6. *And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines.*] From this verse unto the fifteenth, this Divine writer shews how excellent a prince this was, and how God prospered him, while he continued truly religious. For he was skilled in husbandry as well as in warlike affairs: and was very solicitous for the good of his people. The former of these is mentioned ver. 10. and the other in the rest of the verses: which tell us, how prudently he demolished all the fortifications of his enemies on the frontiers; and provided his own frontiers with works, garrisons, arms, and engines of war.

Ver. 7. *And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-baal, and the Mehunims.*] I have noted often before, that these Mehunims were a people in Arabia Deserta. See 1 Chron. iv. 41. 2 Chron. xx. 1. Judg. x. 11, 12. of which this place gives a clear proof.

Ver. 8. *And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah.*] Made him presents, that they might preserve his friendship.

And his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly.] His power grew so very great, that he was formidable, not only to the Philistines in the west, and to the Arabians and others in the east, but to the borders of Egypt in the south.

Ver. 9. *Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem, at*

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the corner-gate, and at the valley-gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them.] In his father's time the wall of Jerusalem was broken down four hundred cubits, as we read in the foregoing chapter, ver. 23. which, it is likely, was built again before this time. But Uzziah made it stronger by towers, which he built for its defence. One of which was at that very gate where the breach ended, *viz.* the corner-gate.

Ver. 10. *Also he built towers in the desert.*] To defend the shepherds from the sudden incursions of their enemies: particularly the Arabs, who had formerly broken in upon them, (xxi. 16.)

And digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains; husbandmen also, and vine-dressers in the mountains.] Some therefore take the towers forementioned to have been country-houses, where husbandmen dwelt; and where their cattle in hard weather were sheltered; and the fruits of the earth were laid up.

And in Carmel.] By this is not meant the famous mount of that name (for that was not in the tribe of Judah), but a very fertile country, as the word *Carmel* signifies in several places, (Isa. xvi. 10. Jer. ii. 7. xlviii. 33.)

For he loved husbandry.] As the greatest men (I have often observed) did in ancient times, and followed the plough, and fed cattle themselves. (See 1 Kings xix. 19.)

Ver. 11. *Moreover, Uzziah had a host of fighting men that went out to war by bands.*] They were sent out by parties, several ways, for it appears by what follows they were very numerous.

According to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe.] He was the secretary of war (as we now speak), who took an account of the several bands of men that went out, and of the number whereof they consisted.

And Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains.] These two, I suppose, were great officers, who were to oversee Jeiel; that there was no fraud in his account.

Ver. 12. *The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand and six hundred.*] This is sufficient to shew he had a very great army (there being so many principal persons employed to command them); but a particular account is given of them in the next verse.

Ver. 13. *And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand, and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy.*] Perhaps these were a standing force, ready to repel their enemies if they invaded them; besides that host, which went forth by bands, to annoy their enemies on all sides: (ver. 11.) and then he was grown much more powerful than his father. (See xxv. 5.)

Ver. 14. *And Uzziah prepared for them, throughout all the host, shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones.*] All sorts of arms; both defensive and offensive: but here is no mention of swords; with which, I suppose, all the people were always provided.

Ver. 15. *And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal.*] The Targum by these engines understands towers perforated: whereas the text plainly tells us they were engines, out of which they shot arrows and threw stones, from the towers and from the walls. Bochartus thinks the word properly imports, they were contrived for the projection of stones, (lib. iii. of his Phaleg. cap. 7. and in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 35.)

And his name spread far abroad.] Beyond the entering in of Egypt, (ver. 8.) unto distant countries.

For he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.] God aided him so wonderfully in all his undertakings, that he feared no enemy, (ver. 7.)

Ver. 16. *But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.*] To the loss of all his authority. How hard is it to bear great prosperity with moderation and humble thankfulness!

For he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.] What should tempt him to this folly, it is hard to give an account. Perhaps he had a vain ambition to imitate heathen princes; who in many places executed the priesthood also. And Jacobus Capellus thinks, that which puffed him up with pride was, that he had not only a son, *viz.* Jotham, but a grandson, Ahaz: (ad A.M. 3231.)

Ver. 17. *And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men.*] See my annotations on 1 Chron. vi. 10.

Ver. 18. *And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him.*] It is plain by this, that they did not withstand his attempt by force of arms: but by reasons, persuasions, and exhortations. And, perhaps, they surrounded the altar, so that he could not, without offering violence to them, approach it.

It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense.] They represented to him, that he invaded the office of the priests, who were consecrated to this service: which he was not, and therefore ought not to meddle with it.

Go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed.] He had gone too far already, in going into the holy place; whereby he had offended the Divine Majesty: but they beseech him to proceed no further.

Neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God.] They represent to him, that he could get no honour, but lose very much by aspiring to this dignity of the priesthood, which the Lord had placed in other hands.

Ver. 19. *Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense.*] Which he would not lay aside upon their admonition: but fell into a great passion, because he was hindered in that which he designed.

And while he was wroth with the priests.] And, perhaps, threatening that he would have his will.

The leprosy even rose up in his forehead.] Where it could not be concealed, but was apparent to all that were present.

Before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense-altar.] Where they stood to keep him from it.

Ver. 20. *And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence.*] There was no need to use force to thrust him out, for he hasted himself, as it follows, to be gone: therefore they only admonished him most earnestly to depart, because the law permitted not a

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leper to remain in a city, much less to come into the house of God.

Yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him.] And he was afraid of a sorer punishment, if he stayed there. (See Grotius, de Imperio S. P. circa Sacra, p. 251.)

Ver. 21. *And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death.*] The punishment was capital for meddling rashly with Divine ministrations, as we see from the beginning, in the case of Nadab and Abihu, (Lev. x. 1, 2. and see Numb. iii. 10. xviii. 7.) Now the leprosy was a kind of death, because it separated those who were smitten with it from the society of men, as if they were dead, and no part of this world.

And dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord.] In the Hebrew the words are, *he dwelt in a house of freedom;* so such places were called, because such as were there were exempt from the common affairs, and shut up from the conversation of men: whence such as are laid in their grave, are said to be *free among the dead,* (Psal. lxxxviii. 5.) because removed from all the affairs and conversation of the world. (See Dr. Hammond upon that place, annot. c.)

And Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.] See 2 Kings xv. 5.

Ver. 22. *Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write.*] This shews, the prophets were wont (as I have before observed) to write the history of their own times. For Isaiah prophesied in the beginning of Uzziah's reign, and, as Abarbinel thinks, before Hosea, who lived in the same period of time; and prophesied before Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Ver. 23. *So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings.*] This was in the city of David, as we read in 2 Kings xv. 7.

For they said, He is a leper.] Therefore he was not buried in the sepulchre of the kings his predecessors; but had a *several* burial-place when he was dead, as he had a several house while he lived.

And Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1. *JOTHAM was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: his mother's name also was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok.*

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did.*] The very same is said in 2 Kings xv. 33, 34.

Howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord.] Some imagine, he was so frighted at what befel his father, that he did not so much as go into the court of the temple, or that he did not offer sacrifices in the temple, but in high places. But this doth not well agree with the words foregoing: therefore the meaning rather is, that he imitated his father in all that was good in him; but did not profanely enter into the temple to offer incense, as he did.

And the people did yet corruptly.] For they offered incense in high places, 2 Kings xv. 35. and, as some think, committed idolatry.

Ver. 3. *He built the high gate of the house of the Lord.*] It was built before by Solomon, but he repaired it, (2 Kings xv. 35.) and, as some think, added a very glorious structure to it.

And on the wall of Ophel he built much.] The Targum translates it, *a palace:* but others understand by *Ophel* a high place, or cliff, where there was a tower. Pellicanus thinks, the meaning is, that he much beautified, as well as repaired, the porch of the Lord's house, which was a hundred and twenty cubits high.

Ver. 4. *Moreover, he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers.*] That is, he took care to fortify his kingdom strongly on all sides against his enemies.

Ver. 5. *He fought also with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them.*] This people had been entirely subdued by David, as we read 2 Sam. x. xii. 31. but now it seems they had recovered so much strength, that they invaded the country of Judah; but were overthrown by Jotham.

And the children of Ammon gave him the same year a hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley.] He made them tributaries to him; and they began the very same year to pay the tribute.

So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year and the third.] Either this was the agreement, that for three years they should make this acknowledgment; or, at the three years' end they grew so strong again, that they refused to continue it longer.

Ver. 6. *So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.*] Directed his counsels and actions aright, according to the rule of God's word. Solomon Jarchi here observes, that all the kings of Judah had some ill thing laid to their charge, but only Jotham: for David himself sinned grievously in the matter of Uriah: Solomon was drawn away by his wives to countenance idolatry: Rehoboam forsook the law of God; and Abijah walked in his steps: Asa took the treasures of God's house, and sent them to the king of Syria; and likewise put the prophet in the stocks: Jehoshaphat entered into society with the wicked; and so he goes on with the rest. But in Jotham (saith he) there is no fault found; which is a wonder, when there were so few good people among them: for his integrity was not so great, as the corruption of his people; who immediately after his death joined with Ahaz in his abominable idolatries.

Ver. 7. *Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways.*] He had wars not only with the Ammonites, but with the Syrians, and with the ten tribes, as may be gathered from 2 Kings xv. 37.

Lo, they are written in the book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.] The affairs of the kings of Judah are commonly said to be recorded in the Chronicles of the kings of Judah: but this king's actions, it seems, were so eminent, that the Israelites also recorded some of them in their books.

Ver. 8. *He was five-and-twenty years old when he began to reign; and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.*] This was said before, ver. 1. and it is not easy to give an account why it is here repeated. Unless it be true, which Kimchi saith, that Jotham was born the same year that his father was struck with a leprosy; but was not king till he grew up, and was instructed in the government; which was

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managed during his minority by the princes of the people. But Jacobus Capellus rather thinks he reigned sixteen years by himself alone; and then took his son into society with him, in the government of the kingdom.

Ver. 9. *And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.*] See 2 Kings xv. 38.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1. *AHAZ was twenty years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father.*] See 2 Kings xvi. 2. where there are the very same words.

Ver. 2. *For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim.*] He not only worshipped the golden calves (which was the way of the kings of Israel), but many other gods of the nations round about: which are all comprehended under the name of Baalim. (See what I have noted upon Judg. ii. 11.)

Ver. 3. *Moreover, he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom.*] Where Moloch was worshipped.

And burnt his children in the fire.] Or, made them to pass through the fire; for the words are ambiguous. The Targum here saith, The Word of the Lord snatched Hezekiah out of the fire; because he foresaw three saints would spring from him: and here he tells a long tale of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who were thrown into the fiery furnace.

After the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.] This was the most detestable idolatry that was practised among the ancient inhabitants of Canaan, as appears from Lev. xviii. 21. xx. 2—4, &c.

Ver. 4. *He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places.*] Not unto God, but unto his idols, whom he worshipped also *on the hills, and under every green tree,* as it here follows.

Ver. 5. *Wherefore the Lord his God.*] The Lord is called *his God,* because he was so by the right of his dominion over him, and his kindness to him for his father's sake.

Delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria.] That by this punishment he might return from his evil ways. These two kings, Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, seem to have come upon him together, whereby he was put to some distress.

And they smote him.] That is, the Syrians slew many of his people.

And carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus.] This was after that invasion mentioned 2 Kings xvi. 5.

And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.] As is related in the next verse.

Ver. 6. *For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers.*] Who therefore forsook them, and took away their courage, that they could make no resistance; for otherwise, it had not been possible to make so great a slaughter in one day.

Ver. 7. *And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah that was next to the king.*] They seem to have taken Jerusalem (though they did not keep it), and to have slain these great persons. The Targum translates the last words, *the arkapta of the king:* that is, as some interpret it, the captain of his host. But our translation comes nearest to the Hebrew, *second to the king.* Who was inferior to the king alone; insomuch that the LXX. translate it Διάδοχον, he that immediately followed the king, and succeeded him. His *viceroy,* as some interpret it.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them.*] This is an argument that they were quite dispirited, and had no heart to defend themselves, being not only slaughtered like sheep, but carried captive by droves.

And brought the spoil to Samaria.] Into their own country, towards Samaria: but they had not yet brought it into the city of Samaria, (ver. 13.)

Ver. 9. *But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded.*] By this it appears that God continued his prophets among the Israelites, to bring them to repentance, if they would have hearkened to their admonitions.

And he went out before the host that came to Samaria.] Bringing their captives and spoil in great triumph thither.

And said unto them, Behold, because the Lord God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand.] He would not have them lifted up with their victory; which was not to be ascribed so much to their valour, as to the anger of God against Judah, who abandoned them to their fury.

And ye have slain them in a rage that reached up unto heaven.] That had no measure, and cried to heaven for vengeance upon the Israelites.

Ver. 10. *And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem.*] This seems to denote that they had sacked Jerusalem.

For bond-men and bond-women unto you.] To use them as slaves of another nation, of whom they might make money, by selling them to their neighbour, or make them drudges to serve them for nought.

But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?] He bids them consider, that they who thought themselves God's favourites because he had made them so victorious, had sins enough to answer for: for which if he punished them as they deserved, they might be reduced to the same condition with the brethren of Judah.

Ver. 11. *Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren; for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you.*] If they did not set them at liberty, he threatens sudden destruction, which was ready to break forth upon them for their cruelty.

Ver. 12. *Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war.*] These persons had some goodness in them, as well as courage, and great authority with the people and soldiers.

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Ver. 13. *And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither.*] That is, into the city of Samaria.

For whereas we have offended against the Lord already.] By making such an unmerciful slaughter of their brethren.

Ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass; for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel.] Or, *though our trespass is great,* and deserves to be punished with a fierce wrath, as we have exercised against Judah.

Ver. 14. *So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation.*] To dispose of them as they pleased. A wonderful instance of obedience; in restoring not only the captives which were very valuable, but all the spoil also, which, no doubt, was considerable. What might not these great men have done, to bring them to repent of their idolatry, if they had been truly religious, and exerted their authority?

Ver. 15. *And the men which were expressed by name.*] There were some nominated and appointed, I suppose, by the heads of the people, to take care of the captives, and see them well treated.

Rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them.] They not only gave them necessary sustenance, but refreshed their weariness, like the good Samaritan in the parable, who poured oil and wine into the wounds of a poor traveller. This was an extraordinary goodness, not only to release poor captives without doing them hurt, or making any gain of them, but to dismiss them with a *viaticum* (as Strigelius speaks), giving them all things necessary for their return home. And it was still a greater kindness to provide *vehicles* (as it here follows) for the infirm multitude, and bring them to their own country without hard travel.

And carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm-trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.] So great was the power of the prophet at this time, that he turned their barbarous cruelty into the tenderest humanity. But, as I said, they were not so easily converted from idolatry: unto which they had so strong an inclination, that nothing could persuade them to forsake it.

Ver. 16. *At that time did king Ahaz send unto the king of Assyria to help him.*] When Rezin king of Syria invaded him, 2 Kings xvi. 6, 7. This is the first time that we read of the king of Assyria, except in 2 Kings xv. 19. where Pul, king of Assyria, is mentioned as a powerful prince, who invaded the Israelites. Before his time we read nothing of that monarchy, which grew by degrees to its greatness from small beginnings. For in David's time, or whensoever Psalm lxxxiii. was written, the king of Assyria was but a petty prince, like those of Moab and Ammon, and the like, with whom he joined, (ver. 8.) to enslave the Israelites: but now had swallowed up all those little princes, and grown to such a height that none could stand before them. But if their large empire had been of long standing, we should in all probability have heard of them before this time, as we do often afterward.

Ver. 17. *For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives.*] When Rezin fell upon them, the Edomites took that advantage, and made great ravage in the land of Judah.

Ver. 18. *The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country.*] Which lay next to them.

And of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there.] They prevailed so far as to make an inroad further into the country of Judah; and not only possessed themselves of the cities here mentioned, but settled in them. For in this weak condition into which Ahaz was fallen, they took their revenge for the mischief which Uzziah had done them, who subdued them as far as Gath, (chap. xxvi. 6.)

Ver. 19. *For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz.*] It was purely upon his account that God gave them up into the hand of the Philistines; for that very year in which Ahaz died, the prophet Isaiah foretold his son should afflict them, (Isa. xiv. 27—29.) and accordingly Hezekiah smote them as far as Gaza, (2 Kings xviii. 8.)

King of Israel.] We cannot gather from hence that he is called *king of Israel,* because he walked in their ways, for a good king is so called, xx. 2. And the Masorites observe, that six times we read the king of Israel instead of king of Judah, because they all descended from Israel. So Beckius here expounds it, in a large sense, he was king of Israel: for Israel is not here opposed to Judah, but comprehends it. Therefore the Targum hath the *king of Judah:* and so the LXX. and the Vulgar Latin. For Israel was once the name of the whole people, and after the division of the kingdom, the two tribes were still a part of Israel, in the ancient state of the world. See Buxtorf; who observes, out of the Hebrew grammarians, that the manner of the Scripture is to put the genus sometimes for the species, and the species for the genus, (Vindiciæ Hebr. Veritatis, cap. 7. par. ii.)

For he made Judah naked.] Deprived them of the Divine protection by his foul transgressions.

And transgressed sore against the Lord.] The Targum renders it, *The house of Judah ceased from the worship of God.* Which Ahaz in a manner wholly abolished, and thereby transgressed more grievously than all his predecessors.

Ver. 20. *And Tiglath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him.*] As he desired by the messengers he sent to him, (ver. 10.)

And distressed him, but strengthened him not.] In 2 Kings xvi. 9. it is said, that he did *help him;* how therefore did he *distress him?* Both these are true, for as he did come to his assistance against the king of Syria, so he took Damascus, carried the people captive, and delivered Ahaz from the power of the Syrians, (2 Kings xvi. 7—9.) But this did Ahaz little good, for he helped him not to recover the cities the Philistines had taken from him, nor did he lend him any forces, nor enable him to recruit his own; but rather weakened him by exhausting his treasures, and by destroying Samaria, whereby the way was opened to invade his country the more easily in the next reign. Thus many countries in latter ages, by calling in the assistance of some foreign prince against their enemies, have been overrun, and conquered by those who came to their help.

Ver. 21. *For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house*

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of the Lord, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not.] Did not make his condition better, but so much the worse. (See 2 Kings xvi. 8.)

Ver. 22. *And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord.*] He was not at all amended by the sore calamities which fell on him, but introduced more idolatry than had been practised before.

This is that king Ahaz.] The word *hu* is sometimes a word of contempt, as Kimchi observes, (Gen. xxxvi. *ult.* Numb. xxvi. 9.) And Ahaz deserved to be branded, as the most notorious offender that had ever been among the kings of Judah: and was remarkable for this also, that he never prospered in any thing he undertook.

Ver. 23. *For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him.*] A most monstrous stupidity, to imagine they had any power over him, who could not defend themselves from Tiglath-pilneser: but being of opinion that they were gods, he sacrificed to them to appease them, that they might do him no further hurt; doing as the ancient Romans, who wooed by larger sacrifices the gods of their enemies to come over to their side, and be their friends, as Dr. Jackson discourses, in his Original of Unbelief, chap. 17. parag. 5.

And he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me.] Not against the Syrians, but he foolishly imagined they might help him against the Edomites, Philistines, and other enemies.

But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.] They were so far from being his friends, that they proved the destruction of him, and of his whole country: for though it was not in their power to do him either harm or good, yet his worshipping of them undid him and all his people.

Ver. 24. *And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God.*] That the priests might not be able to minister before God for want of them, (xxix. 19.) and that he might employ the money he made of them (for what he cut in pieces, I suppose, he sold) in building altars (as it follows) in every corner of Jerusalem.

And shut up the doors of the house of the Lord.] That no man might come to worship God there, but sacrifice every where, but only where they should; and this continued till the beginning of his son's reign, (xxix. 3.)

Ver. 25. *And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods.*] He took care the people should not think of going up to Jerusalem; by erecting, at his own charge, high places in every city, wherein to perform Divine service to what God they pleased.

And provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers.] With whom he did not join other gods, but worshipped him not at all.

Ver. 26. *Now the rest of his acts, and of all his ways, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.*] In 2 Kings xvi. 19. it is only said, they were written in the book of the kings of Judah: but Ezra, it seems, found that the book of the kings of Israel contained some memorable passages of his reign; there being, as is here recorded, great wars between them and Judah.

Ver. 27. *And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem; but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel.*] They are called the kings of Israel, because they had an ancient right to govern the whole twelve tribes.

And Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1. *HEZEKIAH began to reign when he was five-and-twenty years old; and he reigned nine-and-twenty years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Abijah the daughter of Zechariah.*] See upon 2 Kings xviii. 1, 2. where I have noted, that Ahaz therefore was very young when he begat Hezekiah. And we may grant, as Jacobus Capellus thinks, that he was but ten years old (though, as I have there shewn, Bochartus thinks he was more); for though this was wonderful, yet not incredible, as his words are. For he refers us to Scaliger in his first oration against Paræus, where he mentions a city, in which a boy not twelve years old begat a child of a girl, a cousin of his, not ten years old: and adds, "Rem notam narro," &c. *I tell a known story*, whose memory is still fresh in Aquitain. (See his Histor. Sacra et Exotica, ad Annum Mundi, 2292.)

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done.*] The same is recorded in 2 Kings xviii. 2.

Ver. 3. *He, in the first year of his reign, in the first month.*] This demonstrates his great piety and zeal for God, that he began so soon to reform religion, and did not stay till he was established in his throne. For the surest way to establish himself, he thought, was to establish true religion; though he run a great hazard in attempting the abolishing idolatry, which had been confirmed by some years' prescription.

Opened the doors of the house of the Lord.] Which his father had shut up, (chap. xxviii. 24.)

And repaired them.] For by long neglect they were gone to decay.

Ver. 4. *And he brought in the priests and the Levites.*] Whose business it was to take care of religion, and look after things sacred, and admonish kings of their duty. But Hezekiah was beforehand with them, and prevented their endeavours; not only exciting them to reform what was amiss, but using the most proper arguments to press them to it.

And gathered them together into the east street.] Which was before the east gate of the temple, where the entrance into it was.

Ver. 5. *And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites; Sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.*] The *abomination*, as the Jews translate it; that is, the altar of Damascus, and all the idols that were upon it. (See 2 Kings xvi. 10, &c.) These were brought by Ahaz into the temple; that is, into the court of the priests, which is called the *holy place*, in Lev. vi. 16, &c.

Ver. 6. *For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord our God, and have forsaken him.*] He urges them to this pious work, from the consideration of the great sin of their forefathers, and their

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horrible contempt of the service of God, as it follows in the next words.

And have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs.] This seems to signify that Ahaz brought in a way of worship directly contrary to the law of God; which commanded them to worship towards the ark, which was placed in the west. But he ordered they should turn their backs upon that (which was a disrespect and contumely to the Divine Majesty), and worship towards the east, where he had set his altar. And at last he shut up the doors of the temple, that they should not worship there at all, as it is again observed in the next verse.

Ver. 7. *Also they have shut up the doors of the porch.*] That none might enter into the temple, but it might be left a desolate place.

And put out the lamps.] The priests having nothing to do there.

And have not burnt incense, nor offered burnt-offerings in the holy place, unto the God of Israel.] But made high places in every city, to burn incense unto other gods, as it is ver. 25. of the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 8. *Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon Judah and Jerusalem.*] After the confession of their sins, he represents to them the calamities wherewith God had punished them.

And he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as you see with your eyes.] Sent such a panic fear and terror into them (such as is mentioned chap. xx. 22.) that they could not stand before their enemies, but became a scorn to them. For it had not been possible that they should slay such a vast number of them in one day (as we read chap. xxviii. 6.) if they had not been perfectly astonished, and bereaved of their senses.

Ver. 9. *For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword; and our sons, and our daughters, and our wives, are in captivity for this.*] Or rather, *were* in captivity, till the tender mercy of God released them. And it is likely some were still in captivity to other nations, though the Israelites had dismissed their captives: for they were distressed in Ahaz's time by the Edomites, and the Philistines; the former of which carried away captives, as we read xxviii. 17, 18.

Ver. 10. *Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.*] He resolved therefore to renew the covenant between God and the people, because he foresaw there was immediate destruction impending upon the whole nation for their iniquities, unless they did heartily and speedily repent of them; for they were grown to the greatest height of impiety, his father having by degrees proceeded to the utmost pitch of idolatry: which, though God had many ways punished very severely, yet he persisted in his wickedness; and to the very end of his life amended nothing, but grew worse and worse: therefore this good king thought it absolutely necessary forthwith to make a thorough reformation, and engage the whole nation in a solemn covenant to worship God purely. Thus Conradus Pellicanus.

Ver. 11. *My sons, be not now negligent.*] He beseeches the Levites, in the most tender language, no longer to go along with the people in their error, but to bestir themselves to make them better.

For the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that you should minister unto him, and burn incense.] This was the work of the priests, unto whom he speaks as well as to the Levites, remembering them what their office was to which they were peculiarly chosen, *viz.* to take care to see his laws observed, and to minister to him, according to his directions; and therefore not to omit the performance of their duty in the house of God, now that it was open to them.

Ver. 12. *Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites: and of the sons of Merari; Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel: and of the Gershonites; Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah:*

Ver. 13. *And of the sons of Elizaphan; Shimri and Jeiel: and of the sons of Asaph; Zechariah and Mattaniah:*

Ver. 14. *And of the sons of Heman; Jehiel and Shimei: and of the sons of Jeduthun; Shemaiah and Uzziel.*] These were the principal persons among the Levites, who readily complied with the king's exhortation, and engaged their brethren also (as it here follows) in the same work, which they undertook, of cleansing the house of the Lord.

Ver. 15. *And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves.*] By washing their bodies, I suppose, and other rites prescribed by the law.

And came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord.] The king had a great power in things commanded by God: the exercise of which power is here very properly called *the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord:* or, as in the margin, *in the business of the Lord.* The like we read chap. xxx. 12. (See Grotius, in his book de Imperio Summarum Potestatum circa Sacra, p. 59.)

Ver. 16. *And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it.*] That is, into the sanctuary (for into the most holy none might go but the high-priest), whither the Levites might not come.

And brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the Lord into the court of the house of the Lord.] That is, the court of the priests, where the Levites attended upon them, and ministered unto them.

And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron.] They cast the filth into the valley of the son of Hinnom, or Tophet, through which Kidron ran, (2 Kings xxiii. 10. 12.)

Ver. 17. *Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify.*] This was the month Abib, as our great primate Usher observes, but not on the day he was made king, but nine months after his father's death. (See his Chronol. Sacra, p. 82.)

And on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the Lord.] Which they cleansed together with the outward courts, and the chambers of the temple, in which they spent eight days more, as the next words signify. The house having been long shut up, and nobody coming into it, must needs be full of dust, and the vessels become rusty: in the scouring of which, and restoring them to their splendour, and wiping the walls of the house, they must necessarily spend a great deal of time, for the neglect had been great, and their diligence extraordinary: it being probable, that this sanctification was by washing both the walls of the house, and the floor, and every thing else.

So they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.]

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The pollution was so universal, and their exactness so great in restoring all things to their purity, that they could not finish their work in less time. Some think they spent eight days in cleansing all the places from filth; and other eight days in sanctifying the temple, and all belonging to it: though how this sanctification was performed we are not told.

Ver. 18. *Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the Lord, and the altar of burnt-offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shew-bread table, with all the vessels thereof.*] All which they set in their right places, after they had removed all defilements from them.

Ver. 19. *Moreover, all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression.*] The Targum explains it very significantly, *Which he profaned, and rendered abominable by idols of other countries, particularly from Damascus.* And so Kimchi, *Which he translated to idolatrous uses.*

Have we prepared and sanctified.] The Targum gives a quite contrary sense of the words, *We have set them apart and hidden them, and prepared others in their place.* And, indeed, the Talmudists (as Beckius here observes upon the Targum) are of opinion, that all the vessels which Ahaz profaned in his reign were set aside, and others consecrated in their stead: for they thought them not any longer fit to be employed in the Divine service. But Kimchi understands these words as we do, that they purged and purified the vessels which he had profaned.

And, behold, they are before the altar of the Lord.] Before the altar of burnt-offering (I suppose), unto which they went the next morning, and offered sacrifices; with the blood of which, perhaps, they were further purified.

Ver. 20. *Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the Lord.*] Now he engaged the principal persons in the city to join with him in his reformation of religion, when all things were ready for the performance of the duties thereof.

Ver. 21. *And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he-goats, for a sin-offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah.*] It is very observable that the word *tsaphir*, which here signifies the *he-goat*, was never used by the Hebrews till after the captivity of Babylon, when we find it in Daniel who lived in the captivity, (chap. viii. 21.) And here being used, and in no other place beside, it is some argument that Ezra was the author of this book, which he wrote after their return from that captivity, in which he had learned the Chaldee language, and thence mixed some Chaldee words with the Hebrew, whereof this is one. And therefore Daniel, to explain it, adds the Hebrew word *seir* to it, just as in the New Testament the word ὁ πατὴρ is added to *abba*.

And he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the Lord.] There are two laws in the books of Moses, requiring a sacrifice to be offered for the sin of the whole congregation, when they were in an error. The first is in Lev. iv. 13, 14. where a bullock is required to be offered, when they were ignorantly seduced to do something forbidden by the law, though they did not forsake their religion. The other is in Numb. xv. 22—24. where a goat is commanded to be offered together with a bullock, when they acted contrary to their religion, and were fallen by error into the practice of external rites. And the bullock was offered for a burnt-offering in token that they owned no other God but the Lord, nor any other religion but that prescribed by Moses; and the goat for a sin-offering, that they might expiate the guilt they had contracted, by doing contrary to their religion. Now this good king Hezekiah being sensible, that they had not only acted contrary to their religion, but in effect abolished it, by shutting up the doors of the temple, and omitting the daily sacrifice, and every where exercising strange worship, appointed seven bullocks for a burnt-offering, and as many goats for a sin-offering (though the law never required more than one goat), thinking these numerous sacrifices (together with rams and lambs) were, if not necessary, yet very fit, because of the great and long neglect of his Divine service, and because of the multitude and long continuance of their other sins against the Lord, for which they now begged forgiveness. Thus after the captivity they offered twelve bullocks for burnt-offerings, and twelve goats for sin-offerings, (Ezra viii. 35.) according to the number of the children of Israel: for, as they knew one goat was necessary, so they thought a great number would be becoming in such cases.

Ver. 22. *So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled it on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar.*] According to the direction of the law, Lev. viii. 15.

Ver. 23. *And they brought forth the he-goats for the sin-offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them.*] As the law also directed, Lev. iv. 14, 15. viii. 22.

Ver. 24. *And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel; for the king commanded that the burnt-offering and the sin-offering should be made for all Israel.*] The burnt-offering, to acknowledge the Lord to be the only God: and the sin-offering, to make expiation for all their offences against his supreme authority. And they were made not only for Judah but for all Israel: a great many of the ten tribes being now joined to them.

Ver. 25. *And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.*] What king David had ordained was approved by the prophets: who liked the design, and, by authority from God, settled this course of Divine service, (1 Chron. xxiii. 5. xxv. 1. 2 Chron. viii. 14. xxiii. 18.) The Targum here translates the last words, *For by the Word of the Lord this ordinance was made by the prophets.*

Ver. 26. *And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.*] Which were ordained by Moses, Numb. x. 10.

Ver. 27. *And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar: and when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also.*] When the drink-offering was poured out, then began the song: as the practice is described in aftertimes, by the son of Sirach, Ecclus. i. 25, 26, &c. (See Dr. Lightfoot in his Temple Service.) What the song of the Lord was, we are told ver. 30.

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With the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel.] See 1 Chron. xxv. 1. 6. These hymns and doxologies were in the nature of prayers to God, as Mr. Mede observes, book ii. chap. 6. p. 365.

Ver. 28. *And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt-offering was finished.*] They all adored, as soon as the sacrifice and the praises of God began: and continued praising God till all was done.

Ver. 29. *And when they had made an end of offering, the king, and all that were present with him, bowed themselves, and worshipped.*] As they began so they concluded the service, with adoration of the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 30. *Moreover, Hezekiah the king and the princes.*] Who now joined with him in furthering the reformation.

Commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer.] These were the prophets who composed the songs that the Levites sung, as I observed upon 1 Chron. xxv. 6. But the author of the psalms ascribed to Asaph (in the book of Psalms), seems to be one that lived in aftertimes: perhaps of the same family with this famous Asaph, who lived in David's days, and so called by his name.

And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.] Not only upon this day, but continually, as David had appointed; and Jehoshaphat in his reign restored, (xx. 19, 20.) But this order had been interrupted in the time of succeeding idolatrous princes, especially in the time of Ahaz; but now revived by this good king Hezekiah.

Ver. 31. *Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord.*] By offering sacrifices of reconciliation with him, whom they had acknowledged to be their Lord; and were anew entered into their office.

Come near, and bring sacrifices and thank-offerings into the house of the Lord. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank-offerings.] These were peace-offerings, whereby they acknowledged God's great goodness to them: and gave him thanks for this happy change of religion.

And as many as were of a free heart, burnt-offerings.] These were not like the sacrifices of thanksgiving, as Kimchi observes, which were in great part eaten by the offerers: for burnt-offerings were entirely consumed upon the altar, in honour of God: and therefore it argued greater piety and largeness of heart to offer them.

Ver. 32. *And the number of the burnt-offerings, which the congregation brought, was threescore and ten bullocks, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs: all these were for a burnt-offering to the Lord.*] These were not so many in number as had been offered in former times; for the nation was now grown poorer, in comparison to what it was heretofore.

Ver. 33. *And the consecrated things were six hundred oxen, and three thousand sheep.*] All these were devoted to the service of God, besides the burnt-offerings beforementioned.

Ver. 34. *But the priests were too few.*] For they who had sacrificed to idols were excluded from their ministry: and they who had not, were not all prepared and sanctified to do their duty. For it appears by what follows, they were backward unto this work to which Hezekiah called them; and therefore could not prepare all the burnt-offerings, (which was their proper work, Lev. i. 5.) much less all the other sacrifices, which were numerous.

So that they could not flay all the burnt-offerings.] This was the work of the priests, (Lev. i. 6.) and could not be done but by those who were skilful in the business. So Bochartus observes out of the heathen poet, that it was practised with great art and industry (Μιστύλλουτ' ἐπισταμένως) by those who had knowledge and skill to do it dexterously, (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 33. p. 324.)

Wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them till the work was ended.] In cases of great necessity, they did not stand nicely upon the observation of the ceremonial law. For both now, and in the days of Josiah, (xxxiv. 11.) some things were admitted, which that law did not allow. For, as now the Levites flayed the sacrifices, (which was the work of priests alone, Lev. i. 6.) so all the people were allowed to keep the Passover in the second month; and the Levites offered the paschal lambs, which were brought by those that were unclean, and the unclean ate them.

And until the other priests had sanctified themselves.] Then the Levites might no longer continue to do their proper work.

For the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.] In the foregoing reign, as Jarchi thinks, such as feared God (that is, would not worship idols) were forced to conceal themselves, and lie hid: so that when Hezekiah came to the crown, they did not presently appear, nor were they forward to be cleansed and sanctified. But the Levites were men of greater integrity than the priests: at least there were more men of zeal found among them, that readily offered themselves to the service of God. (See xxx. 17.)

Ver. 35. *And also the burnt-offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace-offerings, and the drink-offerings for every burnt-offering.*] This is another reason why the number of the priests was not sufficient to discharge the work of this day: because there were not only abundance of burnt-offerings to be flayed, but the fat of peace-offerings to be burnt, and a drink-offering to attend every burnt-offering, which must necessarily employ many hands.

Ver. 36. *And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people.*] Had given this good mind to them, to join so forwardly in this reformation.

For the thing was done suddenly.] Which argued a Divine motion; whereby they were excited without long persuasions.

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 1. *AND Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh.*] I look upon the last words as signifying, that more particularly he wrote letters to these two tribes, as he sent messengers to the rest: for they were the tribes nearest to him. Whom he could not command, but only invite and admonish them of their duty. For they were bound by the law, as well as the people of Judah, (see ver. 5.) and great numbers of them had settled themselves in the land of Judah, in the reign of Asa, (xv. 9.)

That they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel.]

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This was a festival that used to be celebrated in this very month wherein he began his reformation: which he resolved therefore to keep with great solemnity; and it could be kept no where but at Jerusalem; whither he invited the Israelites to come: and it seems, Hoshea king of Israel, at this time, did not forbid the messengers of Hezekiah to come and invite them, nor his people to go; as Jacobus Capellus observes: which I cannot but look upon as a remarkable instance of God's goodness towards this sinful people in the kingdom of the ten tribes, that he raised up, at the very last when they were ripe for destruction, such a king to reign over them, as had so much goodness in him, that he did not hinder any of his subjects who would go and worship at Jerusalem. Nor did he prohibit those from coming into his country, who were sent to invite them to it: so that the Israelites could not pretend they were compelled to be idolaters, for fear of the king's displeasure.

Ver. 2. *For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in the second month.*] The time being elapsed (by such means as here follow) for its observation in the first month (which was the proper season), he took advice with those who were his proper council in such matters, to keep it in the next. For by the *princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem,* are meant the great synagogue, consisting of the senate of that city, and the other senators called from other places. So Grotius understands it upon St. Matt. x. 17. And thus our Mr. Thorndike also, in fewer words; He means the consistory, called *the princes,* as they are called in the prophet Jeremiah, xxvi. 10, 11. (See Rites of the Church, p. 231.) For Jehoshaphat having settled judges in every city, it is likely they remained in some authority till this time.

Ver. 3. *For they could not keep it at that time.*] At the time appointed by the law, on the fourteenth day of the first month: for the reason here following.

Because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together at Jerusalem.] Ahaz had made such confusion in the worship of God, by shutting up the doors of the temple (that no Divine service might be there performed), and by erecting idols every where, and many other ways; that as the priests, by long disuse, could not be sanctified so soon as was necessary, nor the people have time to assemble: so the temple itself could not be purged till the sixteenth day of the first month, (xxix. 17.) and consequently the time was passed for keeping the Passover, which was to have been on the fourteenth: they thought it best therefore to adjourn it to the next month, rather than stay till the next year; especially since God himself allowed, in some cases, those that could not keep it in the first month to keep it in the second, (Numb. ix.) And what was allowed to particular persons, they thought might be allowed to the whole congregation of Israel.

Ver. 4. *And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation.*] The advice of the great council was approved by the king, and by every one else.

Ver. 5. *So they established a decree.*] This was the work of a court, or great council.

To make proclamation throughout all Israel.] By the king's authority.

From Beer-sheba even to Dan.] From one end of the country to the other.

That they should come to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem; for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written.] The ten tribes had never kept it, since the division of the kingdom by Jeroboam (at least not in such manner as the law prescribed), being hindered by his threatening interdicts from going to Jerusalem; as their forefathers were by their long tedious travels in the wilderness, (Josh. v.) And as for Judah, it appears from ver. 26. they had never kept it with such solemnity, since the time of Solomon.

Ver. 6. *So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah.*] They sent posts, that timely notice might be given to every one, to prepare themselves for this service.

And according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.] That is, Pul and Tiglath-pileser, who had carried a great many of them captive, (2 Kings xv. 29. 1 Chron. v. 26.)

Ver. 7. *And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as you see.*] And would certainly give them up also, if they continued to provoke him, as they did.

Ver. 8. *Now, be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were.*] It is a metaphor (as I have observed elsewhere) from refractory oxen, which will not go forward; but withdraw their necks and their shoulders from the yoke, and go backward.

But yield yourselves unto the Lord.] In the Hebrew, *give your hand;* concerning which phrase, see 1 Chron. xxix. 24.

And enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever.] Come to worship at Jerusalem: which was the only place appointed by God for his service, as long as that law lasted.

And serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.] Which otherwise was ready to make an utter end of them, as it had done of their brethren.

Ver. 9. *For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.*] These were the contents of the letter, which Hezekiah sent throughout all Israel: concluding with a most exuberant grace (as Strigelius justly calls it), which not only promised to them that they should continue in their land; but they also, who were carried captive, should be restored to them. This, no doubt, Hezekiah had authority from God to declare to them, that he might move them to repentance. For Moses had declared this, which Hezekiah applies to them in their circumstances.

Ver. 10. *So the posts passed from city to city, through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.*] Being long accustomed to serve other gods, their hearts were so hardened, that the generality of the ten tribes scoffed at this

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most gracious invitation to repentance. For which they paid very dearly shortly after: Shalmaneser coming six years after this, and taking Samaria, and carrying the whole nation captive, (2 Kings xvii. 6. xviii. 10.)

Ver. 11. *Nevertheless divers of Asher, and Manasseh, and of Zebulun, humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.*] Here is not so much as one of Ephraim mentioned: but in some other tribes there were those found who laid to heart their apostacy, and came to Jerusalem, humbly begging pardon. Yet Ephraim is mentioned afterward as partaking of the passover; (ver. 18.) some of them, it is likely, upon consideration following the example of their brethren, though at first they mocked at the message.

Ver. 12. *Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes.*] There was a marvellous unanimity in Judah, who were so obedient to the motions of the Divine grace (without which so great a change could not have been made), as generally to comply with the king's proclamation, made with the consent of the princes.

By the word of the Lord.] They looked upon it as a Divine command, which was brought to them by that authority. And it appeared so to be, by the mighty power of God, which wrought their hearts to a cheerful obedience.

Ver. 13. *And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation.*] This confutes the fancy of the Talmudists, who say, Hezekiah added a month to this year by intercalation; that is, made another month, Adar, which was the last month of the year; and so kept this Passover in the first month of the next year. But this is directly contrary to the express words of this verse, which says, they kept it in the second month. Nor is the opinion of the Karaites truer, who fancy, that though they kept the Passover in the second month, yet they did not keep all the parts of it, but only offered the sacrifice of the paschal lamb; the feast of unleavened bread being performed in the first month. But this doth not agree with ver. 21. which saith expressly, "they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days."

Ver. 14. *And they arose, and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away.*] They began as soon as they came to Jerusalem, to shew their zeal against idolatry, by throwing down the altars that Ahaz had erected in high places, either for sacrifice, or burning incense, which were very many. (See xxviii. 24.)

And cast them into the brook Kidron.] They stamped them to powder, I suppose, and then cast it into this brook.

Ver. 15. *Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and Levites were ashamed.*] They blushed to see the people so forward, and themselves so negligent.

And sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt-offerings into the house of the Lord.] They that had not done it already (xxix. 34. and ver. 3. of this chapter) now sanctified themselves, that they might perform their office; there being many sacrifices to be offered upon this day. (See upon Deut. xvi. 2.)

Ver. 16. *And they stood in their places, after their manner, according to the law of Moses, the man of God.*] That they might dispatch their business the more readily.

The priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites.] Private persons, as well as the Levites, might receive the blood from the beast, but the priests alone could sprinkle it.

Ver. 17. *For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified; therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passover.*] The passover doth not only signify the paschal lamb, but all the sacrifices that accompanied it, as I have shewn in the forenamed place, (Deut. xvi. 2.)

For every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the Lord.] Abundance of the people that came to keep this Passover were not clean; and therefore there needed the more sacrifices to be offered for their cleansing, which was one reason why the Levites were employed in it, otherwise there had not been a sufficient number to perform this duty.

Ver. 18. *For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves.*] And therefore ought not, according to the law, to have come to the sanctuary, much less eaten the passover.

Yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written.] They did not understand, after such a long night of ignorance and superstition, what ceremonies were required for their cleansing; or rather, they had not time to use them. Yet, having an eager and pious desire to commemorate their wonderful deliverance out of the Egyptian bondage, they were permitted in their uncleanness to eat the passover, lest they should be discouraged, if they were denied it, in their return to the true religion.

But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one.] He had a confidence that God was so gracious, that he would not stand strictly upon the observation of external rites, when he saw men's hearts honest and upright.

Ver. 19. *That prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers.*] Who with pure and holy intentions came disposed to worship God, and acknowledge him to be the Lord.

Though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.] But wanted such ritual purifications as were required of those that were admitted to worship God at the sanctuary.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.*] Some imagine that God smote them with some disease, because of their impurity, which upon his prayer was cured. But the Scripture uses this phrase, for granting pardon, and freeing men from the guilt of sin, as is apparent from Isa. vi. 10. "Lest they should be converted, and be healed;" *i. e.* pardoned.

Ver. 21. *And the children of Israel, that were present at Jerusalem, kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness.*] Which was appointed to be observed after the killing of the passover. (See Exod. xii. 15, 16, &c.)

And the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord.] All the seven days they sang praises to God with music, when the sacrifices were offered.

Ver. 22. *And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord.*] He

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encouraged them to continue to instruct the people more fully in their duty, by commending them for their care and diligence; and promising, it is likely, to reward them, for what they had done in propagating the true knowledge of God.

And they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace-offerings, and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers.] Acknowledging his great goodness unto them, which is called confessing, in the holy language, (1 Chron. xvi. 23, 24.)

Ver. 23. *And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days.*] They advised, it is likely, with those mentioned ver. 2.

And they kept other seven days with gladness.] They did not observe other seven days of unleavened bread, but offered sacrifices, with praises and thanksgivings, and feasting seven days.

Ver. 24. *For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and ten thousand sheep.*] Part of these sacrifices was offered unto God, and the priests had another part, and the rest was distributed to the multitude, that they might feast and be merry all the seven days, which was an extraordinary solemnity; but by this means not only all the Israelites were provided for who kept this great feast, but all the strangers also that came with them to Jerusalem.

And a great number of the priests sanctified themselves.] So that there was a sufficient number to offer the sacrifices, and to sprinkle the blood, though not to flay them all.

Ver. 25. *And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced.*] From hence we may conclude, that many strangers that were in the kingdom of Israel became proselytes, at this time, to the true religion revived in Judah.

Ver. 26. *So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon, the son of David king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem.*] He held a wonderful great feast for a vast number of people fourteen days, as we read 1 Kings viii. 65.

Ver. 27. *Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people.*] That is, such of the Levites as were priests stood up and dismissed the congregation with a blessing: for it was their office alone to bless, (1 Chron. xxiii. 13.) and this blessing is ordained in the law of Moses, by a Divine commandment, (Numb. vi. 22, 23.) and was continued by them as long as the sanctuary stood. Yea, it was used, if we may believe the Jews, not only in the temple, but in the synagogues; not only in the land of Canaan, but in all countries where they met to worship God, and they think themselves bound to it by the Divine law. (See Campegius Vitringa, in his book de Synagoga Veteri, par. ii. lib. iii. cap. 20.)

And their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling-place, even unto heaven.] This shews that their blessing was a prayer to God to bless them, of which the blessing ordained by Moses is a proof. And, perhaps, God at this time, by some visible token, testified his acceptance of them: but it is not likely the Divine writer would have concealed such a miracle.

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1. *NOW, when all this was finished.*] In the latter end of the second month, after the Passover and the following festivals were over, and they had received good instructions from the pious Levites, (xxx. 22.) they now produced the fruit of all this, by destroying the monuments of idolatry.

All Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars.] Which Ahaz had made in all the fenced cities of Judah, (xxviii. 25.)

Out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all.] They had no authority in the kingdom of Israel, to which Ephraim and Manasseh belonged: but some think, that as Hezekiah sent letters to all Israel to come and keep the Passover, so he went by a Divine motion to those tribes which were nearest to him, and, without the consent of Hoshea king of Israel, destroyed their images, and other idolatrous monuments. But these words may signify no more than that he did this in all parts of Ephraim and Manasseh, who were fallen off to Judah, and come under his government, (chap. xv. 9.)

Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.] This argues great zeal, that they would not return home till they had done all they could to establish and promote true religion. Of so great import it is (as Pellicanus here observes) to have a good king, and a well-instructed people.

Ver. 2. *And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests, and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service.*] He restored the order which David had instituted; which had been interrupted since the days of Jehoshaphat, who walked in the ways of David, (chap. xvii. 3.)

The priests and the Levites for burnt-offerings, and for peace-offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise.] Not only upon such solemn feasts as the Passover (which they had lately kept), but every day they sung praise to God, when the sacrifices were offered.

In the gates of the tents of the Lord.] That is, in the Lord's house; which anciently was a tent, as he represents to David, 2 Sam. vii. 6. And all houses were called by that name, Psal. lxix. 25.

Ver. 3. *He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt-offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt-offerings, and the burnt-offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the Lord.*] There was a particular sacrifice, I suppose, offered for the king every day, at his own cost and charge. Besides which, Hezekiah likewise maintained the morning and evening sacrifices every day, and especially on the sabbaths, and new moons, and solemn feasts: because the condition of the people was so low, that they could not every one pay the tax that was laid on them on purpose for the maintenance of these sacrifices. Yet the first-fruits and the tenths he ordered to be carefully paid, as it here follows. And these words it is possible may mean no more, but that he made an allowance out of his own estate, for the support of all the expenses, ordinary and extraordinary, at the altar.

Ver. 4. *Moreover, he commanded the people that dwelt*

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in Jerusalem.] That by their good example others might be stirred up to their duty.

To give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord.] For the service of God could not be maintained, unless there was a due provision made for the maintenance of his ministers, who were always supported out of the public stock. For they who minister to the community, ought by the law of nature (as Estius well observes) to be maintained by it. For their ministry is not appointed for themselves, but for the salvation of all the people.

Ver. 5. *And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first-fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey.*] The Targum translates the word *honey of dates,* as the Jews commonly understand it, and so expound Deut. viii. 8. where seven sorts of things are mentioned, of which they brought the first-fruits. But though honey was not offered in sacrifice to God (which is their reason why they will not here understand *honey,* properly so called), yet I see no reason why they might not bring the first-fruits of it, and give it to the priests for their own use.

And of all the increase of the field.] Which Kimchi expounds of the fruits of the rest of the trees; *viz.* fig-trees and pomegranates.

And all the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly.] They paid tithe, saith he, not only of the corn, but of the fruit-trees, and of the herbs, which were not due by the law: such herbs as those mentioned by our Saviour, mint, anise, and cummin; (Matt. xxiii. 23.) though these seem to have been of a later date, invented by the Pharisees.

Ver. 6. *And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the city of Judah.*] As many of the Israelites as were under the power and dominion of Judah, did the same that they did.

They also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep.] As the inhabitants of Jerusalem had brought in the tithe of such things as are forementioned, which they had in their storehouses; so they in the country brought in also the tithe of oxen and sheep, which were not kept in the cities.

And the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord their God.] That is, saith Jarchi, the tithe which the Levites paid to the priests. But Kimchi takes it for things consecrated, which they had dedicated to God's service; of which they also gave tithe, though they were exempted from the law of the tithing.

And laid them by heaps.] In a great abundance, as is beforesaid.

Ver. 7. *In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month.*] They began to offer first-fruits in the third month, when their harvest began; and finished the tithing in the seventh month, when their harvest was ended, (Exod. xxiii. 16.)

Ver. 8. *And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord and his people Israel.*] They gave thanks to God, who had given them such plenty of good things, and likewise given them a heart to offer so plentifully: and they commended the people, and prayed God to increase their store. For that is the meaning of blessing the people, praising their liberality, and praying God to reward it.

Ver. 9. *Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps.*] Asking them, as some understand it, what they meant to let them lie so carelessly, as if they were neglected, and did not lay them up in some safe place. But others think he means, how it came to pass, that there were still such great heaps left, and no more spent. Which the following answer seems to favour, though the next words incline to the former.

Ver. 10. *And Azariah the chief priest, of the house of Zadok.*] The head of the family of the priests, of the line of Zadok.

Answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord.] Which was from the very beginning of harvest.

We have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store.] His meaning seems to be, that they had not spared to make use of the plentiful provision which was brought to them; and had also laid up as much as they had room to receive, and all these heaps were still left.

Ver. 11. *Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the Lord; and they prepared them.*] To build new storehouses, besides those which Solomon had made; because there was not room enough wherein to lay all the offerings, and tithes, and other dedicated things.

Ver. 12. *And brought in the offerings, and the tithes, and the dedicated things, faithfully: over which Cononiah the Levite was ruler, and Shimei his brother was the next.*] As he took care they should all be faithfully laid up, so he set trusty persons to see that they were no less faithfully preserved, for their proper uses. Of which these two brethren were the chief.

Ver. 13. *And Jehiel, and Azaziah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah, were overseers, under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother.*] These were inferior officers, under the command of the two forenamed brethren, who had the principal oversight, and these were assistant to them.

At the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah the ruler of the house of God.] For so it was ordered by the king, with the advice of Azariah, who was before mentioned (ver. 10.) as a chief person among the priests.

Ver. 14. *And Kore, the son of Imnah the Levite, the porter towards the east.*] At the entrance of the house of God.

Was over the free-will-offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of the Lord.] Unto the priests and Levites, to whose uses they were appropriated by God: or, as some think, to give out so much flour, oil, wine, frankincense, &c. as was necessary for the sacrifices.

And the most holy things.] So they called the burnt-offerings, and the offerings for sin, and the trespass-offerings, and the two lambs for peace-offerings, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, as Beckius observes out of Maimonides.

Ver. 15. *And next him were Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shechaniah, in the cities of the priests, in their set office, to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small.*] These were to take care of those who stayed in their cities, while others came in their courses to wait at Jerusalem. None of which wanted the portion allotted to them, both for themselves and for their little children.

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Ver. 16. *Besides their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, even unto every one that entereth into the house of the Lord, his daily portion for their service in their charges, according to their courses.*] Though none of the Levites were permitted to come into the house of the Lord, to do service, till they were twenty years old; yet their males (as Mr. Selden observes from this place), who were three years old or more, were allowed to come into the temple with their parents; and in the distribution, the other infants being pretermitted, these were provided for. Kimchi here observes, that males under three years old were not capable of entering into the house of the Lord: but females, neither then, nor after they were older, were capable of this privilege.

Ver. 17. *Both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges, by their courses.*] These words *twenty years old* (as the same great person observes) relate not to the priests, but to the Levites: who, according to the law of Moses, were not obliged to their function, till they were thirty years old, Numb. iv. 3. But David, in the latter end of his reign, a little before the building of the temple, admitted them to officiate at the age of twenty years, 1 Chron. xxiii. 26, 27. (See Selden, de Succession. ad Pontif. lib. ii. cap. 4.)

Ver. 18. *And to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation.*] The forenamed officers gave to every family their portion; not only to the priests, but to their wives and children: of which (it appears by these verses) an exact register was kept, according to which they made their distribution.

For in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness.] Or rather, according to the Hebrew, For *in faith*, or *with fidelity* (some translate it in the margin *in trust*), *they sanctified themselves in holiness;* that is, attended upon their ministry at the house of God, nothing doubting they should be provided of all things necessary. For this seems to be a reason, why such care was taken of their wives and children, because their husbands were wholly given up to the service of God, and could not follow any other employment whereby to provide for the maintenance of their families.

Ver. 19. *Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, which were in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every several city.*] Care was taken of those that lived in the country, though at the greatest distance, as well as of those that lived in or near Jerusalem, or waited in their courses there. They that were not in waiting, but at home with their families, had provision made for them, as if they had been at the house of God.

The men that were expressed by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites.] The forenamed persons were entrusted with this business, to see that none wanted a maintenance.

Ver. 20. *And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good, and right, and truth, before the Lord his God.*] Whatsoever he thought was pleasing to God, conformable to the law, and profitable for his people, he performed with integrity of heart.

Ver. 21. *And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.*] Whatsoever he went about, either for the advancement of religion, or the good government of his people, he did it sincerely, and with great zeal; so that God prospered him both in peace and in war.

CHAP. XXXII.

Ver. 1. *AFTER these things, and the establishment thereof.*] After the reformation of religion, and the establishment of it, by settling the maintenance of the priests and Levites (whom he appointed, according to the ordinance of David, to attend in their courses), he prospered so, that he resolved to be subject no longer to the king of Assyria: who thereupon came and invaded his country, (2 Kings xviii. 7.)

Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah.] This was in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 13.

And encamped against the fenced cities.] Many of which he took: God thinking fit to try the faith of Hezekiah, and, by disappointing Sennacherib, to get himself the greater glory.

And thought to win them for himself.] To conquer the whole country, even Jerusalem itself.

Ver. 2. *And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem.*] His success puffed him up, so that he designed, as plainly appeared, to besiege the capital city of the kingdom.

Ver. 3. *He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men.*] Though the prophet Isaiah had assured him of God's protection, he did not neglect to consult the best means of his preservation.

To stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city.] To fill them up with earth, that it might not be known there was any water there; which they turned another way, and by pipes and channels under ground brought it to Jerusalem.

And they did help him.] Assisted him in this work.

Ver. 4. *So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land.*] That is Gihon, as Kimchi understands it; which some take to be Kidron. It was no easy thing to dry up this brook: but it is supposed the head of it was not far from the city, which being stopped up they diverted the current, and, by conveyance under ground, brought it into great pits within the city; which received the water for the use of the people.

For we read afterward (ver. 30.) of his stopping up a course of water, which was above; and bringing it down to this west side of the city.

Saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?] Water was scarce in this country; therefore they thought it prudent to distress their enemies by the want of it. He speaks of *kings*, in the plural number either because there were many kings that served under the king of Assyria, or because he was the *great king*, as he styled himself.

Ver. 5. *Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken.*] There was a great breach made in it by Joash king of Israel in the days of Amaziah: (chap. xxv.

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23.) which, I suppose, was repaired in his son's days, who was a very powerful prince, (chap. xxvi. 9.) and therefore he speaks here of some other breach, which had been made since that time; and perhaps in the same place, where through neglect the wall might possibly be fallen down.

And raised it up to the towers.] It was broken down from the gate of Ephraim to the corner-gate (as we read in the forenamed places), where there were towers, for the defence of the gates, unto which he carried the wall: so that it was entirely raised up again.

And another wall without.] He compassed the city with another wall without the old one; for its stronger defence.

And repaired Millo in the city of David.] Some understand by *Millo* the wall that was about Zion, on the north part of the city: or the street within the city from the palace to the temple. Which he repaired, that is, fortified and made strong with a wall, to defend the entrance of it.

And made darts and shields in abundance.] Both offensive and defensive weapons; of which he took care there should be no want.

Ver. 6. *And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city.*] In the street of the principal gate, which was very large.

And spake comfortably to them, saying.] Encouraged them to stand by him, in defence of their city, religion, and liberties: which he assured them God would protect, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 7. *Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him.*] It is the part of a good commander to shew himself undaunted before his soldiers; but especially to persuade them, that, having a good cause, God is on their side: which the Targum in the next verse explains thus, *The Word of the Lord our God is our helper.* Which signifies, as Beckius there thinks, more persons than one in the holy Trinity.

Ver. 8. *With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.*] Relied on what he said, as if it had been spoken to them by God himself.

Ver. 9. *After this did Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem (but he himself laid siege against Lachish, and all his power with him), unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah, that were at Jerusalem, saying.*] See 2 Kings xviii. 17, &c. in which place, and in chap. xix. 10, &c. the following speech is set down more largely; which here is abridged.

Ver. 10. *Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege of Jerusalem?*] See 2 Kings xviii. 19. The last words seem to signify, that for fear of the king of Assyria, they durst not stir out of the gates of Jerusalem: for so we translate the last words in the margin, *the strong hold of Jerusalem.*

Ver. 11. *Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The Lord our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?*] See 2 Kings xviii. 22. He did not intend, it appears by this, to storm the city, but to keep them pent up till they were starved.

Ver. 12. *Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it?*] It is evident from hence, that the worship of one God alone was known to be the religion of the Jews. But Sennacherib would have had them believe, Hezekiah had dishonoured him by confining his worship and service to one narrow corner: which was before diffused and spread all over the city and country; and therefore would not help them. (See there, 2 Kings xviii. 22.)

Ver. 13. *Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand?*] If the Lord had a mind to help them, he would have them believe that he was not able: because no gods had been able to deliver those that worshipped them from his power.

Ver. 14. *Who was there among all the gods of those nations, that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand?*] Upon this argument he enlarges himself very much in 2 Kings xviii. 32—35.

Ver. 15. *Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you in this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers; how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand?*] See 2 Kings xviii. 29, 30.

Ver. 16. *And his servants spake yet more against the Lord God, and against his servant Hezekiah.*] The Targum translates it, *They spake perversely against the Word of the Lord God,* &c. Which plainly declares, that paraphrast took the *Word of God* to be a Divine person, whose servant Hezekiah was.

Ver. 17. *He wrote also letters to rail on the Lord God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying.*] One of these letters is set down at large in 2 Kings xix. 9—14.

As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of mine hand.] He insists upon this so often and so long, it being the most popular argument he could use.

Ver. 18. *Then they cried with a loud voice, in the Jews' speech, unto the people of Jerusalem that were on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them, that they might take the city.*] By a surrender of it into their hand. (See 2 Kings xviii. 26, 27, &c.)

Ver. 19. *And they spake against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of man.*] They ignorantly fancied, there was no difference between the God of the universe, whom the Jews worshipped, and the gods of particular countries, who pretended to no power but only there: though in truth they had no power at all, being made by those that worshipped them.

Ver. 20. *And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.*] See 2 Kings xix. 1, 2, &c. 25, 26, &c.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains, in the camp of the king of Assyria.*] With a vast number of common soldiers, as we read 2 Kings xix. 35. The Hebrew text no where mentions the name of angel, nor of the time

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of the year when this stroke was given, nor the kind of plague whereby they were destroyed: but the Targum saith, The Word of the Lord sent Gabriel to do this execution, who in the Passover night smote them with lightning. Which is related in the Babylonian Talmud, after the same manner, as Beckius observes upon the Targum.

One would think, that Artabanus had read or heard something of this sudden and dreadful overthrow, when he dissuaded Xerxes from invading Greece, being swoln with confidence that nothing could withstand him. "Dost thou not observe (saith he) how the highest and magnificent buildings are wont to be struck with thunder, when the lower escape? Φιλέει γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς τὰ ὑπερέχοντα πάντα κολούειν, *for God loves to depress all things that are lifted up.*" And a little after, in the same speech, he admonishes him, Οὐ γὰρ ἐᾷ φρονέειν ἄλλον μέγα ὁ Θεὸς ἢ ἑαυτόν· *for God doth not allow any other to think highly of themselves, but only himself.* (Herodotus, lib. vii. cap. 10.)

So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.] See 2 Kings xix. 37. And with him the Assyrian empire began to fall, and never recovered its former strength, though it still continued in great power. For the next year after Sennacherib's death the Medes revolted, being encouraged to it, no doubt, by this great defeat at Jerusalem: and by their example several other nations fell off from the Assyrians and asserted their liberty, as Hermannus Conringius hath observed out of Herodotus, in his Adversaria Chronologica, cap. 4. But still their monarchy continued, as appears by what follows in the next chapter of this book.

Ver. 22. *Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other, and guided them on every side.*] That is, defended them from all their enemies; just as a shepherd doth his sheep, whom he leads into places of safety.

Ver. 23. *And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah.*] His neighbours were so far from molesting him, that many came to worship God, and to do honour to Hezekiah, who was so highly in God's favour.

So that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.] That is, all the neighbouring countries, who heard of these things, had him in great esteem.

Ver. 24. *In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the Lord: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign.*] Or, as it is in the margin, *wrought a miracle for him.* See a large account of this in the twentieth chapter of the second book of the Kings, and my annotations there. Unto which this may be added, that Pliny saith, *The application of a very fat fig to a hard swelling is a present remedy;* "Carbunculi, si sine ulcere est, quam pinguissimum ficum imponi, pene singulare remedium est," (lib. xxiii. Nat. Histor. cap. 7.) But the *schechin* wherewith Hezekiah laboured (which we translate *bile*) was not of this sort: for the word signifies the worst kind of ulcers: and therefore there was nothing in this application of a lump of figs to lessen the wonder.

Ver. 25. *But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him.*] In his deliverance from so powerful an enemy as he could not resist: and from such a dangerous disease, as was incurable, without the special hand of God.

For his heart was lifted up.] By the embassy sent to him from the king of Babylon, who came to inquire of the wonder done in the land. Which, together with the slaughter of Sennacherib's army, his shameful retreat, the presents which had been sent him from other countries, and the fame which he had got, made him have too high an opinion; though not of his power, which was very small; yet of his piety, which was very great. But instead of making him thankful, he grew so presumptuous of God's favour as to be forgetful of his benefits.

Therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.] Who, it seems, were as insensible as himself of the mercies they had received: contenting themselves, that they were not idolaters, though they were not truly pious, and mindful of God's benefits.

Ver. 26. *Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart.*] Upon the admonition which the prophet Isaiah gave him; and the severe sentence he pronounced against him, and his family.

(Both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem).] Who were awakened by the same threatening.

So that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.] But peace and truth were in his days, as he speaks, 2 Kings xx. 19.

Ver. 27. *And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels.*] All which he shewed to the king of Babylon's ambassadors, (2 Kings xx. 13.)

Ver. 28. *Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *for beast and beast;* that is, *every beast:* as in Esther ix. 21. *Year and year;* that is, *every year:* and ver. 28. *Generation and generation;* i. e. *every generation.*

Ver. 29. *Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him substance very much.*] The great riches of these countries consisted in abundance of cattle, of all sorts, as I have often observed.

Ver. 30. *This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper water-course of Gihon.*] He seems to speak of the same thing which is mentioned before, ver. 4. being a work of such great labour and art, that Ezra thought fit to make it memorable, by taking a more particular notice of it, among his great works. From the mention of the *upper watercourse,* Kimchi gathers, there were several streams of this torrent.

And brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David.] The rivulet, I suppose, had many windings before, and did not come straight down to the city, as now it was made to do.

And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.] It is likely, he contrived many other things for the benefit of the city of Jerusalem; none of which miscarried.

Ver. 31. *Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land.*] Which is mentioned at large, 2 Kings xx. 10, 11. Isa. xxxviii. 7, 8. In the former of which places I have endeavoured to give an account of

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it. But Bochartus, I find, strongly opposes the opinion of the body of the sun's going back: in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 14. p. 4. where he observes, that the Scripture in both places speaks of the shadow's going back ten degrees; and then it is said, the *sun went back*, that is, the shadow of the sun, or the light of the sun, which succeeded to the going back of the shadow. And it must be confessed, that if the sun had gone back, it would not have been a miracle in Judea alone, but all the world over: and the king of Babylon needed not have sent to inquire about the wonder in that land, because it would have been a wonder in his land, and in all lands, as well as in Judea. And so it was, for I have observed there out of Herodotus, that in Egypt they knew something of the unusual motion of the sun: and, perhaps, they now observed it in Babylon, and only sent to inquire whether Isaiah foretold it, which was a great wonder. I have met also with one, who thinks, that the Babylonians being worshippers of the sun, it was part of Hezekiah's sin, that he did not take this occasion to persuade the ambassadors to worship God, who made and commanded the sun; and could stop the course of it when he pleased.

God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.] God suffered him to behave himself according to his own inclinations, without any special motion from him; that Hezekiah might know he was not so strong as he imagined, if he were left to himself without God. But it is generally thought, the last words relate rather to God: who made proof of him, as he had done of many other good men, whether he would entirely obey him, or not. He tries none in that sense of which St. James speaks; *viz.* for an ill intent, or to lead men to destruction; but for a good end, to improve them, and bring them to salvation. Thus he tempted Abraham, Gen. xxii. 1. and the children of Israel, Exod. xv. 25. xvi. 5. and Ezekiel, and many others, that it might appear how they stood affected to him: which God, no doubt, knew, and now saw the pride and vanity that lurked in Hezekiah's heart: which was hid from every one but God himself, who now suffered him to discover it for his humiliation. For it was a greater crime to be again puffed up, as he had been before his dangerous sickness.

Ver. 32. *Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.*] Who hath recorded his prayer, which he made to God in his sickness.

And in the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.] See xxvii. 7.

Ver. 33. *And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David.*] Which was a part of that honour which they did him, mentioned in the next words; for he deserved it above all the kings which they had since the time of David.

And all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death.] Buried him, perhaps, with such solemnity and expenses as were made at the funeral of king Asa, chap. xvi. 14. Maimonides saith, they appointed a company of students in the law to sit at his sepulchre, and to mourn seven days together. (See Schickard, in his Jus Regium, p. 173.) But this I look upon as merely rabbinical.

And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Ver. 1. *MANASSEH was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem.*] See 2 Kings, chap. xxi. 1. where his mother's name is set down, which is here omitted.

Ver. 2. *But did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.*] The very same words are in the forenamed place, ver. 2. And here it follows, ver. 9. that he did worse than those abominable heathens; not only committing all the sins of his forefathers, but endeavouring to exceed them, and leave nothing undone wholly to subvert the worship of God.

Ver. 3. *For he built again the high places, which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim.*] Imitated Ahab king of Israel, as it is explained there, 2 Kings xxi. 3.

And made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.] These groves, I suppose, were made about the temple, which was utterly forbidden, (Deut. xvi. 21.) being a heathenish rite, (Judg. vi. 25.) and mentioned by Isaiah (lxvi. 17.) among the abominable idolatries which they practised secretly in their gardens. Yet the Jews in aftertimes did plant trees about their *proseuchæ*, their oratories, or places of prayer, as Scaliger observes in his Fragmenta, at the end of his book de Emend. Temporum, p. 25. But they were not in the law touching the temple.

Ver. 4. *Also he built altars in the house of the Lord.*] In the court of the priests. (See 2 Kings xxi. 4.)

Whereof the Lord had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.] This was the greater profanation, because God had chosen this place to settle his presence in it.

Ver. 5. *And he built altars for all the host of heaven, in the two courts of the house of the Lord.*] In the court of the people of Israel, and in the court of the gentiles. (See there, ver. 5.)

Ver. 6. *And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom.*] There is mention made only of his son in the book of the Kings, but here of *his children*, whom he consecrated to Moloch.

Also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.] He seems to have studied to find out what God had forbidden in his law, that he might practise it. (See there, 2 Kings xxi. 6.)

Ver. 7. *And he set a carved image (the idol which he had made) in the house of God, of which God had said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever.*] This verse and the next are the same with 2 Kings xxi. 7, 8. where see my annotations. I shall only add here, that this seems to have been an imago of more than ordinary note, which he *set up* with a great deal of ceremony. For among the heathens, whom he imitated, *images* did not become gods, that is, were not made objects of worship, till being placed in the most holy part of their temples, there they were consecrated by being anointed and crowned by sacrifices, prayers, and adorations; and then setting up candles burning before them: all which

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was concluded with a festival, which sometimes was made anniversary. Many plain instances there are of this, particularly in Minutius Felix, who mentions the unction, coronation, adoration, and prayers, whereby they were consecrated.

Ver. 8. *Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law, and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.*

Ver. 9. *So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.*] A most prodigious change, from the height of piety in his father's time into the sink of impiety in this: which strange vicissitude of things should admonish us not to be secure, as Victorinus Strigelius notes. Who being professor of theology at Heidelburg, left this remark in his lectures on this place near a hundred and forty years ago: "Now we have the word of God abundantly, in all wisdom; and pious princes patronise both those that preach, and those that learn the gospel. But this plenty of the word we now enjoy (I tremble to speak it, but I must speak it; because it will come to pass) shall be taken away: and that sad mournful time will come, when the public assemblies of the church shall be scattered, and a few pious souls shall meet with fear in a corner, to communicate among themselves the fragments of the heavenly doctrine, and give God thanks for those remainders;" which we have seen fulfilled in that country, and in France, and other places.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people.*] By his servants the prophets. (See ver. 18.) The Jews say in Seder Olam Rabba, (cap. 20.) that Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk, prophesied in his time; but he was so wicked, that they would not so much as mention his name in the beginning of their prophecies, which is not a good reason.

But they would not hearken.] Neither he nor his people regarded what they said.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria.*] The royal family failing in Babylon, the king of Assyria (Esar-haddon) brought that kingdom under his yoke again, and held it thirteen years, as primate Usher observes in his Annals. And he hearing, from the ambassadors of Merodach-Baladan, what great treasures were in Jerusalem, and that Hezekiah was dead, and Manasseh had forsaken that God who did such great things for his father, sent an army against him which he could not withstand.

Which took Manasseh among the thorns.] In a thicket where he had hid himself, but was discovered.

And bound him with fetters.] With iron chains fastened to his wrists, or to his legs, as we understand it.

And carried him to Babylon.] Which the king of Assyria, it is likely, had made his seat, to secure his late conquests. This was in the twenty-second year of his reign, as the Jews compute in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 24. when they carried away with him the idol in Dan, according to Judg. xviii. 30. But however that be, it is very evident the Assyrian monarchy was not fallen by the defection of the Medes and other nations, which I before mentioned, but still continued in great power; Babylon itself, which rebelled at the same time with the Medes, being again subdued to its obedience, as appears by their sending Manasseh bound hither. So that they had not only Cœlo-Syria and Phœnicia, but Mesopotamia and Chaldea under their dominion, as Conringius observes, in the book beforenamed, upon the foregoing chapter, ver. 21. How long their power continued the Scripture doth not tell us; but Manasseh, after his return from his captivity, seems to have been a free prince, subject unto none, maintaining forces in all his fenced cities, (ver. 14. of this chapter.)

Ver. 12. *And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.*] This was three-and-thirty years before his death, as the Jews make account, in the book beforementioned. But both Kimchi and Abarbinel confess that this relies upon a weak foundation, as doth the other thing, that he was carried away in the twenty-second year of his reign.

Ver. 13. *And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.*] So true it is that "vexatio dat intellectum," *trouble and vexation give understanding,* and make men know God and themselves. Which is not universally true; for some are far from being brought to a right sense by their miseries: as Ahaz, this king's grandfather, was never without some sore affliction or other, and yet never relented. But though R. Johadan was so charitable as to think that Manasseh had his part in the other world, yet the doctors in the title Sanhedrin (cap. 11. sect. 1.) exclude him from any portion in it, and say he was only restored to his kingdom, but not to life eternal. For this is the doctrine they there lay down, There were three kings, and four private men, who have no portion in eternal life: the three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh; the four private men, Balaam, Doeg, Ahithophel, and Gehazi. But they have no ground for this sentence pronounced upon Manasseh, but the wickedness of his successor; from whence they argue the father's repentance was not sincere. The folly of which sufficiently appears from this history of him and his father Hezekiah.

Ver. 14. *Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish-gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.*] He provided for the safety of his kingdom, and in the first place built a wall for the defence of Jerusalem; which some think was that which his father made, (chap. xxxii. 5.) which he repaired and strengthened, after it had been thrown down, perhaps by the king of Assyria's forces, when they carried him captive. The *fish-gate* was the gate where they sold fish (as the Targum expounds it), which was brought from Joppa. Concerning Ophel, see xxvii. 3.

Ver. 15. *And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city.*] He had profaned the house of the Lord, but had not shut up the doors as Ahaz did; and therefore he is said only to have purged it from idols, but not to have opened it, as Jacobus Capellus observes.

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Here particular notice is taken of the idol mentioned ver. 7. which confirms what I have noted there.

Ver. 16. *And he repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon peace-offerings and thank-offerings.*] For now he was sensible there was no other God but the Lord, who had wonderfully delivered him out of captivity, and restored him to his kingdom, when he implored his mercy.

And commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel.] This was a proof of his true repentance, that he endeavoured to bring his people back to the service of God, whom he had misled (ver. 9.) to the worship of idols. But, as Kimchi notes, he was not able to do so much good as he had done mischief, for the people continued their inclination to idolatry, and neglected the study of the law of God. For in Josiah's reign (which presently followed) it was matter of great surprise that they found the book of the law, when they were repairing the temple: the copies of it, as the Jews think, having been destroyed in the time of Manasseh and Amon. But it is not credible, which were preserved in the hands of the ten tribes, and without which the church could not have been reformed.

Ver. 17. *Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the Lord their God only.*] This was an error so rooted, that very good kings could not correct it, such as Asa and Jehoshaphat, in whose days the people worshipped the true God but in an unlawful place, as they now did.

Ver. 18. *Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel, behold, they are written in the book of the Kings of Israel.*] So Judah is now called, who with Benjamin were all that were left of the children of Jacob, who was named Israel. But these books here mentioned are not those which we now have, but others that were lost in the captivity.

Ver. 19. *His prayer also, and how God was entreated of him.*] He mentions his prayer again; because, I suppose, he made more than one. As if he had said, *how he continued to pray till God was entreated of him.*

And all his sins, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled.] This is one of the places which plainly prove (as I have often noted) that *ascherim* (which we translate *groves*) signifies not the groves themselves, but the images or statues which were set up in them. For groves are *planted*, not *set up* or erected, as it is here said of Manasseh, that *he set up groves:* that is, dedicated and consecrated, as that word signifies among Greek and Roman writers. (See xxxiv. 1. 2 Kings xiv. 23. Jer. xvii. 2.)

Behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers.] Or *of Hosai* (as we translate it in the margin), who was a prophet, it is likely, in those times, by whom many memorable things in this reign were recorded: particularly *his prayer*, which he recorded, as Isaiah did the prayer of Hezekiah his father.

Ver. 20. *So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.*] See 2 Kings xxi. 18. It is likely he left it in his last will, that he would be buried privately, as not worthy to lie by his ancestors.

Ver. 21. *Amon was two-and-twenty years old when he began to reign; and reigned two years in Jerusalem.*] As the sons of Jeroboam, and of Baasha, and of Ahab, reigned two years and no longer.

Ver. 22. *But he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them.*] See 2 Kings xxi. 20, 21.

Ver. 23. *And humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself.*] He followed him in his sin, but not in his repentance.

But Amon trespassed more and more.] Some of the Jews say, that he burnt the book of the law: others, that he lay with his own mother. But the great sin which the Holy Scriptures charge him with, is his idolatry, which he more and more introduced, and never repented of it.

Ver. 24. *And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house.*

Ver. 25. *But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon: and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.*] These two verses are the very same with those 2 Kings xxi. 23, 24. (See there.)

CHAP. XXXIV.

Ver. 1. *JOSIAH was eight years old when he began to reign; and he reigned in Jerusalem one-and-thirty years.*

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left.*] These two verses are the same with 2 Kings xxii. 1, 2. only there the name of his mother is set down, which here is omitted.

Ver. 3. *For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father.*] He gave very early proofs of his pious inclinations; for when he was but sixteen years old, and had newly taken on him the administration of affairs, he began to worship God publicly, and propounded David to himself for his pattern.

And in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.] When he was twenty years old, he began to bring others to the true religion, by reforming abuses in the worship of God. For now he had got more authority, and therefore destroyed idolatrous worship, which he was inclined to do before, and had it in his mind when he was a mere youth. This is not so distinctly noted in the book of the Kings, where nothing is recorded of him till what he did in the eighteenth year of his reign. And this is the more remarkable, because he began the reformation here spoken of before Jeremiah began to prophesy, which was not till the next year, in the thirteenth of king Josiah. (See Jer. i. 2.)

Ver. 4. *And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence.*] I have elsewhere observed that Baalim were *demi-gods*, as Mr. Mede truly calls them.

And the images that were on high above them he cut down.] The Hebrew word *chamamim*, which we translate *images*, as most think, hath some relation to the sun; because it comes from a word that signifies heat. And Aben Ezra translates it *houses made for the worship of the sun.* The LXX. sometimes translate it εἴδωλα, sometimes βδελύγματα, but do not tell us what *idols* and *abominations* these were.

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Jo. Geusius thinks it was the idol called Thammuz, by which name Osiris, Jupiter Ammon, or the sun, was understood. And, indeed, the worship of all the host of heaven is mentioned together with the worship of Baalim, in the idolatry which Manasseh committed, chap. xxxiii. 3.

And the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces.] Here again *ascherim* signifies the *idols in the groves;* for the groves themselves were not *broken in pieces,* but cut down.

And made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.] To declare his detestation of the smallest remainders of them.

Ver. 5. *And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.*] Whereby he polluted these altars, and made them abominable, and purged the nation from their idolatry, which was very great. For it is likely these were not Levitical priests, but priests made by their idolatrous kings, either of other nations, or such as they could draw in of their own nation (after the manner of Jeroboam), to officiate to their strange gods.

Ver. 6. *And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali.*] Though Shalmaneser had carried away the main body of the ten tribes from their own land, yet there remained a great many of the poor people behind, as appears from this place, and from ver. 9. 33.

With their mattocks round about.] Some translate it *mauls,* others *forks,* or such-like instruments.

Ver. 7. *And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.*] For it appears by the book of the Kings more fully, that he went himself in person through the whole country to see this work done, which otherwise might have been performed negligently.

Ver. 8. *Now, in the eighteenth year of his reign.*] When he was twenty-six years old he proceeded further, having disposed the people to offer freely towards the reparation of the house of God, as it here follows.

When he had purged the land, and the house.] That is, the house of God.

He sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the Lord his God.] Here is a more perfect narrative of the reparation of the temple than was given in the book of the Kings, where only Shaphan is mentioned as sent to Hilkiah; but here two other men of great authority are joined with him, and ordered to see the work set forward.

Ver. 9. *And when they came to Hilkiah the high-priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem.*] These last words import, that these Levites (having received what was given at the door of the tabernacle which they kept) travelled all the country over, to collect what money they could gather from well-disposed people, who contributed to this work. Which money the three forenamed persons received from them when they returned to Jerusalem: and, besides this, Shaphan alone seems to have been sent to Hilkiah, to sum up the money that had been offered at the temple for this use, (2 Kings xxii. 4.)

Ver. 10. *And they put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the Lord.*] Who were appointed to take care of the work, and to see it done.

And they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the Lord, to repair and mend the house.] The overseers gave it to the artificers mentioned in the next verse, who were to buy materials, and employ them in the reparation.

Ver. 11. *Even to the artificers and builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed.*] It seems both the outside and inside, the floor and the roof, were run to ruin by long neglect, since the days of Joash, when the temple was last repaired: which the Jews (in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 24.) make account was two hundred and eighteen years.

Ver. 12. *And the men did the work faithfully.*] So that no account was taken of them.

And the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music.] That is, all those who were well skilled in music, and performed their part in the service of the temple: which is here mentioned to signify that the principal Levites were set over this work to see it well done.

Ver. 13. *Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service.*] There being great numbers of them, they might well inspect every person that was employed in this work.

And of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters.] These overseers were deputed to several employments; for which none so fit as the Levites, who understood all manner of things belonging to the house of God: being to do constant service there.

Ver. 14. *And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord.*] And thereupon had begun the reparation of the house.

Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.] The word *given* is not in the Hebrew: which must be applied not to the *book,* but to the *law of the Lord* given by Moses. For we cannot certainly from hence conclude, that this was the very authentic book which Moses laid up by the ark; (see 2 Kings xxii. 8.) because in the Hebrew it is said the book of the law of the Lord *by the hand of Moses.* Which doth not signify the book was written by his own hand, but that the law therein contained was delivered to the people *by the ministry of Moses.* So the phrase, *by the hand,* is used in very many places, Exod. xxxv. 29. Lev. x. 11. xxvi. 45. Numb. iv. 37. 45, &c. (See 2 Kings xviii. 8. and in this book, xxxv. 6.)

Ver. 15. *And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.*] Who read it, 2 Kings xxii. 9.

Ver. 16. *And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it.*] When he came to give an account to the king, how he had executed his command, (ver. 8, 9, &c.) he delivered the book to him.

Ver. 17. *And they have gathered together the money that*

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was found in the house of the Lord, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.] See 2 Kings xxii. 9.

Ver. 18. *Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.*

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.*] These two verses are word for word in 2 Kings xxii. 10, 11. where I have explained them. I shall only here add, that Jacobus Capellus thinks, the reading of the law, on every sabbath and festival (which was divided for that purpose into several sections), was as old as the time of Joshua; but was neglected in the reign of wicked kings, particularly in that of Ahaz. If it were again restored by Hezekiah (which is uncertain), it was again abolished by Manasseh; and perhaps not renewed when he repented: howsoever, discontinued again by Amon. So that both priests and people, omitting the reading of the law, both publicly and privately (for the public omission caused a private neglect), no wonder, that upon finding the book of the law, and hearing it read, they were startled at it; as if one were risen from the dead, (Histor. Sacra et Exotica, ad A. Mundi 3372.)

Ver. 20. *And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying.*] He that is called here Abdon, is in 2 Kings xxii. 12. called Achbor: otherwise there is no difference between this verse and that.

Ver. 21. *Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book.*

Ver. 22. *And Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college); and they spake to her to that effect.*

Ver. 23. *And she answered them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,*

Ver. 24. *Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah:*

Ver. 25. *Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.*

Ver. 26. *And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, concerning the words which thou hast heard,*

Ver. 27. *Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord.*

Ver. 28. *Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.*

There is little difference in the words between these verses and 2 Kings xxii. 14, 15, &c. and none in the sense. He that is called there Harhas, is here called Hasrah (some pronouncing his name one way, and some another). And the Targum translates those words, (ver. 27.) *Thou didst humble thyself before God,* &c. in this manner: *Thou didst humble thyself before the Word of the Lord, when thou didst hear his words against this place.* Which plainly suppose the Word to be a Divine Person, who spake to Moses, and gave him the law.

Ver. 29. *Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.*] See 2 Kings xxiii. 1.

Ver. 30. *And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites.*] In 2 Kings xxiii. 2. it is said, the *priests and the prophets* went up. The Levites are omitted there, as the prophets are omitted here: but both make up a complete narrative of the persons that went up to the house of the Lord. For among the priests and Levites there were some prophets, such as Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and others.

And all the people, great and small; and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord.] One cannot think that Josiah and all the nation were wholly strangers to the words contained in this book (though perhaps they seldom had read it), who considers that Jeremiah and other prophets were now living, who were very conversant in this book, and instructed the people out of it. But they did not sufficiently attend to the words of it; and therefore Josiah gathered a solemn assembly on purpose, that they might hear it read, and be moved to observe that which most affected them. But it is not to be supposed that the whole book was all read at one time, but by parcels at several times, that they might consider and weigh it. Especially that passage in Deut. xxviii. 38. where Moses foretold the captivity of Samaria, and afterward of Judah and their king: which, Kimchi thinks, Hilkiah might bid Shaphan take special notice of, and read it to the king, which (if it be true) no doubt, he remarked to the people, that, if it were possible, they might be brought to repentance, and prevent the great calamities which were threatened to them.

Ver. 31. *And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.*] See 2 Kings xxiii. 3.

Ver. 32. *And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.*] He did not compel them, but they offered themselves freely, upon his persuasion, to renew their covenant with God, and promised to be firm to it: which, perhaps, at that time they really resolved; though they soon revolted.

Ver. 33. *And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel.*

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This is more largely related in 2 Kings xxiii. 4—6. and the following verses.

And made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God.] He persuaded them to perform all acts of religious worship unto God, and unto none else.

And all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers.] But though he suppressed all external idolatry, yet in their hearts they strongly inclined to it, and often practised it, as appears from Jer. iii. 10. xxv. 3, 4, &c.

CHAP. XXXV.

Ver. 1. *MOREOVER, Josiah kept a Passover unto the Lord in Jerusalem.*] This was in the eighteenth year of his reign, immediately after he had made a glorious reformation, by abolishing all idolatry. And accordingly it is related next to that in 2 Kings xxiii. 21—23. but very briefly, as the other is very largely.

And they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.] At the time prescribed by the law, Exod. xii. 6. For there was no need, it seems, to adjourn it till the second, as they did in the days of Hezekiah.

Ver. 2. *And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord.*] To do their duty in their several places, so that nothing might be omitted, which was required to be done at this great festival.

Ver. 3. *And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the Lord.*] That is, the Levites were holy unto the Lord. And therefore may be rendered, *and were holy*, &c. *i. e.* peculiarly dedicated to this service of ministering to the priests, and instructing the people.

Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon, the son of David king of Israel, did build.] Jarchi thinks that Manasseh, or his son Amon, had removed the ark from its place, as other enormous things had been done by such wicked kings (2 Kings xvi. 14. xxviii. 24. of this book), which may give a more probable sense of those words, xxxiii. 23. that *Amon trespassed more and more*, than that which some of the Jews mention: for it was a great addition to his sin, if he displaced the ark. Other Jews, indeed, interpret it after another manner, and make a fable out of these words, as Const. L'Empereur observes upon Codex Middoth, p. 97. and Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, p. 91. But nothing is more natural than to think that Hilkiah himself had removed the ark while the temple was repairing, there being defects in the most holy place as well as other parts of it: and it was not fit to let the ark be exposed to the workmen. Yet Jacobus Capellus thinks it better to say, the word *tenu* ought not to be translated *put*, but *keep*, or *look after*, the ark in the house which Solomon built. For now, that they were eased of carrying it on their shoulders, they ought to employ themselves more carefully in all other offices about it; ad A. Mundi 3374.

It shall not be a burden upon your shoulders.] That is, hereafter: for they were to carry it to a settled place, there to remain; and then they would be obliged no further to bear it on their shoulders, as they had done before it was fixed in the temple.

Serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel.] Serve God in singing, and playing upon instruments, when the sacrifices of God's people are offered, and you shall be excused from your former burdens.

Ver. 4. *And prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel.*] See 1 Chron. xxiii. xxiv. and the following chapters.

And according to the writing of Solomon his son.] See 2 Chron. viii. 14.

Ver. 5. *And stand in the holy place.*] In the court of the priests, where they were wont to stand when they ministered unto God.

According to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people.] Who were to bring for every family a lamb, as Moses commanded, Exod. xii. 3.

And after the division of the families of the Levites.] Who were appointed to kill the lamb for them.

Ver. 6. *So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren.*] That they might be capable to eat of it.

That they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.] Who commanded it to be eaten in one house, Exod. xii. 46. He seems to require, that as the rest of the tribes came according to their families, into which they were divided; so the Levites would give them a good example, and come according to their families.

Ver. 7. *And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids.*] For the lamb might be taken either from the sheep or from the goats, (Exod. xii. 5.)

All for the Passover-offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand.] That the people might be at no charge: at least thirty thousand families were provided for, at the king's charge.

And three thousand bullocks: these were of the king's substance.] These bullocks were for offerings upon the seven days of unleavened bread which followed the Passover.

Ver. 8. *And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites.*] As Josiah provided paschal lambs for the people, so some great men provided not only for them, but for the priests and the Levites, that they also might offer without charge.

Hilkiah, and Zechariah, and Jehiel.] It appears by these words, that the princes here mentioned were not rulers of the people, but the chief of the priests. For Hilkiah was the high-priest; and the other two were the heads of the two great families of the priests, Eleazar and Ithamar: who are called the *captains of the host*, as I observed upon 1 Chron. xxv. 1. (See my annotations there.) This is a little more largely and distinctly expressed by Bertram, in his Republica Judaica, cap. 15. where he saith, Zechariah was the chief among the second priests of the race of Eleazar, who was properly called *Nagid*, the captain of the temple: as Jehiel was the most illustrious person among the second priests, who were the progeny of Ithamar, and was properly called *Pakid;* and was set over the Gershonites and Merarites, as Zechariah was over the Kohathites.

Rulers of the house of God.] Who were the same with those who in the New Testament are called the στρατηγοὶ of the temple, who governed the rest of the priests. (So Bertram, de Republica Judaica, p. 296. 300.)

Gave unto the priests for the Passover-offerings two thousand and six hundred small cattle.] That is, lambs and kids.

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And three hundred oxen.] That through the whole festival they might be able to rejoice with their brethren.

Ver. 9. *Conaniah also, and Shemaiah, and Nathaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah, and Jeiel, and Jozabad, chief of the Levites.*] Who were men of estates, as well as in great offices among their brethren.

Gave unto the Levites for Passover-offerings five thousand small cattle, and five hundred oxen.] That they might be provided for as well as the priests, to make it a time of universal joy.

Ver. 10. *So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment.*] All things were disposed for the offering the paschal sacrifice; the priests standing in their place, and the Levites attending them.

Ver. 11. *And they killed the passover.*] That is, the Levites killed the lamb, and gave the blood to the priests.

And the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands.] For they alone could perform this part of the service.

And the Levites flayed them.] That the priests might have nothing to do, but to sprinkle the blood of every one of them: which took up a great deal of time. (See xxix. 34.)

Ver. 12. *And they removed the burnt-offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the Lord, as it is written in the book of Moses.*] It seems, some of the lambs were given by Josiah for burnt-offerings: and these they dispatched as fast as they could, that they might give the paschal lamb to every family according to their divisions, after it had been offered to the Lord. For this was the principal offering upon this day.

And so they did with the oxen.] All of which were not given for peace-offerings, but some for burnt-offerings: which they also offered as fast as they could, that they might not hinder the paschal lamb from being offered.

Ver. 13. *And they roasted the passover with fire, according to the ordinance.*] See Exod. xii. 8, 9.

But the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans.] Though the paschal lamb was to be roasted; yet the other eucharistical sacrifices which attended it (as the Targum expounds it) might be boiled in water.

And divided them speedily among all the people.] Gave every one of the people a portion of the oxen that were offered for peace-offerings: and did it so speedily, that they had time to take care of themselves, as it here follows.

Ver. 14. *And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering burnt-offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron.*] This is a great instance of the zeal and diligence of the priests, for whom the principal persons among them had made a large provision; but they did not eat of the paschal lamb nor of the peace-offerings till night, being employed in offering burnt-sacrifices, and burning the fat till that time: against which the Levites prepared for them and for themselves.

Ver. 15. *And the singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters waited at every gate: they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.*] This seems to import, that the singing and music continued till all the sacrifices were offered, that is, till night; and none were suffered to depart from the service, the porters standing at every gate to hinder them, if they attempted it. And their brethren, who were not singers, took care to provide for them their portion, when they had done.

Ver. 16. *So all the service of the Lord was prepared the same day to keep the Passover, and to offer burnt-offerings upon the altar of the Lord, according to the commandment of king Josiah.*

Ver. 17. *And the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days.*] These two verses are a summary account of what went before, that the whole solemnity was performed in every part of it, according to the king's direction.

Ver. 18. *And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet.*] We do not read in the book of Samuel of any Passover kept in his days; therefore the book wherein this was recorded is lost, as many other books of the prophets are.

Neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.] The last clause shews wherein his Passover went beyond all other. David and Solomon were greater kings than he, and in several respects kept greater festivals; the number of people, while the ten tribes were united to the other two, being greater, and the multitude of sacrifices also greater: but in this Josiah excelled them all, that being nothing so rich, he was notwithstanding so liberal, as to provide all the sacrifices for the priests, the Levites, and the people, at this feast.

Ver. 19. *In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this Passover kept.*] In the same year wherein he repaired the house of God, and the book of the law was found and brought to him; which, it is likely, put him in mind of this duty; chap. xxxiv. 8.

Ver. 20. *After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple.*] Some time after the temple was repaired, and made fit for the service of God, and they expected great happiness to ensue such pious works, there was an unexpected change: which is here noted, to teach us not to be confident, nor rashly enterprise any thing, remembering the vicissitude of all earthly things.

Necho king of Egypt.] Whom the Targum calls *Pharaoh the Lame*, and so Kimchi, who saith he was lame in his feet, and thence called by the name of Claudus, as the Romans would have expressed it: who, from the like disposition of their bodies, gave names to their emperors; such as Crassus, Barbarosa, and others, as Beckius observes. This lameness proceeded from some wound he had received, for *Necho* signifies *wounded*.

Came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates.] The city Carcusium stood upon that river, and belonged to the Assyrians, with whose king Necho came to fight, (2 Kings xxiii. 29.)

And Josiah went out against him.] See what I have noted there; unto which I shall here add, that by this it seems probable Josiah was in friendship with the king of Assyria, to whose assistance he seems to have voluntarily gone with his forces, by giving a diversion to the Egyp-

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tians. Certain it is, the Assyrian empire was not yet fallen; for in Josiah's days the prophet Zephaniah foretells the destruction of Nineveh, (chap. ii. 13, &c.) Now Josiah reigned in the time of Cyaxarus king of the Medes, by whom Nineveh was destroyed, as Herodotus tells us. But it was then in a flourishing condition, for Phraortis, the predecessor of Cyaxarus, not contented with the kingdom of the Medes, but invading the Assyrians, after he had subdued the Persians, was defeated, and lost a vast army before Nineveh: which Hermannus Conringius thinks might possibly move Josiah to court the king of Assyria's favour, by opposing himself to the king of Egypt when he came to invade him. But a most judicious person in this kind of learning (whom I have often consulted) thinks this all wrong; and that though Nineveh was not yet destroyed, yet the empire was, in the eighteenth year of Josiah; from which some governor got some little part, and kept Nineveh till it was destroyed by Nabopolassar, in the first year of his reign. Therefore I should have said Josiah was a friend of the king of Babylon, rather than of the king of Assyria. But I must leave those that are better skilled than I am in these matters to judge of them.

Ver. 21. *But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war.*] He had no controversy with him, and therefore prays him not to meddle in this war.

For God commanded me to make haste.] And therefore desires him not to give him any stop in his expedition. Some think he only pretended this, because he knew Josiah had a great reverence to God, and in obedience to him might desist from his purpose: and the Targum, with some of the Jews, thinks he calls his own idol by the name of God; though Kimchi thinks he speaks of the true God; who perhaps admonished him in a dream, as he did Abimelech, or sent him such a message by the prophet Jeremiah (as Grotius supposes), many of whose prophecies are directed to foreign nations: or, perhaps, he meant, that he felt a strong impulse unto this undertaking, which he took to be from God.

Forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not.] Of which there was great danger, if he opposed the Divine command.

Ver. 22. *Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself that he might fight with him.*] And not be known to be the king of Judah.

And hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God.] The Targum thinks that Josiah regarded not what Necho said, because he thought he spake only from his idol, for he could not imagine that the God of Israel had spoken to him. But these words import the contrary, and therefore Josiah should at least have inquired of God, whether it was his mind that he should not oppose Necho.

And came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.] A place in the tribe of Manasseh, (Josh. xvii. 11.) So that Josiah may seem to have come against him, because he passed through his country without his leave: but I rather think, as I said before, he was in the interests of the king of Assyria. I observed upon 2 Kings xxiii. 29. that Herodotus tells the same story, but mistakes the name of Megiddo, and calls it Magdolim; which was a great city in Egypt, better known to him than the cities in Syria or Phœnicia. He also adds, that after this battle the king of Egypt took the great city in Syria called Cadytus: which Herm. Conringius thinks was the name of Jerusalem among the old Egyptians: (Adversaria Chronolog. cap. 15.) I think Jacobus Capellus hath well observed (in his Hist. Sacra et Exotica), that the Egyptians, being a vain people, concealed from Herodotus, when he came to consult the affairs of their country, many things that were true, and imposed upon his belief many things that were false. For example, they did not tell him a word of the victory which Nebuchadnezzar got over Pharaoh-Nechoh at Euphrates; but gloried in this victory over the Syrians: ad A. Mundi 3425.

Ver. 23. *And the archers shot at king Josiah: and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded.*] His disguise did not secure him; for still he appeared, I suppose, as a great commander, at whom the enemy would sooner aim than at common men.

Ver. 24. *His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had.*] As all great captains have led horses, that if one fail they may mount another: (which was the custom in wars in ancient time, as Bochart shews in his Hieroz. par. i. cap. 2. 9.) so when they fought in chariots they had an empty one following them, into which they might go if the other proved unserviceable or inconvenient.

And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers: and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.] After the example of the prophet Jeremiah. For as bad as they shewed themselves afterward to be, they had some sense of the great worth of this prince.

Ver. 25. *And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing-men and singing-women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day.*] Whensoever they bewailed any calamity, they mentioned that as the greatest that had befallen them.

And made them an ordinance in Israel.] That they should never forget this fatal stroke, after which they never saw good days. This statute was made by the supreme authority, and was approved by the prophet Jeremiah, who joined in this lamentation; which warrants Christian kings and princes to appoint days for the yearly commemoration of great calamities, or great deliverances.

And, behold, they are written in the Lamentations.] Josephus in his tenth book of the Antiquities of the Jews, chap. 6. imagines the book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, which now remains in the Bible, contains the mournful ditties sung at Josiah's funeral, and in aftertimes; which opinion St. Jerome follows; at least in those words Lament. iv. 20. R. Solomon thinks Josiah was bewailed: but it is manifest all this is a mistake; for that book was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, which is lamented in it, and the words now mentioned plainly relate to Zedekiah, not to Josiah; who was not *taken* but killed. Therefore the Lamentations here mentioned are lost, which were written immediately after Josiah was slain.

Ver. 26. *Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness,* &c.] That is, his piety, or (as we translate it in the margin) his *kindnesses*, that is, his great love to his people, of which there are great instances in the foregoing part of this history.

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According to that which was written in the law of the Lord.] Which he made his rule in all that he did.

Ver. 27. *And his deeds, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.*] It seems the Israelites, who were left in the land of Samaria, continued to keep records of what was done in the land of Judah itself.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Ver. 1. *THEN the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem.*] Not by right of succession, but by a faction of the people.

Ver. 2. *Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.*] See 2 Kings xxiii. 30, 31.

Ver. 3. *And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem, and condemned the land in a hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.*] He heard, it is possible, that he meditated revenge for the death of his father, and therefore deposed him; and also set a great fine upon the people who joined with him. (See 2 Kings xxiii. 33.)

Ver. 4. *And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim.*] As a mark he was made king by him, and owed his dignity to his favour. So Pharaoh changed the name of Joseph; and Nebuchadnezzar, the names of Daniel and his three companions.

And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt.] See 2 Kings xxiii. 34.

Ver. 5. *Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God.*] See 2 Kings xxiii. 36, 37.

Ver. 6. *Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.*] The first words *against him* are emphatical; for when he came up before, he did not come up properly against Jerusalem, but against Pharaoh-Nechoh. And therefore it is said, not that he came up against that city, but merely that he "came up into the land," (Jer. xxxv. 11.) when he made Jehoiakim his servant three years. So that his coming up had no other effect but to make him tributary to Nebuchadnezzar.

And bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon.] See 2 Kings xxiv. 1, &c. The Targum expounds it, He put brazen chains upon his hands and fetters upon his legs. But he did not carry him to Babylon, for Nebuchadnezzar altered his mind, and permitted him to reign at Jerusalem as his tributary; though he carried away, as it follows, some of the vessels of the temple, and also certain choice persons, as we read in the first of Daniel.

Ver. 7. *Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the Lord to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon.*] He carried away a great many in the next king's reign, (2 Kings xxiv. 13, 14.) but it seems he began to do it in this. And they were so hardened, as to believe those false prophets, who assured them these vessels should shortly be brought again from Babylon, and give no credit to Jeremiah, who told them they prophesied a lie; for these vessels should be so far from being brought from Babylon, that all the remaining vessels should be carried after them, and there be till the day when God visited them. (See Jer. xxvii. 16, 17. 21, 22.)

Ver. 8. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.*] There was a book, it is likely, that had this title; but what was said there to be *found of him*, is not here mentioned. The Targum saith, *the iniquity that was found in him.* But what was that iniquity? To this they answer in the Talmud, that he had the name of an idol in his forehead: or, as others say, there were found in his body certain marks and impressions in honour of idols. So St. Jerome, He had made those marks in his body, which God had forbidden in Lev. xix. 28. (See our learned Dr. Spencer, lib. ii. de Leg. et Rit. Hebr. cap. 14. sect. 2.) But there are those that think it is meant of the innocent blood that he shed, (2 Kings xxiv. 4.) But that was the sin of Manasseh; therefore the plainest meaning is, that he was found guilty of disloyal intentions against the king of Babylon, which he concealed a great while, but at last they were discovered, (2 Kings xxiv. 1.)

And Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

Ver. 9. *Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign.*] In 2 Kings xxiv. 8. it is said, that he was *eighteen years old* when he began to reign. See my annotations on that place: unto which may be added, that Abarbinel thinks there is no difference between these two places; but that the word for *eight* is governed by another that is wanting, signifying *ten.* But the common solution is, that when his father had reigned one year, he made his son joint sovereign with him, that the people might be settled in their affection to him before he left the throne, which was ten years after. So long he reigned with his father, and eight years alone, which made eighteen years in all. (See Buxtorf, in his Vindiciæ Hebr. Veritatis, par. ii. cap. 2. p. 408.) But there are those who take the meaning to be, that he was eight years old, when *he* (that is, his father) began to reign: or, as our primate Usher thinks, it was the eighth year, not of his age, but of the captivity of Babylon, to which some principal persons were obnoxious, (Chronologia Sacra, pag. *ult.*) But some great men think here is an error of the copyist, for he was *eighteen* years old.

And he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.] It seems Nebuchadnezzar repented of his making him king; being afraid, as Kimchi thinks, that by the evil counsel of his courtiers, he would be persuaded to rebel, after the example of Jehoiakim. Jacobus Capellus thinks the people set him up to be their king; and therefore he resolved to dethrone him, sending his servants against him, and then coming himself and taking Jerusalem. (See 2 Kings xxiv. 10, 11.)

Ver. 10. *And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the Lord, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.*] See 2 Kings xxiv. 11, 12. For God had threatened none of Jehoiakim's seed should sit upon the throne of David. They might be set upon his throne, as the same Capellus observes, but not remain or continue possessed of it. "Sedere enim dicuntur, non transitoria, sed quæ aliquamdiu pedem figunt," ad A. M. 3399.

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Ver. 11. *Zedekiah was one-and-twenty years old when he began to reign; and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.*] See 2 Kings xxiv. 18.

Ver. 12. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord.*] *From the mouth of the Word of the Lord,* saith the Targum: which shews, that by the *Word* here he meant a Divine person. It is a wonderful thing, that having seen so many of the people carried away captive, together with their king Jehoiakim, they should not at all relent, but go on in those ways which had led others to destruction. But so incorrigible were this people, that Ezekiel tells us, they who were carried away captive (among whom he was one) persisted in their rebellion, and were not at all amended. His whole book is full of complaints of their impenitence. And in the thirteenth chapter he tells us, they still entertained false prophets (unto whom they hearkened rather than to Ezekiel), who saw visions of peace for Jerusalem, when there was no peace; as he there speaks, ver. 16. that is, made the people believe Jerusalem should not be taken; and so hardened their hearts in their obstinate wickedness.

Ver. 13. *And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who made him swear by God.*] That he would be true and faithful to him.

But he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.] His wickedness was so great, that God gave him up to commit this further crime of perjury, to his utter ruin, (2 Kings xxiv. 20.)

Ver. 14. *Moreover, all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.*] There was such an universal corruption, and that to such an abominable height, that there was no hope of their growing better, they being perfectly ripe for utter destruction.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending.*] To *rise betimes* signifies in Scripture to do a thing with care, diligence, and affection: for good husbands, especially fathers of families (from whom this expression is borrowed), were wont to get up early to look after their business, and to quicken and encourage their servants to their duty. Such was the compassion and care of God for his people, that he gave them seasonable, timely, and early admonitions to their duty, and notice of their danger, before it was too late.

Because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place.] To this compassion they owed a succession of prophets in every king's reign, as I have before noted, who most earnestly called upon them to reform. Yet, if they did in a good king's reign grow something better, they immediately revolted as soon as he was dead, and a bad one came in his place. Such a strange propension they had to idolatry: which is the more wonderful, when we consider, that this nation, which was so prone to idolatry, when they had so many prophets among them to admonish them against it, were not at all inclined to it, when they had no more any prophets to instruct them, nor any miracles wrought among them; that is, after their return from the captivity of Babylon, when prophecy in a little time ceased; and yet they were steadfast in the service of God, according to the law of Moses. The best account that I am able to give of this is, that before the captivity sufficient care was not taken for the building of synagogues for the teaching of the law, if there were any at all; for we find no mention of them in these books: whereas they abounded in every place after the captivity; insomuch, that the Jews say, there were several hundreds in Jerusalem alone, wherein the law was read and taught, which was a most powerful means to keep them constant to the religion they professed: for, as Josephus reports, by this means the people came to be so acquainted with their laws, that if any person asked any of them concerning them, *ῥᾷον ἂν εἴποι πάντα, ἢ τοὔνομα τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ, he would more readily tell every thing, than his own name.*

Ver. 16. *But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets.*] As the corruption was universal, so they were incorrigible; not only rejecting, but despising, and setting at nought, the means of their cure.

Until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.] Till the implacable wrath of God came upon them; there being no hope they would repent, and be healed, but they must die and perish.

Ver. 17. *Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary.*] Unto which, it is likely, they fled for safety, after the manner of all nations, who took their holy places to be inviolable: but they found no protection there; the Chaldees being a rough nation, and having no regard to them.

And had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; he gave them all into his hand.] To kill them, or sell them for slaves; as he thought good.

Ver. 18. *And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small.*] Which are numbered in the next book, Ezra i. 9—11.

And the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon.] The former treasures, by a special providence of God, were preserved, and restored in the reign of Cyrus to the house of the Lord: but the other, it is likely, were looked upon as spoil, and spent by the king and his great men.

Ver. 19. *And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.*] See 2 Kings xxv. 9, 10. But it is a very absurd supposition of some, who think that all the sacred books were now also burnt, and restored again by Ezra after the captivity out of his memory. For who can believe, that among all the priests, and prophets too, that were carried captive, none of them should take care to carry a Bible with them? Jeremiah also remaining in the land, we may be confident was not without it. It is plain also, that Daniel had his prophecy, and the books of Moses, in Babylon, (Dan. ix. 2, 3.) And Josephus says that Cyrus was shewn the prophecy of Isaiah, wherein his name was expressly mentioned: which shews, they had copies of these books in their captivity. But this extravagant fable was brought upon the stage by the apocryphal Esdras, (chap. xiv.) and

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was not known till the beginning of the third century, when that author, half Jew and half Christian, lived.

Ver. 20. *And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon, where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia.*] Which gave them liberty to return to their country. Such was the law of war in ancient times; all the people of a city or country that were conquered became slaves to the conqueror; and appertained to the public or private persons who had taken them, according to the laws settled in every nation for the dividend of the booty. Thus we find at the sacking of Troy, all that remained alive were made slaves, even queen Hecuba, and her daughters. The Greek and Roman histories are full of such examples.

Ver. 21. *To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath.*] Because the Jews, among other precepts, had violated that of letting their land rest from ploughing and sowing every seventh year, God gave their land a long sabbath, or rest, for no less than ten times seven years; which Jeremiah threatened, chap. xxv. 9. 12. xxix. 10. If it be true, that they had neglected this law for the space of four hundred and thirty years; but had ploughed their ground, &c. in the seventh, as well as in all other years; then the judgment of God upon them was very remarkable, in making their ground rest, and be free from tillage, just as long as it should have been if they had observed his law: for in the space of four hundred and thirty years, there ought to have been sixty and five years of rest and intermission. (See Gulielmus Vorstius, upon David Ganz's Tzemuch David, p. 212.)

To fulfil threescore and ten years.] These years ended in the first or second year of Cyrus; but when they began is variously disputed. Hermannus Witsius hath lately argued strongly, that it was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim: for then Jeremiah said, *The whole land shall be a desolation, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years*, chap. xxv. 11. which is further explained, ver. 17, 18. Which is the opinion also of Hermannus Conringius, in his Adversaria Chronologica, cap. 14. and of Johannes Vorstius, in his Exercitatio Secunda de Captivitate Babylonica; and thus our Usher, ad A. Mundi 3394. Though other great men date these seventy years from the captivity of Zedekiah. (See Scaliger, de Emend. Temporum, lib. vi. p. 575.)

Ver. 22. *Now, in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia (that the word of the Lord, spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be accomplished), the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made the proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,*

Ver. 23. *Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah: who is there among you of all his people? the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.*] These two verses, which conclude this book, begin the next, where I will explain them; and only take notice here, that thus the Targum translates this proclamation: "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of this earth hath the Word of the Lord God of heaven delivered unto me; and he commanded me to build him a sanctuary in Jerusalem," &c. Which evidently shews, this paraphrast believed the Word dwelt in the sanctuary.

THE

BOOK OF EZRA.

IT is generally thought by all sorts of writers, that Ezra himself wrote this book which bears his name. And there is the less doubt of it, if he wrote the foregoing book: for he begins this book as that ended; which is an argument they had the same author: it being an ancient way of writing, as Grotius observes out of Polybius, who concludes one book, and begins the next with the same words. But the learned Huetius is of opinion, that Ezra did not write the first six chapters of this book, but some other person: for it is evident they were written in the time of Darius, when the author speaks of himself as then at Jerusalem, (chap. v. 3, 4. 9.) Whereas Ezra went up from Babylon in the reign of Artaxerxes, (chap. vii. 1.) and then it is manifest wrote the four remaining chapters, as appears from chap. vii. 27, 28. ix. 5. x. 1. Therefore, when the Talmudists and other Hebrew doctors say Ezra wrote this book, they are to be understood (he thinks) to speak of the latter part of it.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *NOW, in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia.*] This is that famous Cyrus, who, a hundred and forty years before the temple was destroyed, and two hundred years before he was born, was mentioned by name in the prophecy of Isaiah, as designed by God for the restoring his people, (Isa. xliv. *ult.* xlv. 1. 4.) Which prophecy, it is probable, Daniel shewed to Cyrus, which made him set forth the following edict: which was not put forth in the first year of his empire, for then the Jews were not his subjects, but the first year after his conquest of Babylon, where the Jews then lived in captivity. (See Scaliger, in his Isagoge, lib. iii. p. 260. and De Emend. Temporum, lib. vi. p. 576.)

(That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet might be fulfilled).] Who foretold, that, after seventy years were accomplished, the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans should be destroyed, and the people of

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Judah restored to their own land, (see chap. xxv. 12, xxix. 10.)

The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying.] God, who had so long ago designed him for this work, suggested these thoughts to him, and excited him to prosecute them; which he did, not only by causing his will and pleasure to be proclaimed, but to be put in writing, that none might mistake his meaning.

Ver. 2. *Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven.*] It is a observation of Mr. Mede, that as, before the captivity, when they spake of God they called him *the Lord of hosts;* so the constant style of the holy books after the captivity, is the *God of heaven.* As here, and chap. vi. 10. vii. 21. But it is a question, whether Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, penned these writings themselves, wherein they proclaimed the God of the Jews to be *the Lord God of heaven:* or, whether they were drawn up by some of the Jews that attended upon them. It seems likely to me, that God, who raised up the spirit of Cyrus to be a peculiar instrument of the freeing his people from slavery, did enlighten his mind to understand that there was but one only God whom the Jews worshipped, and who spake in those holy books which were shewn him. And Artaxerxes might call the law of Moses the *law of the God of heaven,* knowing the Jews worshipped no other God, whose law this was.

Hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth.] That is, all those large dominions which the Assyrians and Babylonians had enjoyed.

And he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.] So he understood from Isa. xlv. 13. where God saith of Cyrus, *he shall build my city,* of which the temple was the principal part: and more plainly, chap. xliv. 28. *he shall say to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.* Josephus hath thus paraphrased upon these words, Ἐπεί με ὁ Θεὸς τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπέδειξε Βασιλέα, &c. *Because the greatest God hath constituted me the king of the world, I believe him to be he whom the people of Israel adore. For he foretold me king by his prophets, and that I should build his temple at Jerusalem, in the land of Judea.*

Ver. 3. *Who is there among you of all his people?* &c.] Not of the Jews only, but of Israel also, who were under his government, the Assyrians and Medes being his subjects. And so Josephus (as I observed before) says, that Zerubbabel sent the edict of Cyrus into Media, to the rest of the ten tribes: to whom he not only makes a promulgation of liberty to go to their own country, but desires them to go, and prays God to be with them and prosper them in building God's house, whom he acknowledges to be the true and only God. This was a marvellous encouragement to them.

Ver. 4. *And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth.*] This seems to relate to such as were desirous to go up with their brethren, but were forced to stay behind for want of necessaries to support them in so long a journey.

Let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts.] He therefore requires his officers to furnish them with such things as they needed.

Besides the free-will-offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.] Which he supposed the richer sort of Jews would readily make to assist their poor brethren; though they themselves being well settled in Babylon, did not think fit to stir till they saw how these would succeed.

Ver. 5. *Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all those whose spirits God had raised up.*] There were some of other tribes besides Judah and Benjamin that went up, (1 Chron. ix. 3.) though these were the principal, who all needed a special motion from God to quicken and encourage them to this enterprise; the difficulties being so great which they were to encounter in a long journey, and their country lying waste when they came thither; this made those who had got possessions in Babylon to choose to stay there.

To build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.] This was the design, which people of great piety cheerfully undertook, that the public worship of the true God might be restored, whom they now worshipped only in private.

Ver. 6. *And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things.*] Such was the authority of the king, and such was the influence of God upon their hearts, that all their neighbours encouraged them to this work, and enabled them to undertake this journey to Jerusalem.

Besides all that was willingly offered.] Their brethren freely offered them their assistance, though they did not think fit to go along with them.

Ver. 7. *Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods.*] Where by a singular providence they had been preserved till this time, being looked upon as sacred things, which Nebuchadnezzar would not turn to his own private use, but dedicated to his gods. Some think the ark was among the sacred things which Cyrus caused to be restored; but it should first be proved that it was carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon, which now here appears to be true. The argument they bring for it is, that in the second temple sacrifices were offered as in the first, and all solemn days observed, especially the great day of expiation, when the law ordained the blood should be sprinkled before the mercy-seat, which could not be done when there was none; and there was none, if there was no ark. But, as the Jews universally acknowledge, this was one of the five things wanting in the second temple; so, unless the Divine Glory had been there also, the ark would have signified little. Therefore it is more likely, that by the absence of these, God would signify, he was withdrawing his presence from that house of stone, to dwell in the temple of Christ's body: who offered himself to God, and thereby put an end to those figurative sacrifices.

Ver. 8. *Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer.*] This was a name frequent among the Persians, derived from their god Mithra: as Cyrus himself had his name (Hesychius saith) from the sun, which in their language was called Κῦρος.

And numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.] Which was another name for Zerubbabel, mentioned chap. iii. 2. 8. v. 14. 16. For it was common in the time of the captivity for the great men of Judah to have two

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names: one of their own country, which was domestic; another of the Chaldeans, which was used at court. (Dan. i. 7.) Nehemiah had two names: and this of Sheshbazzar seems to have been a good omen of their flourishing condition; being compounded of two words, signifying *fine linen* and *gold*. On the contrary, Zerubbabel was a name importing the misery of the people of Israel at that time; for it is as much as an *exile*, or *stranger*, in Babylon, where he was born. Thus pious men, even in the midst of the honours they had at court (for, Josephus saith, Zerubbabel was one of the guard of the king's body), were admonished not to forget their brethren, but sympathize with them in their miseries.

Ver. 9. *And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine-and-twenty knives.*] See Dr. Lightfoot, of the Temple, p. 233, 234.

Ver. 10. *Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand.*

Ver. 11. *All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred.*] Here seems to be some difficulty: for all the vessels that are specially named, make no more in number than two thousand four hundred and ninety-nine. To which many think this a sufficient answer, that it is said in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 18. Nebuchadnezzar carried away all the vessels, both great and small. Now, in the account that is here given, the larger vessels only, which were of greater bigness and price, are mentioned: but the gross sum comprehends all, both great and small, and amounts to the number of five thousand and four hundred. But Tremellius solves this, by translating the last words of the former verse otherwise than we do; not *of other vessels a thousand*, but *other vessels by thousands, viz.* almost three thousand, wanting one hundred: which our Mr. Mede judges a true translation, in his Daniel's Weeks, book iii. p. 700.

All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.] Which restoration of the Jews to their own land seems to be a greater miracle than the first conquest of it: for Joshua did that by force of arms; but these exiles recovered their country without any force at all; and were settled in it, notwithstanding many great impediments to hinder it.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *NOW these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity.*] Some by the *province* understand *Babylon;* in which these people were most of them born, and had all lived a long time. But I think it more likely to be meant of Judea, which was made a province when it was conquered, and Gedaliah constituted the governor of it; and in this book is called the *province of Judea*, chap. v. 8.

Of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon.] Their parents and ancestors had been carried away by him, and they in them.

And came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city.] See Jer. xxxii. 15. Nehem. xi. 3. Their land and their cities had been laid so desolate, and had been so long neglected, and were infested also by such bad neighbours, that it was a great piece of generosity in these men to return thither: and their names are recorded to the eternal honour of them, and of their posterity; they being the first planters of this country, after it had been laid waste.

Ver. 2. *Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah.*] These were their heads, who undertook to conduct them: among whom Zerubbabel was the prince, or leader in chief; as Jeshua was high-priest, who is mentioned next to him. Nehemiah, who follows after him, is not the same, whose book comes after this: for he did not go now, but afterward; or, if he did, he returned to Babylon again. (See our famous Reynolds, in his Censure of the Apocryphal Books, prælect. cxi. cxviii.) Nor is it likely, that this Mordecai was the same with him that was Esther's cousin, but some other person; there being another of that name mentioned in the book of the Chronicles. (See the same Reynolds, prælect. cxlvii.)

The number of the men of the people of Israel.] They who were called the *children of the province* before, are now called the *people of Israel:* for from him they were derived, though most of them were of the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 3. *The children of Parosh, two thousand a hundred seventy and two.*] He begins first to reckon up the families that went up; of which this was one of the largest, descended from Parosh, who was their ancestor.

Ver. 4. *The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.*] This was another family, descended from this man. The same is to be said of the rest.

Ver. 5. *The children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five.*] So many gave in their names in Babylon, that they intended to return into Judea: but it appears by Nehem. vii. 10. that there came no more thither than six hundred fifty and two: therefore it is supposed, that the rest altered their minds, or died by the way. The same must be said of several other differences between this account and that in Nehemiah.

Ver. 6. *The children of Pahath-Moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve.*] Here seems to be two families joined together, one from Pahath-Moab, the other from Jeshua-Joab (as the other may be translated), which both together make the greatest body of those that went up: and six more added themselves; for in Nehem. vii. 11. they are said to have been two thousand eight hundred and eighteen.

Ver. 7. *The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.*

Ver. 8. *The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five.*

Ver. 9. *The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.*

Ver. 10. *The children of Bani, six hundred forty and two.*

Ver. 11. *The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three.*

Ver. 12. *The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two.*

Ver. 13. *The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.*

Ver. 14. *The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six.*

Ver. 15. *The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four.*

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Ver. 16. *The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.*

Ver. 17. *The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three.*

Ver. 18. *The children of Jorah, a hundred and twelve.*

Ver. 19. *The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three.*

Ver. 20. *The children of Gibbar ninety and five.*] Or, as it is in Nehem. vii. 25. the children of Gibeon; these being the citizens of that city. For this is not the name of a man, but of a place; and so are several that follow: which hath made some think, that the foregoing are not the names of men, but of cities, or countries, the people of which are called *the children* of such places; which is frequent in the Scripture language, where we read of the children of Zion, the children of Egypt, the children of the East, &c.

Ver. 21. *The children of Beth-lehem, a hundred twenty and three.*] These were such as belonged to that city; unto which they went up, (ver. 1.)

Ver. 22. *The children of Netophah, fifty and six.*] This was a town near to Beth-lehem.

Ver. 23. *The men of Anathoth, a hundred twenty and eight.*] A famous place in the tribe of Benjamin, where the prophet Jeremiah was born. But there are those who think it not improbable, that these were cities in the country of Babylon; which the Jews had built, and called by the names of those cities in their own country, from whence they were banished; of which they were desirous to preserve a remembrance. Thus the Spaniards at this day have cities in America, called Corduba, Granada, Carthagena, &c. that they may not suffer the memory of their ancient country to perish, when they were removed to a far distant land. But I see no ground for this.

Ver. 24. *The children of Azmaveth, forty and two.*] Or, of Beth-Azmaveth, as it is called Nehem. vii. 28.

Ver. 25. *The children of Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three.*

Ver. 26. *The children of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.*] These seem to have been cities in the tribe of Benjamin: and so, it is likely, were the foregoing, and some of those that follow.

Ver. 27. *The men of Michmas, a hundred twenty and two.*

Ver. 28. *The men of Beth-el and Ai, two hundred twenty and three.*

Ver. 29. *The children of Nebo, fifty and two.*

Ver. 30. *The children of Magbish, a hundred fifty and six.*

Ver. 31. *The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.*] There is another Elam mentioned ver. 7. which argues the former to be the name of a town; from which the very same number of persons went up that there did from this.

Ver. 32. *The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.*

Ver. 33. *The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five.*] These were three towns in the tribe of Benjamin, which make it probable Harim was so likewise.

Ver. 34. *The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.*

Ver. 35. *The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty.*] It is uncertain whether this be the name of a person, or of a place; but the greatest number of persons went from hence that did from any of the forementioned.

Ver. 36. *The priests.*] Having numbered the people that went from Judah and Benjamin, he proceeds now to the tribe of Levi; and first mentions the priests.

The children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.] He is mentioned in 1 Chron. xxiv. 7. as a principal person among the priests. (See Dr. Lightfoot, p. 916.)

Ver. 37. *The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two.*] He is mentioned also in 1 Chron. xxiv. 14. as head of one of the twenty-four courses of priests.

Ver. 38. *The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.*] He is mentioned also 1 Chron. ix. 12.

Ver. 39. *The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.*] See 1 Chron. xxiv. 8. where he is mentioned as head of another course of the priests.

Ver. 40. *The Levites: the children of Jeshua, and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy and four.*] See Nehem. vii. 43.

Ver. 41. *The singers: the children of Asaph, a hundred twenty and eight.*

Ver. 42. *The children of the porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, in all a hundred thirty and nine.*

Ver. 43. *The Nethinims.*] These are generally taken to be of the race of the Gibeonites; who being given to the service of the temple were called Nethinims, which imports as much as *given*. But this is a mistake, the Nethinims being those whom David gave to help the Levites, as I have observed before.

The children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth.] It is not said how many came from each family: but it appears there were several families of them, and their whole number is mentioned in ver. 58.

Ver. 44. *The children of Keros, the children of Siaha, the children of Padon.*

Ver. 45. *The children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub.*] The number of these families, and those that follow, is not set down particularly; but they are all comprehended in that sum mentioned ver. 58.

Ver. 46. *The children of Hagab, the children of Shalmai, the children of Hanan.*

Ver. 47. *The children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah.*

Ver. 48. *The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam.*

Ver. 49. *The children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai.*

Ver. 50. *The children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of Nephusim.*

Ver. 51. *The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur.*

Ver. 52. *The children of Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha.*

Ver. 53. *The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Thamah.*

Ver. 54. *The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.*

Ver. 55. *The children of Solomon's servants.*] These were a distinct people among the Jews; but it is uncertain who they were. Some take them to have been originally de-

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scended from slaves, whom Solomon took in war, and who afterward became proselytes. But there was no war in his days; therefore others think they were such of other nations as came to serve Solomon in servile work during the building of the temple; who being proselyted, he deputed them to the perpetual conservation and reparation of it; as Joshua had done the Gibeonites, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water there. Or, they were some of the relics of the Canaanites, who delivered up themselves to Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 20, 21. Whosoever they were, it appears from ver. 55. of this chapter, that they had the same employment with the Nethinims about the temple, or something like it; for they are numbered together with them.

The children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda.] These, and they that follow in the two next verses, are the families of the forenamed persons.

Ver. 56. *The children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel.*

Ver. 57. *The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Ami.*

Ver. 58. *All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred ninety and two.*] This makes it probable, that the Nethinims and the children of Solomon's servants (as I said before), were employed in the same or the like employment; being both mentioned together: to whose honour it must be observed, that, though they were not of the children of Israel, and were despised by them (there being decrees made by the Sanhedrin, as the Jews tell us, that they should not marry with the Gibeonites, who they fancy are here meant), yet they were more forward to return to Jerusalem, and build the house of the Lord (where they were to serve in lower ministries), than the Levites themselves. For there were greater numbers of them returned than of the Levites and singers, as appears by comparing this verse with ver. 40, 41.

Ver. 59. *And these were they which went up from Telmelah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan, and Immer; but they could not shew their father's house, and their seed, whether they were of Israel.*] These are names of some cities in Chaldea, or Mesopotamia, from whence many went along with them to Judea: and, as some think, they were Jews or proselytes who were carried captive by Shalmaneser into Assyria. Now these could not shew the families from whence they were derived, and so could not obtain any certain possession in Judea; as the rest did, who knew to what family and city they belonged.

Ver. 60. *The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two.*] These were persons who could not make out their pedigree; and yet were desirous to live among the people of God, and see his worship restored.

Ver. 61. *And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai (which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name).*] This person, whosoever he was, thought it so great an honour to be descended from such a noble family as that of Barzillai, that he chose to be called by that name, which he preferred before his own in the family of the priests: by which vain ambition he lost his title to the priesthood, because he could not make out his pedigree from the priests, but from Barzillai.

Ver. 62. *These sought their register among those who were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found.*] The words may be more plainly translated out of the Hebrew, in this manner, *These being numbered among the priests* (or, reckoned in the priestly genealogy) *sought the register, the record of it in writing, but could not find it.* The Jews were so careful to keep the priesthood pure, that they preserved an exact account of the parents, the kindred, and the quality of every priest; because there were some women the priests might not marry, whose children were accounted impure; as Mr. Selden hath shewn at large, lib. ii. de Success. ad Pontific. cap. 2. p. 213. and cap. 3. p. 215. But when the city and temple were burnt, and the people carried away in a tumultuous, confused manner into Babylon, many tables of genealogy perished, and could not be recovered.

Therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.] Not permitted to perform the office of priests; because it did not appear that they were legally descended from priests.

Ver. 63. *And the Tirshatha.*] Some think (particularly Jacobus Capellus), that by the *Tirshatha* is here meant *Zerubbabel:* it being a general name, they suppose, for all chief governors. So Nehemiah is called, chap. viii. 9. x. 1. whom others therefore will have to be here meant; who was a kind of judge (as the Persian word signifies), and gave the sentence which here follows, when he came to Judea: which was a good while after this first company arrived there. Others interpret it, the *king's commissioner;* for Zerubbabel was no more. (See J. Reynolds, in his Censure of the Apocryphal Books, prælect. cxviii.)

Said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things.] That is, they should not partake of the sacrifices offered for sin, nor of the right shoulder of peace-offerings, nor of the shew-bread; which were all most holy, and the portion of the priests alone. This shews that Tirshatha, whosoever he was, had great power and authority; who could lay such a restraint upon those that had been held for priests.

Till there stood up a priest with urim and with thummim.] Till the Lord himself should shew (when he vouchsafed such a high-priest as was in the first temple), whether they were of the line of Aaron or not. He doth not quite reject and exclude them, but left them their claim; yet would not admit them to enjoy that which was the sole right of the priests: which he could not determine whether it belonged to them; but the oracle being ceased, waited till God, who knew all things, should declare it. Thus careful they were to distinguish families, that strangers might not come to inherit among God's people; and especially that the priesthood might not be invaded by any who were unqualified for it. (See Buxtorf, in his Historia Urim et Thummim, p. 323. 327.)

It is evident from this place, that the *urim* and *thummim* were either lost or burnt with the temple; and whether they were after this restored, that is, whether any priest with this authority was raised up after the captivity was ended, we are no where informed. If there was, it was only (as Dr. Jackson well speaks, book i. on the Creed, chap. 11.) to give this people a farewell of God's extraordinary speaking to them, either by priests or by prophets, till Christ came. Josephus confesses, that revelation by *urim* and *thummim* did cease two hundred years before his time: but more probably this, as other kinds of prophecy, and many extraordinary tokens of God's power and presence

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(sometimes most frequent in this nation), did cease with that generation which returned from captivity, or immediately after the finishing the second temple: as if, during all that time (to use the words of that great man beforementioned), God had appointed a *fast*, or *vigil*, as an introduction to the fulness of time; wherein (as Joel prophesied, ver. 28.) God would *pour out his Spirit upon all flesh*; upon the gentile, as well as the Jew, (Mal. i. 11.) For this cause God imposed this long fast upon the Jews, that he might humble them, and teach them, that he was not their God alone, but of the gentiles also. The Jews generally acknowledge there was no *urim* and *thummim* under the second temple: and even they that say there was (because it was necessary the high-priest should have his garments complete), yet say, there was no answer from God given by it; which is as much as to say, there was none at all. (See Buxtorf, Hist. Urim et Thummim, cap. 5.)

Ver. 64. *The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.*] This was but a small number in comparison with that vast multitude which came out of Egypt, yet more than double to that number which was carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar. But here occurs a small difficulty (like that in the end of the foregoing chapter); for if we put together the several sums beforementioned, they amount to no more than twenty-nine thousand eight hundred and eighteen; so there wants above twelve thousand to make up this number of forty thousand three hundred and threescore. But where shall we find them? say the Jews, in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 29. To which they there answer, that they were of the rest of the tribes of Israel, who came up with those of Judah and Benjamin: or they might be Levites, or other Israelites, who could not make out their descent. Which is a very solid answer, for there is no doubt but many of their brethren of the ten tribes incorporated themselves with the two tribes in captivity, and took the advantage of returning with them: which may be the meaning of those words in the first chapter, ver. 5. "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, with all them whose spirit God had raised to go up:" that is, saith Diodate, all those of other tribes, according to 1 Chron. ix. 3.

Ver. 65. *Besides their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven.*] Though all that returned were not Jews, but some of the ten tribes joined with them; yet they did not amount, slaves and all, to fifty thousand. Now what is this number to what they were in Jehoshaphat's time, when Judah had in it two hundred thousand fighting men?

And there were among them two hundred singing-men and singing-women.] Whether these were now become servants is not certain; but it seems to be manifest from 1 Chron. xxv. 5, 6. that women, as well as men, sung in the house of the Lord.

Ver. 66. *Their horses were seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five.*] Their poverty appears, as by the small number of servants that attended them, so by the little parcel of cattle which they had to carry them.

Ver. 67. *Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; their asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.*] Most of the people therefore travelled on foot, for these would but suffice to carry their baggage (as we speak), or little more.

Ver. 68. *And some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the Lord which is at Jerusalem.*] That is, to the place in which the temple stood, unto which it seems their pious affections carried them, as soon as they came to Jerusalem.

Offered freely for the house of God, to set it up in his place.] Made a new offering besides that which they brought out of Babylon from their brethren there, mentioned chap. i. 4. 6. By this it appears, that the Jews were not made such poor slaves in Babylon as wrought for their lords and masters, but had liberty to trade and get riches for themselves; some of them being advanced to considerable offices in the king's court: otherwise they could not have been able to offer such sums as are mentioned in the next verse. And the like contribution, though not so large, was made for the support of the second company that went up from Babylon, as Josephus tells us, lib. xi. cap. 4. where he saith, the Jews in Babylon gave their brethren who were going to their own country, a hundred pound of gold, and five thousand of silver. But most of these rich men continued still in Babylon, being well settled there, and in a thriving condition: insomuch that R. Eliezer was wont to say (as he is quoted by a converted Jew), "The bran only returned to Judea, the fine flour still remained in Babylon." (See Jer. xxix. 4, 5. 28.) But this is a conceit advanced to elude the prophecies which belong to their return from Babylon, and apply them to their present captivity from the Romans.

Ver. 69. *They gave after their ability, unto the treasure of the work.*] Which was presently erected, according to the ancient pattern in David's time, (1 Chron. xxvi. 20.)

Threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pounds of silver, and one hundred priests' garments.] Garments, as well as gold and silver, were wont to be laid up in treasures, as appears by our Saviour's words, "Lay up for yourselves treasures, where neither moth nor rust do corrupt," Matt. vi. 20. Moths do not corrupt silver and gold, but only garments. (See Job xxvii. 16.)

Ver. 70. *So the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities.*] They are here set down in that order wherein they are reckoned from ver. 36. and the good order is observed that was among them, every one going to the city where his ancestors dwelt; and so did all Israel, as well as Judah and Benjamin, (chap. vi. 16, 17.) Thus the foundation of this poor commonwealth was laid in a marvellous concord, there being no strife nor contention among them that came up, though of different orders and qualities; but they had one heart and soul, like the first Christians, without which unity no people can be preserved. And that it may be cherished, they must avoid those things that destroy it, which are (as Joh. Wolfius here observes) principally φιλαυτία and πολυπραγμοσύνη, *self-love*, and *meddling in other men's matters*.

And all Israel in their cities.] When the ten tribes were carried captives by Shalmaneser into Assyria, they were not carried away entirely, but some of every tribe left, who, with Judah and Benjamin, were afterward carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and now restored by Cyrus. By this our primate Usher explains what we read afterward, (chap. vi. 17, 18.) that they offered twelve he-goats, according to the number of the children of Israel; (ad A. Mundi

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3468.) and, indeed, there were some relics of the ten tribes till their last destruction, (Acts xxvi. 7.)

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *AND when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.*] We are no where told in what month they began their journey from Babylon. But from chap. vii. 9. we understand it was a journey of four months from thence to Jerusalem; so that we may safely conclude they came out in the spring-time in the first or second month, and having spent a short time in settling themselves in their several cities, the seventh *approached*, or *drew nigh* (so it must be understood, and should be rendered), in which was the first feast that fell out after they came into Judea; which they assembled themselves unanimously to celebrate at Jerusalem.

Ver. 2. *Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests.*] He was the high-priest, called Joshua in Haggai i. 1.

And Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren.] He is called there the governor of Judah, being appointed by the king of Persia to that office. And he is there put before Joshua, as here he is put after: the viceroy and the high-priest being "Pares dignitate aut suppares," as Bochartus speaks. (See below, ver. 8. chap. iv. 3. v. 2.)

And builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt-offerings thereon.] Which were the most ancient offerings of all others.

As it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God.] Where, in the very beginning of the book of Leviticus, there is an order for the burnt-sacrifices before any other.

Ver. 3. *And they set the altar.*] Before they began to lay the foundation of the temple; for they would not have sacrifices wanting while it was building.

Upon his bases.] That is, in the place, some think, where it anciently stood. Which was done, Maimonides saith, by the authority of the prophets, who were then among them. Here the reader must remember what I have observed upon 1 Chron. ix. 11. 21. 23. that till the temple could be built, they erected a tabernacle wherein the service of God was performed, as it was before Solomon's temple was built. But I noted there, ver. 18. that it did not stand on Mount Moriah, but on Mount Zion; and therefore the altar was also there, and not in the place where it anciently stood, till the temple was finished.

(For fear was upon them, because of the people of those countries).] The particle *ki*, which we translate *for*, signifies *although:* and so it had been better rendered here, Although they were in great fear of their evil neighbours, yet notwithstanding they would not desist from restoring the worship of God. But if we take it as we translate it, the meaning is plain that they were the more zealous to restore the worship of God, that they might upon all occasions flee to him for succour against their enemies, of whom they were in dread.

And they offered burnt-offerings thereon unto the Lord, even burnt-offerings morning and evening.] Which is called in the law of Moses the *continual burnt-offering*, Exod. xxix. 38—42. Numb. xxviii. 3. 6.

Ver. 4. *They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written.*] See Exod. xxiii. 16. The seventh month was so remarkable for many solemnities appointed to be held in it, that I cannot think they kept only the feast of tabernacles. For on the very first day of the month there was to be a holy convocation, (Numb. xxix. 1, &c.) on which they began to offer sacrifice, as it is said here, ver. 6.: and on the tenth day was another holy convocation, which was the most solemn in all the year, being the great day of atonement, (Numb. xxix. 7.) With these, I suppose, they began; and especially on the tenth day begged pardon of God for their sins, which had cast them out of their land; and then proceeded on the fifteenth day to thank God for their restoration, by keeping the feast of tabernacles.

And offered the daily burnt-offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required.] On every day of the feast, which lasted seven days, there were special sacrifices appointed by the law, and in great numbers; as may be seen Numb. xxix. 13. 17, &c. which put this poor people to great expenses; but their piety now was such, that they valued nothing so much as the service of God.

Ver. 5. *And afterward offered the continual burnt-offerings, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a free-will-offering unto the Lord.*

Ver. 6. *From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord: but the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid.*] The meaning of these two verses is, that holy rites of sacrificing were restored, and so were kept and continued ever after in their several seasons, on the new moons, and other festival solemnities. And they began with the morning and evening burnt-offering, which was never to be omitted, but in every solemnity was to have the precedence, and be offered in the first place. (See Numb. xxviii. 3, 4, &c.)

Ver. 7. *They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters.*] To prepare materials for the building.

And meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre.] Who wanted these things more than money, as appears by the history of Solomon's building, (1 Kings v. 10.)

To bring cedar-trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa.] As they had done in the days of Solomon, (1 Kings v. 9.)

According to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.] Who commanded, I suppose, those of Tyre and Zidon to assist them.

Ver. 8. *Now, in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem.*] That is, to the place where the house of God formerly stood.

In the second month.] All the time before this, in the latter end of the last year, was spent, it is probable, in removing the rubbish, and preparing the ground for laying the foundation, as much as the winter would permit: which was not a season to begin the work, but after the Passover, I presume, they entered upon it.

Began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren, the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem.] Here Zerubbabel is put before Jeshua, as ver. 2. Jeshua was put before him: whereby we learn they were of equal dignity, in the account of the

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Jews. For Zerubbabel was not a king, but a governor of the province of Judea, under the king of Persia, as Nehemiah was; (chap. v. 14, 15.) under whom there were princes and rulers, that is, the heads of families; (chap. ix. 2.) and below them there were *captains of thousands*, &c. and other subaltern *officers;* (chap. x. 8. 14.) and after all, in the fourth place, the *great congregation:* which Bertram makes account was the government of the Jews, after their return from the captivity. (See him, de Repub. Jud. cap. 13. where he undertakes to make out the four orders from Nehem. v. 7, &c.)

And appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the Lord.] For since the time of David, they were thought fit at twenty years of age to attend the service of God in his house.

Ver. 9. *Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren.*] Not Jeshua the high-priest beforementioned, but another Jeshua, who was a Levite, mentioned chap. ii. 40.

Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together.] Who is called there Hodaviah.

To set forward the workmen in the house of God.] They being made overseers of the work.

The sons of Henadad, with their sons, and their brethren the Levites.] These were afterward added to the forenamed, as their assistants.

Ver. 10. *And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord.*] While the sacrifices, I suppose, at the same time were offered, they sung praise to God with such instruments as they had; which were only cymbals, for it is like they had not yet got *harps* and *lutes.* The apocryphal Esdras saith, they laid the foundation in the new moon; but Calvisius thinks it more probable to have been laid the day after, the new moon being a festival.

After the ordinance of David king of Israel.] See 1 Chron. xvi. 7. xxv. 1.

Ver. 11. *And they sang together by course.*] That is, answered one to another; for from hence was derived the manner of praying and praising God in the Christian service alternatively, as Mr. Mede observes, book i. discourse xvi. where he notes how the seraphims cried one to another, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts," &c. Isa. vi. 3.

In praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever towards Israel.] Thus many of the Psalms of David begin, cvii. cxxviii. and cxxxvi. which last psalm, it is probable, was now sung entirely, in every verse of which these words are repeated, *his mercy endureth for ever.*

And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.] That is, every one expressed their thankfulness and joy, in such manner as they were able; the priests and Levites with singing and music, and the people with shouting, which is a natural expression of joy, and as acceptable as the most artificial composures.

Ver. 12. *But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house.*] As many of them might have done, it not being above threescore (or, as some compute, sixty-one) years since it was burnt. And some of them lived long after this, which was the first year of Cyrus: for some prolonged their days (as Huetius observes) till the second year of Darius Hystaspes, which was eighteen years after the first of Cyrus.

When the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy.] The younger sort shouted, but many of the ancient people disturbed their acclamations with howlings. For though the temple was intended to be built as large as the former, upon the same foundation; yet there were not such goodly stones to lay for the foundation, as there were for Solomon's, (1 Kings vii. 9, 10.) nor could they hope to build it so magnificently as he had done, nor was there any appearance of the Divine glory, or of a priest with *urim* and *thummim*, and such-like things: which indeed were sad, but ought not to have made them weep so loud, and interrupt the public joy. Thankfulness for small beginnings would better have become them, than complaints that their condition was no better.

Ver. 13. *So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people.*] There was a great confusion among them by these contrary passions, which was very lamentable when God had been so very good to them all.

For the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.] Notwithstanding which, the young people continued to shout as loud as they could, and made the noise of their joy be heard farther off than the others' weeping was.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *NOW, when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin.*] These were the Samaritans, who were grieved at their return, (ver. 10.)

Heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel.] They being neighbours were soon informed, not only of their return from captivity, but of their building the temple.

Ver. 2. *Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you.*] This people, no doubt, were desirous to partake of the privileges which were granted to the Jews by the king of Persia: and so not only offered their assistance towards the building of the temple, but would have been one people with them. So the following words import.

For we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him.] They pretend to be of the same religion with them, which is the greatest bond of union: but in truth they were not; for though they worshipped God, yet they joined other feigned gods with him, and therefore could not be admitted into communion with them at the temple.

Since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.] The same with him mentioned 2 Kings xix. 39. who brought a second colony, after that brought by Shalmaneser when he first conquered them, to people the country better; and sent a priest also to instruct them, from whom they pretended to have received God's true religion.

Ver. 3. *But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers, said unto them, You have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God.*] They knew them very well what they were; *viz.* a mixed people, not purely of the seed of Israel, and of a medley religion, not wor-

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shipping God purely; and therefore they would have nothing to do with them. And, indeed, they soon discovered their hypocrisy by writing against the work, which they would have hindered by making divisions if they had been among them.

But we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.] They resolve to admit no other people to join with them, but to pursue the grant which king Cyrus had made to them alone, and to none other. These were the two reasons why they rejected them, because they were not of the same people, and the king of Persia had granted this licence to build the temple only to the Jews.

Ver. 4. *Then the people of the land.*] That is, the forenamed Samaritans.

Weakened the hands of the people of Judah.] Discouraged them in their undertakings by false reports and slanders, and, perhaps, by threatenings.

And troubled them in building.] Laid all the impediments they could in their way, by hindering materials or provisions from coming to them, or by enticing away their workmen, or such-like means.

Ver. 5. *And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose.*] They bribed some of the council of the king of Persia to obstruct the work; a frequent mischief in courts, as Grotius notes: or, perhaps, there were some of the officers of the king of Persia in Samaria, Syria, and Judea, whom they corrupted to cross this design.

All the days of Cyrus king of Persia.] Who being engaged in war with the Lydians and Scythians, could not attend such affairs as this; but it went on slowly: which his son Cambyses regarded not at all, being no friend of the Jews, nor of religion.

Even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.] Till Darius the son of Hystaspes, who, killing the magi (who after Cambyses had possessed themselves of the kingdom), was made king; and marrying Artossa the daughter of Cyrus, and loving her very much, confirmed the decree of Cyrus, and followed his steps that he might stand the safer himself. It is a great controversy indeed between learned men, whether this Darius, or Darius Nothus, be here meant: and there are strong arguments on both sides, which it is an immense labour to examine, with the objections against them. It hath been lately done in brief by a judicious writer, who after all is constrained to conclude with a *non liquet*. But yet he thinks the most weighty reasons incline to Darius Hystaspes. (See Hermannus Witsius, Miscellanea Sacra, lib. i. cap. 20.)

Ver. 6. *And in the reign of Ahasuerus.*] Who this was is very uncertain; there being many who think, that after Cyrus this was *nomen gentilitium* (as they call it), the name of all their kings (as Pharaoh was of all the kings of Egypt), who were called Xerxes, or Artaxerxes (from Ahasuerus, as Grotius thinks), besides the name they had before they came to the crown. Some therefore say this was Cambyses, (so primate Usher, ad A. M. 3476.) others Darius Hystaspes, others Artaxerxes Mnemon, or Longimanus; whose disputes are very long about this matter, but leave one no more satisfied than before he began to read them.

In the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.] Importing that they intended to set up for themselves, and not to depend upon the king of Persia.

Ver. 7. *And in the days of Artaxerxes.*] Who is before called Ahasuerus; which is supposed to be his Chaldee name, as Artaxerxes was his Persian. But Dr. Alix, who had examined these things, looks upon it as absurd to suppose Ahasuerus to have been the name of all the Persian kings, and takes this Artaxerxes to have been the son of Xerxes, *viz.* Artaxerxes Longimanus.

Wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia.] These men first drew up the letter, which they intended to send to the king, being governors, I suppose, under him, on this side of Euphrates; such as the Greeks call tetrarchs.

And the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.] The meaning may be, that they sent a brief address to the king in the Syrian tongue, and expounded their business more largely to some of his counsellors in the same tongue. Or, by the first we may understand the letter or characters, and by the other the words: so that the meaning is, it was wrote both in Syrian characters, and in Syrian words. For sometimes a letter or other writing is sent in the character of one language, and in words of another; as Chaldee and Syrian words are wrote in the Hebrew characters, and we ofttimes write Hebrew words in the English characters. But this letter was wrote, and was to be read in the same language.

Ver. 8. *Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king.*] These two were principal persons in these countries; who either joined with the other three beforementioned in the same letter, or wrote another letter of the same import.

In this sort.] Containing the same complaint against the Jews.

Ver. 9. *Then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites.*] These nine nations came out of Assyria, Persia, Media, Susiana, and other provinces of that vast empire; who with one consent joined in this letter or petition. For, perhaps, the king being loath to do any thing hastily upon the motion of that letter mentioned ver. 8. sent to have the opinion of all these nations, or the principal persons among them; and of all other on this side the river Euphrates, as it here follows.

Ver. 10. *And the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest that are on this side the river.*] Some take Asnapper to be another name for Shalmaneser, or for Esar-haddon, who sent these colonies hither. But it is more reasonable to think he was some great commander, who was entrusted by one or both of those kings to conduct them, and *bring them over* (the river Euphrates), and see them settled in these countries.

And at such a time.] Which was expressed, no doubt, in the letter; but here it is only noted in general, that the year and the day were mentioned, when it was subscribed.

Ver. 11. *This is the copy of the letter that they sent unto*

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him, even unto Artaxerxes the king: Thy servants, the men on this side the river, and at such a time.] This was the title of their letter: the letter itself followeth.

Ver. 12. *Be it known unto the king, that the Jews, which came up from thee to us, are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations.*] This was a mere calumny; for they attempted no such thing as to build the walls of Jerusalem. But they speak in ambiguous words (as Huetius observes) concerning the building of this city; which in one sense was true. For they built houses, without which it could not be inhabited; but they did not go about to encompass it with walls, to defend the city against the incursions of their enemies; which was not begun till a great while after. They are fallacious words therefore, whereby they imposed upon the king's belief, when they say, *they set up the walls thereof:* for they only set up the walls of their houses, not of their city. And there is a demonstration they did no more; for when it is said there was an order from the king, that this city should not be built, and accordingly the work was stopped, it is thus expressed, (ver. 24.) *then ceased the work of the house of God, which is at Jerusalem.* It is not said, The work of building the walls of the city ceased (for they were about no such thing), but *the work of the house of God,* which was all they did. Thus wicked men compass their ends by lies and fallacies; with which they prepossess men's minds against the truth. As for their calling it a *rebellious and bad city,* there was some colour for it; their latter kings having rebelled against the king of Babylon. And besides, the laws and customs of the Jews were such, as would not permit them to conform to the manner of other nations; which made their neighbours have an ill opinion of them, as an unsociable people.

Ver. 13. *Be it known now unto the king, that if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom.*] They pretend the Jews would be no longer in subjection, if their city was built; but set up for themselves, as a free people. By the first of these words Grotius understands that which every head paid to the king, which we call poll-money; by the second, the excise (as we now speak) that was upon commodities and merchandise; and by the last, the rent which their land paid. But a late learned man thinks, the first word rather signifies that part which every man paid out of his estate, according as it was valued; the second, that which was paid for every head; and the third, that which was paid upon the highways, by every traveller who brought in wares, or carried them out. (Herman. Witsius, in his Miscell. par. ii. Exerc. xi. n. 20.)

And so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings.] They pretend to study nothing but the profit of the king; and that neither he nor his successors might lose any of the duties owing to the crown.

Ver. 14. *Now, because we have maintenance from the king's palace.*] In the Hebrew it is, *we are salted with the salt of the palace;* i. e. *received their salary* from the king, as Junius translates it. For it seems, they received their stipend in *salt* (from whence it was called a *salary*), which the son of Sirach mentions among the things necessary to human life, (Ecclus. xxxix. 31.) And Homer calls it *a Divine thing,* because, as Plutarch expounds him, it seasons all food, and gives a relish to it. (See Dr. Cudworth, of the Lord's Supper, p. 68.)

And it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour.] It did not become them who received maintenance from the king to see him wronged any way.

Therefore have we sent and certified the king.] Which they would have him think was the sole cause of their writing, to inform him in the truth.

Ver. 15. *That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers.*] In the chronicles of the kings that had reigned before him; whom they call his *fathers,* because they were his predecessors in that kingdom, wherein he now reigned. This search shews, this letter was written a long time after the edict of Cyrus.

So shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know, that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time; for which cause was this city destroyed.] They mix some truth with abundance of falsehood: for this city could not be rebellious in old time, being subject to none; till, in latter times, it was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, against whom they rebelled.

Ver. 16. *We certify the king, that if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river.*] This was a most groundless suggestion, that they should either be able to conquer all the neighbouring countries, as far as Euphrates, or draw them all into a rebellion with them against the king.

Ver. 17. *Then sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria, and unto the rest beyond the river, Peace, and at such a time.*] This was a matter of such concern, that the king dispatched a speedy answer to be communicated to all the people, mentioned ver. 9, 10.

Ver. 18. *The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me.*] It was read, in all likelihood, before the king in council.

Ver. 19. *And I commanded, and search hath been made.*] In the public records. (See chap. v. 17. vi. 1, 2. Esther ii. 23. vi. 1.)

And it is found, that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein.] One instance or two of it, in latter times, served to fasten this odious character upon them; as if they had been always guilty of these crimes.

Ver. 20. *There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river.*] Such, indeed, were David and Solomon; who, as their records shewed, ruled over all countries on this side Euphrates.

And toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them.] As now they were to the king of Persia: which seemed to justify what this people suggested in their letter, ver. 16. only they wanted such mighty kings as they then had, and were never likely to have such again.

Ver. 21. *Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded.*] He gave no order about the temple, but only about the city; which he was made to believe they were fortifying.

Until another commandment shall be given from me.] He kept his ears open, like a good king, to further information; which if he should have different from theirs, he

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might give other orders. For this was not a law of the Medes and Persians that could not be revoked; but only an edict, depending wholly upon the will and pleasure of the king, which he might have reason to alter hereafter.

Ver. 22. *Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?*] By their negligence, if they permitted them to proceed to fortify Jerusalem. It is very observable, that in neither of their letters, nor in the king's answer, there is not one word of the command which Cyrus gave; nor any thing said of the building of the temple: which was the great thing in which they were employed; and the building of which could be no damage to the king. But though we do not know by what trick the decree of Cyrus was now smothered, yet their silence about it proves (as the forenamed Dr. Alix suggests to me) that this complaint was moved neither in the time of Darius the First, who lived in the court of Cyrus, and married his daughter, nor of Xerxes his son, as Josephus thinks (taking Xerxes for Artaxerxes), but in the beginning of Artaxerxes Longimanus; who began to reign seventy-one years after the first of Cyrus, in which the edict was published.

Ver. 23. *Now, when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews.*] So they of the captivity are now called, though there were many Israelites among them; because they chiefly consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. But it must be noted, that all Israel (as this author speaks, chap. ii. *ult.*) are included under the name of Jews. For liberty was granted to them all by the edict of Cyrus (which cannot be noted too often), in virtue of which they might return when they pleased. But the holy writers mention only those who returned in a body: after which the prophets admonish those who remained in captivity to return to their own land; as we see in the book of Zechariah.

And made them to cease by force and power.] They threatened, I suppose, to force them to desist, if they did not presently obey the king's order; which was only that the city should not be built: but the temple being a part of it, they would have it understood that it was comprehended in this order.

Ver. 24. *Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem.*] It did not quite cease; for when the Jews understood that this edict did not prohibit the building of the temple, but only of the city, they went on with their work again without asking any leave; since they knew Artaxerxes did not forbid it. But it went on so slowly, that in a manner it ceased, till the beginning of the reign of Darius, as it here follows.

So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.] They that take Darius Nothus to be here meant, are pressed with very great difficulties. For, from the first year of Cyrus, who gave order for the building of the temple, till the sixth year of Darius Nothus, in which they suppose it was finished, there were at least a hundred and thirteen years, as Scaliger and Calvisius make account: but as others think, a hundred and seventeen; and, according to Cocceius, a hundred forty and two. Now all this time Zerubbabel was in the government of Judea, and Jeshua in the high-priesthood: but so long an authority in church or state was never heard of in any age; and they must have lived some time before and after, and consequently they must be of a vast age: and therefore so long a space was not between the beginning and the conclusion of this work. Besides, Haggai supposes (chap. ii. 4.) that some remembered the glory of the first house, and compared it with the glory of the second: which, if this was in the sixth year of Darius Nothus, they must be at least a hundred and fourscore years old; which is not likely. Several solutions are given to this, which do not satisfy those who believe Darius Hystaspes is here meant: whose second year was the eighteenth after the first of Cyrus, as Huetius reckons: and this is the most ancient opinion. But it is built only upon the authority of Josephus, who was followed by many after the second century: but before, they took this Darius to be Darius Ochus, as Dr. Alix assures me, who thinks the long life of Zerubbabel and Jeshua is no objection against it; but is to be looked upon as an extraordinary effect of the Divine goodness, for the re-establishment of the commonwealth, and of the worship of God: as the life of Jehoiada was prolonged for the same reason, (2 Chron. xxiv. 15.)

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *THEN the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo.*] The grandchild of Iddo; for his father's name was Berachiah.

Prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.] Or rather *against them*, as the Hebrew words may be interpreted: for they reproved them because they did not build the temple. They both prophesied in the second year of Darius, as appears by the beginning of their prophecies: one in the sixth month, the other in the eighth. This second year of Darius, as Dr. Alix observes to me, was a sabbatic year, from which there were seven weeks, or forty-nine days, as well for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, which was in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, as for settling a right policy in church and state, which was finished by Nehemiah, the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, which was also a sabbatic year. And from this second of Darius, whom God gave order by these precepts to set upon this work, he thinks, is the true beginning of the sixty-two weeks, (spoken of, Dan. ix.) till the appearing of the Messiah.

Ver. 2. *Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem.*] It had been begun a good while ago, but went on very slowly, till these great men, excited by the prophets, set the work forward.

And with them were the prophets of God helping them.] Calling upon them to labour strenuously in the work: for God was with them, to protect, defend, and prosper them, (Haggai i. 13, 14. ii. 4.)

Ver. 3. *At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions.*] These were men in authority under the king of Persia, who managed the public affairs in these countries; but seem to have been of a better spirit than Rehum, and the rest mentioned in the foregoing chapter; who, it is likely, were either dead, or put out of their places by this new king.

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And said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?] They fairly question them by what authority they built the temple, and the wall about it: for they do not mean the wall of the city, which was not building.

Ver. 4. *Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building?*] Many take these to be still the words of Tatnai, and his companions. But it is more natural to take them for the answer of the Jews: who not only told them by what authority they built the temple, but also gave them the names of those who were the great undertakers of the work; after which, it is likely, they inquired, ver. 10. But then the word *What*, is not the note of an interrogation, but is to be translated, *We said unto them after this manner, What were the names*, &c. From which place Huetius argues, that he who wrote this chapter was now present when this question was asked, and answer made to it; and therefore Ezra was not the writer: for this was in the second year of Darius, and he did not come to Jerusalem till the seventh year of Artaxerxes, called Longimanus, (chap. vii. 1. 8.)

Ver. 5. *But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius.*] By the favour and good providence of God, the king's ministers in those parts became their friends, so far, as not to prohibit them to go on with their work; but referred the matter to the consideration of Darius himself; to whom they make a very fair and honest report of the case.

And then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.] The matter being laid before Darius, they received answer from him by letter what should be done in it.

Ver. 6. *The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shetkar-boznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king.*] The Apharsachites were one of the nations mentioned before in the former letter to Artaxerxes, (chap. iv. 9.) of which, perhaps, these two great men were.

Ver. 7. *They sent a letter unto him, wherein was written thus: Unto Darius the king, all peace.*] They seem to write with greater affection than the former did, wishing the king all prosperity and happiness, which the other did not, but only called themselves his servants, (chap. iv. 11.)

Ver. 8. *Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God.*] So the Jews spake, to distinguish their God from all others, who were the gods only of small countries, every one of which had their particular gods.

Which is builded with great stones.] The Talmudists, Jarchi, and Kimchi, and others, translate it *marble stones*, and the LXX. *choice stones*.

And timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands.] It was advanced so far, and such diligence was used, that if a stop were not put to it, it would be speedily finished.

Ver. 9. *Then asked we those elders, and said unto them, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls?*

Ver. 10. *And we asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them.*] They made a very diligent inquiry, that they might give the king a perfect account of the matter, and he might the better judge of it.

Ver. 11. *And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up.*] They own their religion which was of very ancient standing; their God having been worshipped many ages ago in this house which was built by Solomon.

Ver. 12. *But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon.*] They give them a short account how it came to be destroyed for their sins, and how they were punished on that account.

Ver. 13. *But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon, the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.*

Ver. 14. *And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor.*

Ver. 15. *And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place.*

Ver. 16. *Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished.*] These last words shew it had gone on very slowly and negligently ever since the first of Cyrus, they being in a poor condition, and hindered in the work by the Samaritans; after which the people grew sluggish, being set upon building their own houses, which they carried on with greater earnestness, than the house of God, as Haggai reproves them. However, in these last verses, the Jews gave Tatnai a faithful account of the whole matter; and he very worthily represented it to the king, as they informed him, without any addition or diminution of his own. For he did not accuse them of building the walls of Jerusalem; which shews, he and his companions were not their enemies; but impartially wrote what they affirmed to be true.

Ver. 17. *Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure-house, which is there at Babylon.*] Where the records of the kingdom were kept very carefully, as treasures use to be.

Whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.] It is likely the elders desired the records might be searched and examined, whether they said true or not; and accordingly, the governors reported their desires to the king, as a speedy way to be satisfied about this matter. For these do not seem to be like the Samaritans in the foregoing chapter, who endeavoured to obstruct the work, but were only desirous to be informed of the truth of what the Jews pretended, that so the building of the temple might either be permitted or prohibited, according as the king found the grant of Cyrus to be.

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CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *THEN Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon.*] In the house where the records of the kingdom were kept; but by what follows, it appears that in Babylon they found nothing.

Ver. 2. *And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written.*] They searched therefore at Achmetha, which was afterward called Ecbatana, where the kings of Persia sometimes kept their courts: and there was found a volume concerning the affairs of Judea, wherein was the following record. This argued a great goodness in Darius, that he did not presently decree against them, because nothing that they alleged was found in Babylon; but caused a search to be made in another place, where he knew records were preserved.

Ver. 3. *In the first year of Cyrus the king.*] This, perhaps, was the inscription of the following memorial.

The same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits.] Or rather, *the length thereof,* as these last words may be translated. They had liberty to make it of these dimensions if they pleased, but no bigger: and these exceeded the proportions of Solomon's temple, if we suppose it to have been thirty cubits in height, except the porch, which was a hundred and twenty. But I have shewn elsewhere, that it is probable all the temple of Solomon was in length a hundred and twenty cubits, and this house was but half so high. This Josephus saith, who saw this second temple, (lib. xv. Archæolog. cap. 14.) Ἐνδεῖ δ' αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος εἰς ὕψος ἑξήκοντα πήχεις, &c. *It wanted* (speaking of this temple) *to make it great, sixty cubits in height; for so much higher was the first temple which Solomon built.*

Ver. 4. *With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber; and let the expenses be given out of the king's house.*] He ordered it to be built at his own charge, for so he saith God commanded him, (chap. i. 2.) "God hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem." Yet we do not find that the Jews made use of his bounty, as Pellicanus observes, because they would not provoke too much the envy of the Samaritans, who were angry at his kindness to them. And therefore they carried on the work at their own cost, till Darius now commanded they should have what they desired out of his revenue, to finish what they had begun.

Ver. 5. *And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again to the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God.*] Thus far the decree of Cyrus is recited, which justified the truth of all the allegations of the Jews in the foregoing chapter. Now follows the decree of Darius thereupon.

Ver. 6. *Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river.*] It is most likely that he set down in his letter to these men the forementioned decree of Cyrus, as it was found in the records, and then gave the following command.

Be ye far from thence.] Come not near Jerusalem to give them any hinderance or disturbance.

Ver. 7. *Let the work of this house of God alone.*] Obstruct not the work, but rather further it.

Let the governor of the Jews, and the elders of the Jews, build this house of God in his place.] In the place where it stood before. Zerubbabel is constantly called the governor of the Jews, never their king, (Hag. i. 1. 14. ii. 2. 21.) and so some of his successors, (Mal. i. 9.) For in Babylon, as Josephus relates, he was σωματοφύλαξ, *a keeper of the king's body,* and τῶν αἰχμαλώτων Ἰουδαίων ἡγεμών, *the captain of the captive Jews;* who in one word was called Αἰχμαλωτάρχα. Therefore he was appointed by Cyrus, and afterward by Darius, to govern the province of Judea in the king's name, and at his charge to see the temple built at Jerusalem. But learned men give no credit to what Josephus says of his great office in Babylon.

Ver. 8. *Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews.*] Whose names they had given in to him, (chap. v. 10.)

For the building of this house of God.] As he had ordered they should not be hindered, so he made a further order that they should give them assistance in what they were about.

That of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered.] That the work might not stop for want of money to go forward, which he ordered to be paid them without delay.

Ver. 9. *And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt-offerings of the God of heaven.*] So he had learned to call the God of Israel, after the example of Cyrus, who acknowledges God had made him so great, as he had Darius.

Wheat, salt, wine, and oil.] For meat-offerings to attend upon the burnt-offerings.

According to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem.] This was a great honour done to God's ministers, who might have whatsoever they desired for his service.

Let it be given them day by day without fail.] That the morning and evening burnt-sacrifices might never fail to be offered every day.

Ver. 10. *That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.*] From this place principally Mr. Mede proves at large, that sacrifices were a rite of supplication unto God; such ones, namely, whereby the supplicant came not with a naked petition, but presented something unto his God, whereby to find favour in his sight, and obtain his petition: whence we find Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, where they pitched their tents, to have built an altar also (which was a place for sacrifice), and there *called upon the name of the Lord.* And by this place it appears, that the sacrifices and oblations presented by gentiles were not refused by the Jews, when they desired their prayers to God for them. The Hebrew doctors indeed say, that all such sacrifices were eucharistical, not hilastical, that is, sacrifices of thanksgiving or acknowledgment to God (being burnt-offerings), not sacrifices of expiation, or sin-offerings.

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So Maimonides, in his treatise of sacrifices, "All the eucharistical sacrifices of the gentiles were burnt-offerings." There is a memorable passage in Josephus (lib. ii. de Bello Judaico, cap. 31.) concerning Eleazar the priest, who, being admonished to admit the sacrifices and oblations of the gentiles, acknowledged that their ancestors adorned the temple with gifts offered by the gentiles, always accepting τῶν ἔξωθεν ἐθνῶν δωρεὰς καὶ θυσίας, *the gifts and sacrifices of external nations.*

The king and his sons.] Here it must be noted, that Darius the First had no sons, but Darius the Second had, *viz.* Artaxerxes Mnemon, and Cyrus the younger, who were great men, and reigned in some manner with him. Artaxerxes Mnemon (as Dr. Alix makes account) was thirty-five years old in the second year of Darius; and Cyrus (who was slain in a battle against his brother) was a little younger.

Ver. 11. *Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and, being set up, let him be hanged thereon.*] To make the decree more valid and better observed, he added this penalty; that if any acted contrary to it, a beam should be taken out of his own house, and, being set up, he should be hanged thereon. But Lud. de Dieu observes, that there is no construction in these words, which we render, *being set up;* therefore he would have them translated after the LXX. *and standing, let him be beat upon it;* whipped, as we say, at a post, as the manner was among the Persians and other nations. Only among the Jews they that were beaten did not stand, but lay down, (Deut. xxv. 2.) But if a greater punishment be here meant, then he makes the first words refer to the wood, and the latter to the man, in this manner, *and from above let it fall upon him.* That is, the stake, being lifted up, shall be struck into his body, and come out at his fundament; which was a cruel punishment among the eastern people, and still continued there.

And let his house be made a dunghill for this.] The pulling down of a beam from his house, supposes the pulling down of the house, which he orders should not be built again, but the place where it stood be made a dunghill. Thus the Romans pulled down the houses of very wicked men for their greater disgrace; of Sp. Cassius, for instance, and of Ovidius Pollio.

Ver. 12. *And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there, destroy all kings and people that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem.*] He was touched with such a sense of the greatness of the God of the Jews, that he prays, He who had all power in heaven and earth, would not only punish all those kings over whom he had no power (not being his subjects), who went about to obstruct this work, but destroy both them and their people.

I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.] He concludes as he began, that forthwith this decree should be executed, (ver. 8.)

Ver. 13. *Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily.*] They were as punctual in executing his decrees as he desired, and that without any delay.

Ver. 14. *And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo.*] Who directed and encouraged them in their work; representing to them, it is likely, the wonderful goodness of God, who had inclined the heart of the king of Persia to be so highly favourable to them.

And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.] If this Darius was he called Hystaspes, then it was Artaxerxes Longimanus his successor that is here meant; who, though he found the temple built, yet sent Ezra to beautify it, and to see things done there according to their law, (chap. vii. 12. 21. 27.) But some think him to be Artaxerxes Mnemon, who reigned with his father many years, and lived till he was ninety-four years old. (Plut.)

Ver. 15. *And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.*] Now they did in four years more than they had done in many years before. For, partly by their own poverty, and partly by the corruption of the courtiers of Persia, who hindered the necessary supplies; and partly by the envy of the Samaritans, who retarded them by their false accusations, and by their interest in the governors of Syria; and partly by the sluggishness of the Jews, and their inclination to mind their own private interest more than the public good, the work went on so slowly, that not only the prophets reprehended them for it, but God punished them severely by scarcity of provision, as we read in the prophet Haggai: but now, by the favour of this king, and by the zeal of God's prophets, it went on apace, and was speedily finished.

Ver. 16. *And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.*] By the *children of Israel* are to be understood not only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin (who were the chief), but all those of other tribes, many of which, from the time of Cyrus to the second of Darius, were come to their own country, though we have not a particular account of their names. This appears from the next verse. All these, together with the priests and Levites, agreed to dedicate this house with festival joy. Thus the temple at first was dedicated, (1 Kings viii. 2. 2 Chron. vii. 4, &c.) That is, after it was built, being designed only for sacred uses, now they shewed, by an example, how it should be used, which is the proper and simple sense of the word *dedicate,* as Selden explains it, (lib. iii. de Synedr. cap. 13. sect. 5.) But the Hebrew doctors observe, that by these sacrifices now offered, there was no new sanctity given to the place, but the old only restored.

Ver. 17. *And offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs.*] A hecatomb was the noblest sacrifice among the heathen, of which we find often mention in their books; and with that the Jews began the dedication of the temple: to which they made many additional offerings, some of which were peace-offerings, on which they feasted, as the hundred bullocks, I suppose, were whole burnt-offerings.

And for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.] For it appears by many places before recited, that though the ten tribes

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were carried captive by Shalmaneser, yet many of them remained in their country, and were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, together with Judah and Benjamin, with whom they returned out of Babylon, as many others of the ten tribes did, who were carried away at the taking of Samaria. (See chap. ii. of this book, ver. 70. 2 Chron. xxxi. 5. 10, 11. xxxiv. 7. 9. xxxv. 3. 17. Ezra viii. 35. Acts xxvi. 7.)

Ver. 18. *And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God which is at Jerusalem, as it is written in the book of Moses.*] Where directions are given for their service, Numb. iii. 6. viii. 9, 10.

Ver. 19. *And the children of the captivity kept the Passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month.*] As was enjoined Exod. xii. 6. The Jews had the free exercise of their religion in Babylon (as I shall observe more largely afterward), where they circumcised their children, and also made proselytes; but the *children of the captivity* signified those who were come back from it, and ate the passover, which they could not have done if they had not been circumcised.

Ver. 20. *For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.*] They had time to purify themselves between the day wherein the temple was perfected, and the day wherein this feast was to be kept, there being above a month between.

Ver. 21. *And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel, did eat.*] That is, all proselytes, who had entirely made themselves subject to the law of Moses; for others might not eat of it, but they might, (Exod. xii. 48, 49.) Now, as Pellicanus observes, there were many proselytes who quite forsook their heathenish religion, and were brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God, by the favour of Cyrus and Darius, kings of Persia. They had kept the Passover before this, being in the place which God chose, and having an altar where they might sacrifice; but it was not a quiet and settled time, and they had much occasion to be among the heathen; and so, it is likely, could not easily purify themselves to eat of it, as they did now.

Ver. 22. *And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.*] God filled their hearts with joy, by turning the heart of the king, who now reigned over all the kingdoms which were formerly under the power of the Assyrians, who had grievously oppressed them, as the Persians who came in their stead now highly favoured them; who having conquered Babylon, were called the kings of Assyria. For we find in these books, the king of Persia, after that conquest, is called by the name of the king of Babylon, (see Nehem. xiii. 6.) as the same king of Persia is here called the king of Assyria: for the kings formerly called by these names were possessed of vast dominions over many large provinces; which the Persian kings enjoying, they retained the ancient names of the former kings. For, as Joh. Vorstius observes, in his Dissert. de Quatuor Monarchiis, sect. 9. the kingdom of Babylon was not extinguished by little and little, but all at once: Cyrus possessed himself of it entirely, *simul et semel;* and, adding a vast dominion to the small one he had before, was called the king of those dominions which he conquered.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *NOW after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia.*] The same Artaxerxes, I suppose, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 14. But R. Solomon and Aben Ezra fancy he was Darius beforenamed.

Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah.] He was descended from Seraiah, but not immediately begotten by him; for Seraiah perished when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans: (2 Kings xxv. 18. 21.) at which time Ezra, it is likely, was not in being; but he was his grandson, or great-grandson, and his descent is mentioned from him, because he was an eminent person, who flourished before the destruction of the temple, whereas his father or grandfather lived obscurely in their captivity. (See 1 Chron. vi. 15.)

Ver. 2. *The son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub.*

Ver. 3. *The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth.*] In this genealogy there are six generations omitted, between Azariah and Meraioth (as before there were some between Seraiah and Ezra), which are to be supplied out of 1 Chron. vi. 7, &c. which Kimchi, as I there observed, thinks was done for brevity's sake. For Ezra being author of that book, which was written first, and then of this, might think it needless to repeat all that he had there said at large.

Ver. 4. *The son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki.*

Ver. 5. *The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest.*] See 1 Chron. vi. 4, 5.

Ver. 6. *This Ezra went up from Babylon.*] Not only by the king's leave and his commission, but with great authority, as appears from the end of this verse, and from ver. 25.

And he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given.] He calls himself a scribe (as Buxtorf notes in his Tiberias), not from writing and describing, but from declaring and explicating, those things that are contained in the Scripture. For as *sepher* signifies a *book*, so *sopher* signifies one skilful and learned in that book, an interpreter and teacher out of it. And there being no book comparable to the book of the law, therefore *sopher* became a name of great dignity, and signified one that taught God's law, and expounded it to his people. Thus, in the New Testament, Γραμματεῖς, *the scribes*, were those that instructed the people. For when our Saviour is said to have taught them as one having authority, and *not as the scribes*, it plainly shews that they were teachers, though not with such authority. See Jer. viii. 8. where the word *scribe* is thus used.

And he calls himself a *ready scribe*, because he was expert in the law, and understood it thoroughly, both in all things belonging to the priesthood, and to the civil power;

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in which he was so well versed, that he could give a ready account of any part of it. And it is thought by some, he gathered together the most perfect copies of the law, and put out an accurate edition of it, with all the prophetical books, and such poems as had any sacred authority among them, adding the history of following times. But Josephus saith nothing of it, and therefore it is looked upon by others as a Jewish chimera, who attribute many other things to him without ground.

And the king granted him all his request.] Some think to rebuild Jerusalem, of which there is no mention any where: therefore he only granted him power, as he desired, to do such things as are mentioned below, (ver. 14, 15, &c.)

According to the hand of the Lord his God upon him.] For God was so favourable to him, as to incline the king to give a gracious answer to his petition. And, indeed, these kings of Persia were so exceeding kind to the Jews, that, in a grateful remembrance of the favour they shewed them, in permitting them to build the temple again, and assisting them in it, they caused a figure of the city and palace of Shushan (where the kings of Persia resided) to be made in brass, in the east gate of the temple, which looked towards Persia; as we read in the Talmud, in the treatise called Middoth.

Ver. 7. *And there went up some of the children of Israel.*] Of the ten tribes, or such Jews as remained still in Babylon, after leave given them by Cyrus to return into their own country.

And of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.] This was the second company that went up to Jerusalem, consisting of such-like persons as went up first with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and others, (chap. ii. 2. 70.) For hearing the temple was rebuilt, and the worship of God restored, we may very well think many went along with Ezra, who had not such a strong motive to go in the first of Cyrus.

Ver. 8. *And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.*

Ver. 9. *For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem.*] On the first day of the first month they went from Babylon to the river Ahava, where they spent three days in taking a view of the people that accompanied him, (chap. viii. 15.) After eight days more, part of which they had spent in fasting and prayer, they went forward, (chap. viii. 21, 22. 31.)

According to the good hand of his God upon him.] He had great reason to acknowledge the favour of God to them in conducting them safe to Jerusalem; for it was a long way thither, and a difficult journey, and they had many impediments (going with wives and children, flocks and herds), and were not without enemies to waylay them, whom he boasted he did not fear, but relied on the Divine protection, as he told the king, chap. viii. 22.

Ver. 10. *For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.*] He was intent upon this business, on which he had set his heart, as we speak, bending his thoughts and studies this way. For so the Hebrew word *cun* (which we translate *prepare*) signifies, to establish, confirm, and make things fixed and immoveable. And first, he set himself to *seek the law of the Lord*, that is, to inquire into it, and search after the will of God therein contained, that he might understand it himself: and then, like a good man, he set his heart *to do* what God commanded, and put in practice what he knew to be his duty, whereby he was the better qualified *to teach* others what he knew and did himself, which was the next thing which he diligently attended. This was the right method of doing good, in which Nehemiah tells us he proceeded, (chap. viii. beginning.) Some think statutes and judgments are the same thing, comprehending all the precepts of Moses; but others take them to have a distinct meaning: the first signifying the ceremonial law about the Divine worship; and the second, the moral precepts concerning common honesty and civil life.

Ver. 11. *Now, this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel.*] Here Ezra declares that he was no ordinary doctor of the law, but of eminent rank among them, who had studied the law thoroughly, and was able in every case to determine what was to be done: or (as some understand the latter part of this verse), he was perfectly skilled in the words or language wherein the law was written (which in the captivity many perhaps had forgotten), and in the sense of every law. But this, I think, is not to be supposed, that they had forgotten their own language.

Ver. 12. *Artaxerxes, king of kings.*] For he had several kings who were subject to him.

Unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven.] So Ezra, I suppose, was wont to be styled by the Jews, who never spake of him, but as a man of greater dignity and honour than others.

Perfect peace, and at such a time.] On such a year and day, as was mentioned in the date of the letter.

Ver. 13. *I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own free-will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.*] None might leave his country without the king's permission, which he here gives to all the Jewish nation who were so disposed.

Ver. 14. *Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors.*] By whose advice this decree being made, it gave it the greater authority; for these were the principal men of the kingdom, as appears from the first of Esther, ver. 14.

To inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God.] By this composition he gave him authority to make inquisition in Judea, whether every thing there was done conformably to the law of Moses: that is, he granted to the Jewish nation an *αὐτονομία, a liberty to live by their own laws*, and to judge all causes according to them; and, in the conclusion, granted them also an *αὐτοδικία, a power to sentence men according to their own law*, (ver. 25, 26.)

Which is in thine hand.] He entrusted Ezra with this great power of being supreme inquisitor and judge, because he was so very well skilled in the law (which is meant by having it *in his hand*), which he had in such readiness, and was so very conversant in it, that he was able presently to determine and judge whether it were observed.

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Ver. 15. *And to carry the silver and the gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem.*] This is an argument that they had a high opinion of the God of Israel, and desired his favour, though they did not worship him alone, but imagined other gods had some power, though not so great as he.

Ver. 16. *And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in the province of Babylon, with the free-will-offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem.*] He gave them leave to carry away all the money they could procure (so the word we translate *find* is used in other places) in his own country of Babylon, as well as what the Jews, who had a mind to stay still there, should offer for the service of the temple at Jerusalem.

Ver. 17. *That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat-offerings, and their drink-offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem.*] That they might pray for the prosperity of the king and of his sons, as Darius ordered, chap. vi. 9, 10.

Ver. 18. *And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and gold, that do after the will of your God.*] He authorizes Ezra to take other priests to his assistance, in disposing of the money that was not laid out in sacrifices; only he would have it employed to some sacred use.

Ver. 19. *The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, those deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem.*] He speaks of him as if he thought him a particular God, but afterward speaks of him as the *God of heaven*, as he had done before, ver. 12. which is a sign he took him to be the most high God, who had a special affection for Jerusalem, because he was there worshipped.

Ver. 20. *And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow.*] Either for the reparation (if any was wanting), or for the adorning of the house. (See ver. 27.)

Bestow it out of the king's treasure-house.] Out of his exchequer, as we now speak.

Ver. 21. *And I, even I, Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river.*] All the receivers, and other officers employed about the king's revenue.

That whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily.] This was a wonderful large concession, that he should have whatsoever he desired; and that they should not make him attend upon them, and wait long for it, but furnish him immediately.

Ver. 22. *Unto a hundred talents of silver, and to a hundred measures of wheat, and to a hundred baths of wine, and to a hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much.*] He limits all the other expenses, except *salt;* without which no sacrifice could be offered: and therefore, since he would not have any sacrifice hindered, he did not prescribe any measure of that; but left them to take as much as they found necessary.

Ver. 23. *Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven.*] Here Jacobus Capellus cries out in a kind of rapture, "O verba literis aureis regum palatus inscribenda, atque adeo stylo adamantino fidelium omnium animis insculpenda!" *O words to be written upon the palaces of kings in golden letters, and engraven on the minds of all the faithful with a style of adamant!* For they express an exceeding great sense of God, and of his supreme authority; and the regard that is due from the greatest kings and potentates to his most sacred commands, (Historia Sacra et Exotica, ad A.M. 3543.) The like is not easy to be found any where.

For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?] As he was afraid there would be, if the worship and service of God was here neglected through his default. An argument he was possessed with a greater dread of God's just displeasure, than the kings of Judah themselves were generally before the captivity. The mention of the king and *of his sons,* shews, that this agrees to Artaxerxes Mnemon exactly; but not to Xerxes (who was in Greece in the seventh year of his reign), nor to Longimanus: but Artaxerxes Mnemon had then Ochus the husband of Esther, who was a great man, and some more. This remark I owe to the most learned Dr. Alix.

Ver. 24. *Also we certify you, that, touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them.*] The king's revenue arose out of these three imposts, as appears by chap. iv. 13. from all which burdens, which were very great, the king freed every one of God's ministers, that they might the more cheerfully attend his service. And this was confirmed by some succeeding princes, as Bertram observes, (de Republica Jud. p. 171.) which the first Christian kings piously imitated, as J. Wolfius notes, "that they who watched and prayed for the public good, might be free from all other cares."

Ver. 25. *And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God that is in thine hand.*] According as the law of God directed, in which he was very expert, (ver. 14.)

Set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river.] Such as Moses ordered, Deut. xvi. 18. Here seems to be the original of the Sanhedrin, which continued but weakly till the time of the Maccabees.

All such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.] Men well acquainted with the laws of God, who were able to instruct others that were ignorant. No Jewish king could have given more pious instructions. And the same Jacobus Capellus in the place abovenamed thinks, that in this large power granted to Ezra, there was comprehended sufficient authority to build the walls of Jerusalem. But as the king did not expressly mention it, so the malignity of the Jews' enemies hindered it; and Ezra being now grown old, was unable to cope with them. But this is not a good reason, for he lived thirteen years after this, able to stand and read the law from six to twelve of the clock.

Ver. 26. *And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king.*] By the *law of the king* is meant this decree, which was now made in favour of the Jews; giving them authority to execute their own laws again. As for the imperial laws Ezra had nothing to do with them, nor were the Jews to be governed by them, but by their own laws; unless any matters could not be determined by

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the Divine laws: in that case they were to be judged by the king's law. So Joh. Vorstius understands these words disjunctively, (in his Dissert. de Synedriis Hebr. sect. 36.) that they should act according to the direction of the Divine law; or, if any thing fell out that could not be defined by that, then according to the prescription of the laws of the king.

Let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death.] The Romans never allowed the Jews the power of life and death, which the Persians did. So it is commonly thought; but the contrary is plain from the Acts of the Apostles, which shew they enjoyed that power, by their stoning St. Stephen.

Or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.] That word which we translate *banishment*, signifies in the Chaldee (as we note in the margin of our Bibles) *rooting out*; and therefore is by some interpreted disinheriting, or excommunicating from their society; so that he should be an *outlaw*, as we speak, the highest degree of which was called *shammathah*. And thus our Mr. Thorndike observes, that this *rooting out* is the same with that which in chap. x. 8. is called being *divided* or *separated* from the congregation of the captivity; being, indeed, a kind of temporal outlawry, unto which is joined confiscation of goods. And thus the greater excommunication among Christians is every where a temporal punishment; *viz.* in respect of some temporal punishment attending it in Christian states: which in Christianity is accidental, by an act of those states; but in Judaism was essential, so long as those temporal advantages, which were essential conditions of the law, were not forfeited. And this without doubt is the same punishment that is called *putting out of the synagogue*. (See Rites of the Church in a Christian State, p. 28. and Review, p. 58. with Grotius, de Imper. Sum. Potest. cap. 9.) I only add, that from such sentence it was in vain for them to appeal to any of the king's courts: for by this decree all matters were to be tried and finally judged by their own law.

Ver. 27. *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.*] To be so liberal in his gifts and privileges, as is before expressed, (ver. 15, 16, &c.)

Ver. 28. *And hath extended mercy unto me.*] These words plainly shew Ezra wrote this part of this book, if not the whole.

Before the king and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes.] By whose advice and consent the large immunities beforementioned were granted to the Jewish nation.

And I was strengthened as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me; and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.] Whose names follow in the next chapter. The marvellous kindness of the king in this grant to Ezra gave a great authority to him; and moved several of the greatest persons among the Jews still in Babylon, to resolve to accompany him to Jerusalem.

These two last verses are evidently the words of Ezra, acknowledging the Divine goodness to him, in giving him such favour with the king; whose words before are in the Syriac or Chaldee language; but these are in the Hebrew.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *THESE are now the chief of their fathers, and this is the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king.*] Whose names he sets down to preserve their memory to future generations.

Ver. 2. *Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel.*] By the sons, he means the families of these two persons; two of which he particularly names, Gershom and Daniel: not Daniel the prophet, but some eminent person of Ithamar's family.

Of the sons of David; Hattush.] His family was so noble, because Christ was to spring from thence, that special notice was taken of it.

Ver. 3. *Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh; Zechariah.*] This Shechaniah is said to be the son of Pharosh, to distinguish him from another Shechaniah mentioned ver. 5.

And with him.] That is, with Zechariah.

Were reckoned, by genealogy of the males, a hundred and fifty.] It is not said how many there were of the other families: and we are not to think that none but males went up out of this family, and the rest that follow; for mention is made of their little ones, ver. 21. who had women, no doubt, to look after them.

Ver. 4. *Of the sons of Pahath-Moab; Elihoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males.*

Ver. 5. *Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males.*] This was a person of great note, of whose family there went up almost twice as many as did of any other family.

Ver. 6. *Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males.*

Ver. 7. *And of the sons of Elam; Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males.*] Concerning these, and the families that follow to ver. 15. there is little to be noted; but that out of them many went up with Zerubbabel in the reign of Cyrus (which appears by the account given in the second chapter), as now more went up with Ezra out of the very same families.

Ver. 8. *And of the sons of Shephatiah; Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males.*

Ver. 9. *Of the sons of Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males.*

Ver. 10. *And of the sons of Shelomith; the son of Josiphiah, and with him a hundred and threescore males.*

Ver. 11. *And of the sons of Bebai; Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males.*

Ver. 12. *And of the sons of Azgad; Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him a hundred and ten males.*

Ver. 13. *And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names are these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males.*] They are called *the last sons*, with respect to the first of them that went up with Zerubbabel. Or, these were the last that followed Ezra: which some look upon as a blot on Adonikam, that his family was the last that accompanied Ezra.

Ver. 14. *Of the sons also of Bigvai; Uthai, and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.*

Ver. 15. *And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava.*] This seems to be the name of a river,

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as well as of a town, which stood on the bank of Euphrates, there where this stream emptied itself into it. Some take it for Adiabene, a city so called from Adiava, ver. 31.

And there abode we in tents three days.] It is likely, that in the whole journey they lodged, not in cities and towns, but in tents, which they carried along with them; and could pitch where and when it was most commodious for them.

And I viewed the people.] Took an account of their number, and of what tribe they were.

And the priests, and found there were none of the sons of Levi.] That is, none who were not priests: of whom there were some, (ver. 2.)

Ver. 16. *Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief men.*] Men of authority among the company, and the heads perhaps of several families.

Also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, men of understanding.] These eleven persons he sent for to come to him, that he might employ them in a message to a place, where he knew there were a great many Levites; as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 17. *And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief.*] Among the Levites, who dwelt at the place next mentioned, and there had the free exercise of their religion, as this and many other passages in this book plainly enough prove. And it is very probable, they had their synagogues (as they had afterward in their dispersion), or other places, where they met for religious worship. For we find the people resorting to Ezekiel in their captivity, and him preaching to them the word of God, in many places of his book, particularly chap. xxxiii. 30, 31, &c. And Ezra, in all likelihood, was an instructor among them, as Joiarib and Elnathan also were, and Iddo, to whom these were sent. By which means many proselytes were made, who left their own country, and came with them to Jerusalem, when they returned, (chap. vi. 21.)

At the place Casiphia.] Several are of opinion, and particularly Stephanus Morinus lately, that this place was in the country of the Caspii, a people who gave denomination to the Caspian Sea: where some of the Israelites were planted, who were carried captive by Shalmaneser, and still preserved their language and religion. But I look upon this as unlikely; the Caspian Sea and the country about it being too far off for Ezra to send thither these messengers: who rather went to a place in the province of Babylon, to which they went, and did a great deal of business, and returned in the space of twelve days. The truth is (as Dr. Alix observes) the Levites were not among the ten tribes, but in Chaldea: and, perhaps, some of them were transported into Parthia, where there was a city called Caspi, known to the old geographers.

And I told them what they should say unto Iddo, and to his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia.] Who, it seems, were better disposed than many of the Levites, to whom they ministered. But R. Solomon and others translate the words quite otherwise; *He told them what they should say to Iddo and his brethren* (or, to Achio), *who were constituted in the place Casiphia.* For it is plain they were not Nethinims, Iddo being called *Harosh*, a prince, or chief, that is, among the Levites: by whose authority Ezra expected some Levites, whom he wanted to accompany him to Jerusalem, should be sent to him, as they were. Now this cannot be said of the Nethinims; for none of them were chiefs, or presidents of the Levites, but their ministers or servants, as appears from ver. 20. and other places. Therefore the word *Nethinim* must here signify men *appointed* to live among the Jews of that place; or, who had their residence there.

That they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God.] That is, Levites to attend upon the priests, as the Nethinims did upon the Levites.

Ver. 18. *And, by the good hand of our God upon us.*] God inclined their hearts to comply with his desire.

They brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen.] They brought a man of understanding, *viz.* Sherebiah (so the words, I think, should be translated), with his sons and brethren, eighteen in number.

Ver. 19. *And Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren, and their sons, twenty.*] These were eminent persons also, though not equal to Sherebiah, who is noted as a man of great knowledge.

Ver. 20. *Also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims.*] Every one knows, that the Gibeonites were addicted by Joshua to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, for the service of God's house; but a great many of them being destroyed by Saul, there were not enough remaining to serve in those ministries. And therefore David (as Bertram thinks, in his book de Repub. Jud. p. 277.) appointed some other persons to the same employment; and afterward Solomon appointed more; who are called therefore Solomon's servants: all which, both Gibeonites and those who were added to them by David and Solomon, were known by the name of Nethinims, as much as to say, *dedititii*, or *ascriptitii*, men *given*, as the Hebrew word denotes: for, as the Levites were given to the priests, (Numb. viii. 16. 19.) so were these given to the Levites. And this is said to have been done by *David and the princes*, because David advised with the consistory about it, who are called *the princes*, 2 Chron. xxx. 2. xxxi. 8. (See Mr. Thorndike, Rites of the Church, p. 231.) But I have observed elsewhere, that these Nethinims were distinct from the Gibeonites, and of a higher rank in the service of God. (See 1 Chron. ix. 2.)

All of them were expressed by name.] I suppose Iddo sent the names of every one of them, though they are not all here mentioned.

Ver. 21. *Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.*] He being the leader of this colony, had authority from the king to command whatsoever he pleased for the good of it. And nothing was more necessary, than humbly and sorrowfully to acknowledge their offences against God, and beg his gracious pardon; and that he would prosper them in their journey, and direct them in the best way to bring themselves and all they had safe to Jerusalem: which was the end of this fast.

Ver. 22. *For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the*

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way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.] He might have obtained from the king any thing that he desired; but he had so openly declared, that he depended solely upon God for safe conduct, that he was ashamed to ask a guard of the king to secure them in their passage, from those enemies that he knew would waylay them; (ver. 31.) for the king not being much instructed in Divine matters, might imagine, that all were vain boasts which the Jews had made of the favour of God to them, and of the prophecies concerning their restoration: which made Ezra and others so confident, as only to desire leave to return to their own country; and as for a safe passage, they took no care, but to commit themselves to God, who would defend his own people that trusted in him. To ask therefore protection and defence from the king, would look as if they distrusted the power and favour of their God, concerning whom they had spoken so magnificently. But it was highly necessary they should beseech that of God, which they would not ask of the king; which they did by fasting and prayer.

Ver. 23. *So we fasted, and besought our God for this; and he was entreated of us.*] Gave them some assurance that their petitions should be granted. Some think, this fast lasted eight days, beginning after the three days mentioned above, ver. 15. For they began to go out of Babylon on the first day of the month, (chap. vii. 9.) and they stayed at Ahava three days to take a view of their company; and went from thence on the twelfth, (ver. 31.) And therefore they must either keep this fast eight days, or else they were seven days in coming from Babylon, and other places, to Ahava; where a general rendezvous, as we speak, was appointed. And this I take to be most probable, that they came out of Babylon on the first day, and expected at Ahava till all their company was got together, which was about the seventh day; and they all rested three days to make a complete muster of the whole number, and fasted one day; and so began to take their journey from Ahava on the twelfth.

Ver. 24. *Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them.*] With whom he might entrust the gifts that had been offered for the temple. These ten men, perhaps, were principal Levites, who were added to the two priests to take this charge upon them. (See ver. 29.)

Ver. 25. *And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel there present, had offered.*] That they might have no excuse if they were any way embezzled.

Ver. 26. *I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels a hundred talents, and of gold a hundred talents.*] Or, *a hundred silver vessels, according to their talents;* that is, every one a talent.

Ver. 27. *Also twenty basons of gold of a thousand drachms, and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold.*] They were not worth their weight in gold; but they were of great value, being scarce and rare: as that metal called aurichalcum was; which might be the reason why there was no more than two of them.

Ver. 28. *And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the Lord; the vessels are holy also.*] They being men consecrated to God's service, were bound above all others to be faithful in the discharge of their duty, especially being entrusted with holy things; which were therefore to be carefully delivered at Jerusalem, just as they were committed to their trust.

And the silver and the gold are a free-will-offering unto the Lord God of your fathers.] Which made them still more sacred.

Ver. 29. *Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord.*] Where they were deposited, after they had given an account of them there, to the persons here mentioned; who received them by the same weight, that they were delivered unto those that brought them.

Ver. 30. *So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem, unto the house of our God.*] This shews, that some of these twelve men (mentioned ver. 26.) if not ten of them were Levites, and not all priests.

Ver. 31. *Then we departed from the river of Ahava.*] Which run by that city into Euphrates.

On the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem.] To pursue their intended journey,

And the hand of our God was upon us.] To protect and strengthen them in so dangerous and long a journey.

And he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.] There were not only many enemies who hated them, and were desirous to cut them off, but many robbers who watched for a booty, whom God either diverted some other way, or disheartened from attempting any thing against them; or, perhaps, directed them (as they prayed, ver. 21.) into some uncommon ways, in which people were not wont to travel, whereby they escaped their enemies.

Ver. 32. *And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.*] Before they did any thing. For it was necessary to rest and refresh themselves awhile, after so tedious a journey, in which they spent above a quarter of a year. (See chap. vii. 9.) Their friends also, it is likely, came to visit them in these three days' time, and welcome them to Jerusalem.

Ver. 33. *Now, on the fourth day was the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them was Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites.*] The names of Eleazar and Phinehas continued through many generations among the priests, because they were two very eminent persons in Aaron's family. And, as there were some Levites charged with this treasure to bring it to Jerusalem, so there were some of them who saw them discharge themselves of their trust.

Ver. 34. *By number and by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time.*] There was a public record made of it; and the persons forementioned, who brought the money and the vessels, were discharged by a public instrument, signed by them that received it. Or, perhaps, the meaning may be, that there was an inventory taken of the goods belonging to the temple, which the priests were charged withal, as the stewards of a family are wont to be with the goods belonging to it.

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Ver. 35. *Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity.*] That is, this company who came up from Babylon with Ezra.

Offered burnt-offerings unto the God of Israel.] To express their gratitude to God for their restoration.

Twelve bullocks for all Israel.] One for every tribe.

Ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he-goats, for a sin-offering.] For all Israel, whether still remaining in Babylon, or returned to Jerusalem.

All this was a burnt-offering unto the Lord.] All the rest (except the he-goats) were a burnt-offering; whereby they acknowledged the Lord for their God.

Ver. 36. *And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river.*] That they might know the king's pleasure, and what privileges he had granted them, which are recited in the foregoing chapter.

And they furthered the people, and the house of God.] Yielded obedience to the king's orders.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *NOW, when these things were done.*] When he had shewn his commission, and it appeared that he had power to reform all abuses, and see the laws of Moses observed by all the Jews, (chap. vii. 14.)

The princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands.] Some of the great men came to him with a grievous complaint, that unlawful marriages were practised among them with those wicked nations whom God had forbidden them to mingle withal: which was the more to be lamented, because not only the people, but the priests themselves and the Levites, were guilty of this sin.

Doing according to their abominations.] This is commonly an expression, signifying worshipping of idols, which are called *abominations* in Scripture; but here signifies only imitation of the heathen in promiscuous marriages with any nation whatsoever, which would soon lead them to commit idolatry. For these words in the Hebrew run thus, Have *not separated themselves from the people of the land, according to their abominations* (the word *doing* is not there); which Mr. Mede rightly interprets, *according to the several kinds of idolaters in the land round about them.*

Even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.] By this it appears, that, as marriages with the seven nations of Canaan were expressly forbidden, (Deut. vii. 2, 3.) so Ezra thought that law extended to all other nations, who were not proselyted to the Jews' religion. And this is the common opinion of the Hebrew doctors, as Mr. Selden shews, lib. v. de Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 12. For even before the law of Moses, it seems to be thought unlawful, after they had received the covenant of circumcision, for the seed of Abraham to marry with other nations that were uncircumcised, (Gen. xxxiv. 14.)

Ver. 2. *For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons; so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands.*] They are called a *holy seed*, because of the covenant of God with them, which made them a peculiar people, separated from all other nations.

Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.] The case was the more dangerous, because the great men of the nation were the principal offenders, (chap. x. 18. 23.) whose example the people followed without fear of punishment. It is likely, those princes who informed Ezra of this enormous practice had endeavoured to reform them, but could not, because they were opposed by as great men as themselves. But we must not cast away all hope, though we cannot presently reform men's lives; the time may come when it may be done.

Ver. 3. *And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle.*] Both his inner and upper garment; which was a token not only of very great grief and sorrow, but expressed his sense of the Divine displeasure. For the Jews rent their clothes when they apprehended God to be highly offended. (See Grotius upon Matt. xxvi. 65.) The Talmudists say, the high-priest rent his garments otherwise than other men, not above from the shoulders to the bottom, but below at his feet, and the skirts of his garments, upward.

And plucked off the hair of my head, and of my beard.] This was still a higher sign of exceeding great grief; for in ordinary sorrow they only neglected their hair, and let it hang down scattered in a careless manner; but this was used in bitter lamentations, even among the heathens. So Bochart observes out of many authors, particularly Homer, in several places. For example, speaking of Ulysses and his companions bewailing the death of Elpenor, he saith, Odyss. x.

Ἑζόμενοι δ' ἐνταῦθα γόων, τίλλοντο τε χαίτας.

They sitting down there howled and plucked off their hairs. (See Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 35.) To shave the head or the beard was another thing; which the law forbade the Jews in their mourning for the dead, because it was a custom of their idolatrous neighbours, whose manners he would not have them imitate.

And sat down astonied.] With amazement that they should be so ungrateful to God, who had delivered them from captivity, and with an apprehension of their danger, there being so open a breach of the Divine law, which had formerly proved their ruin.

Ver. 4. *Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel.*] Which it is likely he read to them, and told them the importance of them.

Because of the transgression of those that had been carried away.] Into Babylon, but now were returned to their own land, little or nothing amended, either by their banishment or their restoration. He speaks not of those who were lately come back with him, but of those who came back with Zerubbabel, and of their children.

And I sat astonied until the evening sacrifice.] When the people used to meet together to worship God.

Ver. 5. *And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness.*] Wherein he had sat ever since he heard of their foul transgression.

And, having rent my garment and my mantle.] He mentions that again, because he still continued and appeared in a mournful condition.

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I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God.] But put himself now into the posture of an humble supplicant to the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 6. *And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.*] The sum of his confession and deprecation is this, which it may be useful to represent at once: That he was confounded when he thought of the greatness of their sins, which were ready to overwhelm them, and of the boldness and insolence of them beyond all measure; and that, though they had seen the Divine vengeance upon their forefathers (from whom they derived this impious disposition) in so terrible a manner, that they had not yet worn off the marks of his displeasure, (ver. 6, 7.) He had begun indeed to shew favour unto them; (ver. 8.) but this so much the more aggravated their wickedness, in that not very many years after he had been so gracious as to deliver a small handful of them, and given them a footing again in their own land, and in the holy place, and thereby had made them joyful, and given them life, as it were, from the dead, by restoring them to their liberty, they returned to their old provocations, and forgot both that they had been bondmen, and that God had been so kind to them in that bondage, as to make those whom they served to pity them, and give them leave to go to their own land, and build the house of their God, (ver. 8, 9.) What shall any one say for such a wretched people as this, (ver. 10.) who had no regard to their prophets, nor to Moses himself, who had charged them to have nothing to do with the people of Canaan, whom he intended to destroy, because they had defiled that land, but to separate themselves from them, and seek to root them out, which was the way to plant themselves firmly there for ever, (ver. 11, 12.) Can we expect less than utter destruction of this small remnant, when, after all the punishments he hath inflicted upon us for our sins, and his ceasing to punish us, and rescuing us in this manner from our captivity, we return to those sins which are so odious to him, because so expressly against his commandments? (ver. 13, 14.) if he deal so with us, we must acknowledge the justice of his proceedings. For when we remain a monument of his mercy, who are rescued (as is apparent) from our bondage, we are notwithstanding here before him in our offences so guilty, that we have nothing to plead for ourselves; we are not able to say one word to excuse our detestable ingratitude.

There cannot be a more pathetical supplication than this, taken altogether; several phrases of which it may be fit to explain.

For our iniquities are increased over our head.] A metaphor taken from deep waters, wherein men are drowned and ready to perish.

And our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.] This signifies, as I have expressed it in my paraphrase, the high presumption and insolence of their wickedness.

Ver. 7. *Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day,* &c.] And therefore were punished unto this day, as the verse concludes. For many of their brethren were still in Babylon, or other countries, and they who returned were in danger to be undone for their continued sins.

Ver. 8. *And to give us a nail in his holy place.*] By *nails* or *pins* tents were fastened to the ground; therefore this signifies (as it is explained in the margin) *a settled abode,* after long banishment.

Ver. 9. *To give us a reviving.*] For Ezekiel compares them, when they were in Babylon, to the dry bones of dead men lying in their graves, (chap. xxxvii. 1, &c.)

And to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.] From hence some infer, that the wall of Jerusalem, before Nehemiah came, was built as well as the temple. But the Hebrew word *gedar* should be otherwise translated; for it doth not properly signify a *wall,* but a *hedge* or *fence,* such as were made for the folds of sheep. Whereby Ezra expresses (as Huetius well notes) the singular care of God of them; who, being the *Shepherd of Israel,* had gathered together his scattered sheep, and brought them back into their ancient folds; wherein he preserved them safe, even when they had no wall to defend them, under the powerful protection of the king of Persia.

Ver. 10, 11, 12. These verses need no explication more than I have given in the paraphrase upon them.

Ver. 13. *Our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *hast withheld beneath our iniquities:* that is, forborne to punish. For as, when God will no longer forbear, he is said *to arise,* and take vengeance: so here (as Lud. de Dieu observes), on the contrary, he is said to *withhold himself below;* that is, not to arise, but to wait patiently for their amendment.

Ver. 14. *So that there should be no remnant nor escaping.*] Not one of such a wicked nation left remaining, but all utterly extirpated.

Ver. 15. *O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous,* &c.] Either the word *righteous* here signifies *very merciful,* which was the reason they were not destroyed as they deserved; or the next words must be translated, not *for we remain,* but *though we remain escaped:* that is, God's justice will not let us escape, though, for the present, he forbear to punish us.

Behold, we are before thee in our trespasses; for we cannot stand before thee because of this.] As this cannot be denied, so it cannot be defended or excused: but we must yield up ourselves to bear the punishment unto which thou wilt condemn us.

Thus he concludes this admirable representation of their condition; which is as much as if he had said, Unless we reform, I know not how to beg for mercy, but we must be undone, and that most justly. For he gives them no hope, intending to put them into a great terror and affrightment, and see how that would work upon their hearts. And we find in the next chapter (ver. 2.) it had this effect; that one stood up and spake in the name of all the rest, that they would renew their covenant with God, and put away these abominations (which was effectual repentance), and then they hope God would be merciful unto them.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *NOW, when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men, and women, and children: for the people wept very sore.*] This prayer being made at the time of

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the evening sacrifice, (as we read before, chap. ix. 5.) when many assembled to worship God; and being uttered with great passion, and the highest expressions of grief and sorrow, it moved those very much who were present; especially to see such a person as Ezra, a priest of God, and a great ruler under the king of Persia, so dejected, full of fear, confusion, and astonishment: the report of which was presently carried through all Jerusalem, and, perhaps, to neighbouring places: which brought together a great number of people of all sorts, men, women, and children; who all made great lamentation, looking upon themselves as under the high displeasure of the Almighty.

Ver. 2. *And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra.*] He seems to have been a good man, not being numbered among those that had trespassed; though several of his family were: even his own father, Jehiel, and several of his uncles, the sons of his grandfather Elam, (chap. v. 26.)

We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.] Ezra seemed to have given up all for gone, the more to awaken and affright them out of their sins; and therefore this person stands up to keep them from despair, and to propound a remedy, which he hoped would prove effectual. This he spake in the name of the rest; with the principal of which, perhaps, he had consulted.

Ver. 3. *Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.*] That which was done contrary to the law of God was looked upon as null, and therefore these were accounted no marriages, and their children were no better than those we call bastards, and were not to be a part of the family, but to be put away with their mothers. St. Paul, indeed, allows the Corinthians to keep their pagan wives or husbands, because they had them before they were Christians; and there was no law of God or man against their marriages, as there was here a very strict law of God forbidding them. It may seem hard, indeed, that the children should be put away as well as their mothers; but they were unlawfully born, and must follow the condition of their mothers, and being educated in superstition, might corrupt other children: and therefore it was unlawful hereafter to marry with the children of these women, for they were reputed unclean, though their fathers were Israelites. Thus Maimonides reports the sense of the law to be, "A son begot of a gentile by an Israelite, is not to be accounted a son." If a son, indeed, were begot by a gentile of an Israelitish woman, the child was accounted an Israelite, for *partus sequitur ventrem*. But a child was of the same condition with his mother, and no regard was had to the father at all: so that if a child was begot by an Israelite, of a woman that was a slave, the child was a slave; but if, on the contrary, a woman of Israel had a child by one that was a slave, the child was as free as any other Israelite. (See Selden, in the place abovementioned, p. 616.)

But it is likely, when they put away these wives and children, they made some provision for them; for all was to be done according to the counsel of Ezra, and other good men, who feared God, and trembled to think his commandment was broke, and therefore judged they should be put away: but they prescribed the manner of it, how it should be done; which, it is probable, was not without some consideration of them.

Ver. 4. *Arise.*] For he lay prostrate upon the ground, (ver. 1.)

For this matter belongeth unto thee.] Who had the greatest skill in the law, and a full power from the king of Persia to see every thing done according unto it, (chap. vii. 14.) Now the renewing of the covenant for the observation of the law was to be done by the authority of the sovereign, as we see by the examples of Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah: and therefore it is a great mistake (as Mr. Thorndike observes) to imagine the people could renew it, or any part of it, without the consent of the sovereign. From whence we may conclude, that Ezra having such a commission as is mentioned chap. vii. was established by the sovereign power, with an authority to execute the law against all transgressors.

We also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.] He promises his assistance, and the assistance of the principal persons: which might give him confidence of success.

Ver. 5. *Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel.*] All that were then present.

To swear, that they should do according to this word: and they sware.] He admonished them of their duty in the name of God, and then persuaded them to take a solemn oath (as they did) to put away their strange wives and children. For the commission given to Ezra supposing a full leave to the people to live according to the law, enabled him to govern them by it, yea, to swear them to observe it; for he might do whatsoever he found necessary to keep them in obedience.

Ver. 6. *Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God.*] This seems to signify, that he made them swear before he would rise up; that they, seeing his great humiliation before God, in the most doleful condition, might be moved to a more forward compliance.

And went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib.] That he might there consult with the princes and elders (ver. 8.) how to put this counsel in execution. This Eliashib was the high-priest who succeeded Joiakim, who succeeded Jeshua; who living a long time, his son Joiakim enjoyed the priesthood but a few years: and Eliashib lasted not long, but seems to have been dead (as Dr. Alix thinks) a little after the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Mnemon. (See Nehem. xii. 10.)

And when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water.] The word *when* is not in the Hebrew; therefore it had better be translated, *till* he came thither he had eaten nothing.

For he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.] And in time of mourning and sorrow they were wont to fast.

Ver. 7. *And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem.*] This proclamation was issued forth by the counsel of the princes and elders mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 8. *And that whosoever would not come within three days.*] This was a short time; but they were resolved to be

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speedy in the business, lest they that propounded it should cool, or any thing occur to hinder it.

According to the counsel of the princes and the elders.] It was a great power which the king of Persia entrusted Ezra withal; which he managed very discreetly: for he would not make the following decree by his own sole authority, without the advice of the Sanhedrin; which is generally thought to be meant by the *princes and elders, viz.* the high court of Jerusalem; for they that are here called *princes,* are ver. 14. called *judges.*

All his substance should be forfeited.] In the Hebrew, *devoted.* Which signifies, that his goods were to be so forfeited, as to become sacred to God; and so incapable to be restored to the former owner, being put into the treasury of God's house.

And himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.] Excluded from their society, and all the benefits of their religion. (See chap. vii. 26.) This was a punishment inflicted by all nations on those who would not conform themselves to the laws; as Grotius observes, de Imperio Sum. Potest. circa Sacra, cap. 9. p. 242. edit. Hagæ, and Selden, de Synedr. lib. i. cap. 7. p. 146, 147. 150.

Ver. 9. *Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days.*] And all they of other tribes complied also with this proclamation, as appears from ver. 25. but these are alone mentioned, because they were the chief, and the others were mixed with them.

It was the ninth month, and the twentieth day of the month.] About a quarter of a year after Ezra and his company came to Jerusalem.

And all the people sat in the street of the house of God.] Some take this to be the street which led to the temple; but it was rather the court of the people where they worshipped; which lying open, and not being yet girt about with a wall, (as we may guess from Nehem. ii. 8.) is called a *street.*

Trembling because of this matter.] The offence they had committed against God, and the consequence thereof.

And for the great rain.] Which they took as a token of God's anger against them, because of their sin.

Ver. 10. *And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.*] When they should have been bewailing their former sins, which cast them out of their land, they added new transgressions when they were restored to it.

Ver. 11. *Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure.*] Confession of sin alone, without obedience to God's will and entire submission to him, is insufficient to reconciliation with him.

And separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.] There being no mention here made of their children, but only of their wives, it hath made some think that they kept their children, and by circumcision dedicated them to God, teaching them to renounce the infidelity of their mothers. For though Shechaniah propounded the putting away the children also, (ver. 3.) yet it may be thought that Ezra, to whom the matter was referred, mitigated the severity of it; because we do not read any thing of them, but only of the wives, when he came to order what should be done.

Ver. 12. *Then all the congregation answered, and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.*] They saw no other remedy, and therefore submitted to what he required, as the pleasure of God.

Ver. 13. *But the people are many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither is this a work of one day or two: for we have many that have transgressed in this thing.*] They give very good reasons why for the present they should be dismissed, and more time taken to make inquisition after all the offenders, and examine them: and to shew they really desired the thing should be done, they propound a method, in the next verse, for the management of it.

Ver. 14. *Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.*] They would have the great council at Jerusalem settled (for that is meant by *let the rulers of all the congregation stand*), and be ready to take cognizance of this matter; set days being appointed for the offenders in every city to be brought before them, by the elders and judges of those cities (that is, some delegates from the senate of that place), who should testify that they had seen the divorces made from their strange wives; for they were best able to know the circumstances of every person, and all his actions. And this they would have to continue, as long as there remained any thing to be done in this business; that the anger of God might be turned away from them. So De Dieu truly renders, I think, the last words of this verse:

How *elders* and *judges* differ, is a dispute among learned men. Sometimes they signify the same; but when they are mentioned together, it is reasonable to think their powers were distinct. And Campegius Vitringa seems to me to have given a good account of them; that by *elders* are meant the supreme senate in every city, who judged in all civil causes; and by *judges* (as distinct from the other) are meant judges of an inferior bench, by whom all money matters were tried. For though the senate might judge in all causes, yet it is reasonable to think they referred small matters to a lower court. This he gathers out of the Scriptures, and shews it is conformable to the traditions of the Talmudists. (De Synagoga Veter. lib. ii. cap. 9. p. 58. and see L'Empereur upon Bertram, de Repub. Jud. p. 395.)

Ver. 15. *Only Jonathan the son of Asahel, and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah, were employed about this matter.*] These were two priests, who were chosen to see all things done according to the foregoing resolution: that is, to appoint the time when the men of each city should come to bring in their names, and to acquaint the great council that these were elders and judges of the cities, who had seen their orders executed.

And Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.] They were both of them Levites, as I take it, who were to assist the forenamed priests in so great a work.

Ver. 16. *And the children of the captivity did so.*] They who came up out of Babylon to their own country are constantly called *the children of the captivity;* to put them in mind of their servitude, and of their freedom from it.

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And Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated.] Sequestered themselves from all other business, to attend wholly to the issue of this.

And sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.] I cannot imagine what it was that they were set apart to examine, unless it was whether the persons beforenamed did their duty: for it is likely they brought the names of those who were found guilty (which here follow) unto Ezra and these assessors; who examined whether they found more than these, and of what quality and condition they were.

Ver. 17. *And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.*] Three months therefore were spent in this disquisition, which shews it was very exact.

Ver. 18. *And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives; namely, of the sons of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah.*] No wonder the people broke the law, when so many of those who were supposed to understand it best (*viz.* the priests) gave them such a foul example of lust and levity (as Pellicanus speaks), yea, some of the sons of the high-priest; which made the example more pernicious. Which may be the reason, as he conjectures, why Jeshua, the high-priest, was represented in a vision to Zechariah the prophet in *filthy garments;* because his family (sons and brethren) were defiled with this impurity. For, as Cicero saith, out of Plato, in a letter to Lentulus, "Tales plerumque cives reliqui esse solent, quales principes in civitate fuerint viri;" *such the rest of the citizens are wont to be, as the great men in the city are.*

Ver. 19. *And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives.*] Solemnly engaged, by making a covenant, or by an oath, that they would do what was enjoined. (See Ezek. xvii. 18.) But it may be expounded simply, *they put their hand to the business;* that is, did it effectually, and actually put away their strange wives.

And, being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.] More than that, they openly confessed their guilt, and made an offering for their offence; and hereby, perhaps, endeavoured to make some amends for their sin, by being the first that condemned themselves and reformed, and offered a trespass-offering: which, some think, all the rest made, after their example.

Ver. 20. *And of the sons of Immer; Hanani and Zebadiah.*

Ver. 21. *And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uzziah.*

Ver. 22. *And of the sons of Pashur; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad, and Elasah.*] All these were priests, who were very deep in this guilt, and being public persons, led others fearlessly into it.

Ver. 23. *Also of the Levites; Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah (the same is Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.*] There were not so many Levites, as there were priests, in the transgression.

Ver. 24. *Of the singers also; Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Talem, and Uri.*] These seem to have been more modest; there being but one offender found among the singers, and but three among the porters.

Ver. 25. *Moreover, of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.*] The Hebrews call all those Israel, who were not Levites, or dedicated to the service of the temple. Whence the court of Israel was that place wherein the men of Israel worshipped, as they were distinguished from the priests and Levites.

Ver. 26. *And of the sons of Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah.*] This Jehiel was Shechaniah's father, ver. 2. And yet, notwithstanding, though his father and kindred were guilty of this crime, which Ezra bewailed, he did not stick to speak his mind, how it should be punished. An admirable example of zealous integrity!

Ver. 27. *And of the sons of Zattu; Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.*] The two former, Parosh and Elam, with this Zattu, and all that follow to ver. 32. were of the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 28. *Of the sons also of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai.*

Ver. 29. *And of the sons of Bani; Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, and Ramoth.*

Ver. 30. *And of the sons of Pahath-Moab; Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.*

Ver. 31. *And of the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon.*

Ver. 32. *Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.*] Now follows an account of those of the other tribe.

Ver. 33. *Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.*

Ver. 34. *Of the sons of Bani; Maadi, Amram, and Uel.*

Ver. 35. *Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh.*

Ver. 36. *Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib.*

Ver. 37. *Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau.*

Ver. 38. *And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei.*

Ver. 39. *And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah.*

Ver. 40. *Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai.*

Ver. 41. *Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah.*

Ver. 42. *Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.*

Ver. 43. *Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah.*] Some take Nebo for a place, of which the following families were citizens. But nothing of this is worth inquiring into.

Ver. 44. *All these had taken strange wives.*] There is no great number of them, in comparison with all that returned from captivity: but they seem to have been eminent persons, who would have spread the contagion, if a stop had not been put to it.

And some of them had wives by whom they had children.] There were some of them women that had brought them children, as the Vulgar translates it: which De Dieu shews is the plainest translation of these words. Here was a fair occasion to have spoken of the putting away their children as well as their wives, if that motion had been prosecuted: but nothing being here said of it, it makes me think, the observation is true which I made ver. 11. (See there.)

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THE

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

THAT Nehemiah himself was the author of this book there can be no reasonable doubt; for he saith as much in the beginning of it, and all along relates what he did in his own person, for the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, and other things. He lived in the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and came into Judea thirteen years after Ezra; unto whom the king of Persia gave great authority, as he had done to Ezra; God disposing his heart to have some Jews still about him in his court, for whom he had a kindness. After him, we do not find that the kings of Persia made any governor, but left things, it is probable, to the management of Jadua the high-priest, as Corn. Bertram thinks. (See de Republ. Judaica, p. 168. 173. 175.)

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *THE words of Nehemiah.*] Or, as Pellicanus translates it, *gesta* (for so the Hebrew word often signifies), the things which Nehemiah did.

The son of Hachaliah.] We are no where told who this was, nor of what tribe: Eusebius and others say of the tribe of Judah.

And it came to pass in the month Chisleu.] Which answers to our November, and part of December.

In the twentieth year.] Not of Artaxerxes, but of Nehemiah's life. (See chap. ii. 1.)

As I was in Shushan the palace.] In the region of Elymais, where the Persian kings kept their court in winter, and, from its pleasant and beautiful situation, was called by heathen writers *Susa*, which signifies a *lily;* or (as Athenæus saith, lib. xii.) *a rose.* Stephanus Byzantinus gives this account of it: It was called Σοῦσα, *ἀπὸ τῶν κρίνων ἃ πολλὰ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ πέφυκει ἐκείνῃ, from the lilies that grew in abundance in that country.* Our Dr. Hyde hath a peculiar fancy, that the Persians called it *Sus*, which signifies *licorice;* but the Jews, to compliment Ahasuerus, called it in these books by this name, of a better sound, which signifies a lily, (Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. cap. 35. p. 414.)

Ver. 2. *That Hanani, one of my brethren.*] And, I suppose, one of his family.

Came, he and certain men of Judah.] Came from Jerusalem to Shushan, either about business, or finding things very hard with them in Judea.

And I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.] He inquired of the condition wherein they were who returned out of Babylon into Judea, and whether Jerusalem were again become a flourishing city; as it was natural for him to do, especially being a man that loved his nation exceedingly.

Ver. 3. *And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province.*] So Judea is called, Ezra v. 8. (See there.)

Are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire.] They answer to both parts of this inquiry, that the people were in great distress and contempt by their insolent neighbours, wherewith they were surrounded, and Jerusalem lay without any walls or gates to defend it from their injuries. He knew very well that it was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar, and the walls beaten down; therefore their meaning is, that the walls and gates lay as the Chaldeans left them after that devastation, and were not repaired, though the temple was built again.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down.*] Upon the ground, as the manner was, in great sorrow, and, perhaps, in ashes.

And wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.] With his face towards Jerusalem.

Ver. 5. *And said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven.*] In this style they all spake of God (as I observed, Ezra i.) after the captivity: signifying, as Conrad. Pellicanus observes, his sovereign dominion over all things that are contained within the compass of the heavens; the sun, moon, and stars, angels, and men, and all creatures.

The great and terrible God.] He is called *great*, not with respect to those petty gods that the heathen worshipped, who had no power at all, but with respect to all potentates either in heaven or in earth; and he is called *terrible*, because he is most humbly to be worshipped and reverenced by them all.

That keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him, and observe his commandments.] Next, he celebrates his faithfulness and truth in performing his promises to those that plainly declare they sincerely love him, by keeping his commandments. These he never fails to bless, because they are faithful to him.

Ver. 6. *Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.*] A deep sense of our own unworthiness, is a good qualification for the mercy we beg of God. This Nehemiah expresses very sensibly, both here and in the next verse.

Ver. 7. *We have dealt very corruptly against thee.*] Some of the Jews expound it, *We have despised and contemned thee.*

And have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.] But violated every one of them, to the high offence both of God and man.

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Ver. 8. *Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations.*] Which they had seen fulfilled by the Assyrians and Chaldeans.

Ver. 9. *But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them.*] As he hoped some of them now did.

Though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.] This promise made by Moses he hoped God would fulfil, as he had done the threatening. It is a very pious observation of Dr. Jackson, (book iii. chap. 17.) that Nehemiah framed this prayer to God, and directed his enterprise for the restoration of Jerusalem, by the rule of Moses, mentioned in Deut. xxx. 1—4. and he plainly found the truth of that prediction in the readiness of the king of Persia to grant his petition: which confirmed his belief of what Moses there saith, although a prophet by profession dissuaded his enterprise, as likely to prove dangerous to his person, (chap. vi. 10, 11.)

Ver. 10. *Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.*] For nothing but the overruling power of God could have moved Cyrus to dismiss this whole nation out of captivity, and let them return to their own land. Or, as some think, he beseeches his compassion to them, because they were his peculiar people, redeemed out of the Egyptian bondage by many miracles.

Ver. 11. *O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name.*] He was not alone in this petition for mercy, but there were many others, who would worship him sincerely. So the words are in the Hebrew, *who will fear*, or *delight to fear, thy name.*

And prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day.] He prayed night and day, as he saith, ver. 6. But this was the prayer he made on that day when he went to wait upon the king.

And grant him mercy in the sight of this man.] He means the king, unto whom he pointed as it were with his finger, when he was going to attend upon him.

For I was the king's cup-bearer.] And perhaps, as he came into his presence, he secretly made this prayer to God in his own breast. Many of the Jews, by the singular favour of God, obtained considerable dignities in their captivity, as Daniel and his companions, Zerubbabel, and others: among whom was this good man, who was advanced to this place of *cup-bearer*, when he was but a youth, as our Rainoldus hath shewn, in his Censura, Lib. Apocryph. p. 1496.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AND it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king.*] Which was almost four months after he heard of the desolate condition wherein Jerusalem lay; in all which time, I suppose, his turn of waiting did not come: so that he wanted opportunity to speak unto the king. Or, as others will have it, he and his friends retired all this time, and spent it in fasting and prayers

That wine was before him.] He was at dinner or supper, and he called for wine; which was ready for him.

And I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king.] After the manner that the cup-bearer was wont to do.

Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.] But always appeared cheerful and well-pleased, as young men so advanced use to be; and perhaps entertained the king at table with pleasant discourse.

Ver. 2. *Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick?*] There did not appear in his countenance any sign of indisposition of body.

This is nothing else but sorrow of heart.] Some inward trouble which grieved his spirit.

Then I was very sore afraid.] Lest the king should have a suspicion that he had any treasonable design in his thoughts, and intended to poison him, as it was easy for the cup-bearer to do: or rather, he was afraid he should not prevail in his suit; the court, it is likely, being full of such as would oppose it.

Ver. 3. *And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever.*] They that think he was afraid the king should be jealous of him, take the meaning to be, Let not the king fear I mean him any harm, but pray for his long life. But this was a common form of wishing the king long happiness, as appears from several places in Daniel, and hath no respect to that now mentioned.

Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?] Men naturally have a great love to the monuments of their ancestors, and are troubled to see the place where they are laid desolate. He did not speak a word of religion, or the Divine worship (as Grotius observes), for though Artaxerxes had a great affection for the Jews, and had their God in veneration (as appears by the edict he sent to Ezra thirteen years before), yet the company about him might not be so well disposed; but had the same affection and concern for their country and relations that he had, though they did not worship the same God.

Ver. 4. *Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request?*] This argues the king had a great kindness for him, that he so readily asked what he would have him do for him, to ease him of his trouble.

So I prayed to the God of heaven.] In his mind he silently beseeched God to guide his tongue, and to bow the king's heart to grant his request.

Ver. 5. *And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight.*] It was a bold request he was going to make, and therefore, before he mentions it, he submits it to the king's will and pleasure; and acknowledges he had no merit, but depended wholly upon the king's kindness; unto whom, perhaps, he might have performed some acceptable service.

That thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my father's sepulchres.] This might lead Eusebius and others to think Nehemiah was of the tribe of Judah, because his ancestors dwelt in Jerusalem, and were there buried.

That I may build it.] Build the walls of it, and make it a city again; whereas now it was but an open town.

Ver. 6. *And the king said unto me (the queen also sitting by him).*] Which was not usual, as historians say, but is

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noted here as a thing extraordinary; because it is likely she favoured him, and promoted the grant of his request.

For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return?] This is another argument of the kindness he had for him; that he would not lose his service, nor be long without it.

So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.] He having told the king how long he desired to be absent from his duty, the king permitted him to go. How long that was, is not certain. But it is not likely it was for twelve years; (mentioned chap. v. 14. xiii. 6.) but rather he asked leave for a year, or perhaps for half so much: which made him so quick in dispatching the building of the wall, which he finished in two-and-fifty days, (chap. vi. 15.) After which, it is likely, he returned to Shushan, according to his appointment: and the king sent him back as his governor for twelve years; his presence being very serviceable, or perhaps necessary there, for the better ordering of that province, to the king's content.

Ver. 7. *Moreover, I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over, till I come into Judah.*] Give him a safe conduct, and furnish him with necessaries in his journey through their several provinces, where they had authority.

Ver. 8. *And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest.*] I suppose he means the forest of Lebanon; from whence he might be furnished with materials for his building. Here the word *pardes* signifies differently from what it doth in other places where it is used; which are but two besides this, Eccles. ii. 5. Cant. iv. 13. where it signifies a most pleasant garden, planted with all sorts of trees. And this forest, it seems, was so sweet and pleasant a place, that it deserved to be called by the same name.

That he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house.] The Vulgar Latin, by *the palace*, understands the *tower of the house;* and so Pellicanus, *portas templi, the gates of the temple.* For though the temple itself was built, yet the several courts seem not to have been walled about, nor the gates to the temple made. For, that it should be meant of the gates of the king's palace, which was near the temple, is altogether unlikely; there being no occasion to build a palace for the king of Persia; and no other king could be intended.

And for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into.] He desired leave to build a convenient house for himself, and for those that should be future governors.

And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.] The *hand* is sometimes taken (as Drusius observes) in an ill sense, for inflicting punishments, (Ruth i. 13. Jer. xv. 17.) for we strike others with the hand: and sometimes in a good sense, for helping and assisting others; for we extend favours to men with our hand. Thus he explains Psal. lxxxviii. 6. *cut off from thy hand;* that is, fallen from thy grace and favour. Pindar, he observes, thus uses the *hand of God* for his help and aid, Olymp. x. Θεοῦ σὺν παλάμᾳ, *by the hand of God;* which the scholiast interprets, Τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ δυνάμει καὶ βοηθείᾳ, *by the power and help of God,* (Miscellanea, cent. i. cap. 85.) Thus Nehemiah is to be here understood; by the Divine favour, which inclined the king to do what he desired; which he calls God's *good hand.*

Ver. 9. *Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. (Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me).*] This the king did over and above what he desired; which procured him the greater respect from the governors, when they saw the care the king took for the safety of his person.

Ver. 10. *When Sanballat the Horonite.*] He seems to have been a petty prince of Moab; or some great man of that country. For Horonaim was an eminent city there, (Isa. xv. 5. xlviii. 3. 5. 34.)

And Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite.] He had been a slave of that country; but now advanced to some authority (perhaps to be a governor of a province) in these parts. The mention of these two great men shews, that the nations of Moab and Ammon were restored as well as the Jews, according to the Divine oracles; and were well known, that their destruction by the people of God might be the more observable; which was in the time of the Maccabees, who subdued those nations, according to the predictions of several prophets.

Heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.] With such authority from the king, and in such favour with him; as appeared by the letters he brought with him, and the guard that attended him, and the diligence of the several governors, through whose provinces he passed, to serve him.

Ver. 11. *So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.*] In which he rested himself, and received the visits of his friends, as Ezra had done, chap. viii. 32.

Ver. 12. *And I arose in the night.*] At the end of those days, it is likely, for he was resolved to make no delay.

I and some few men with me.] In whom he most confided.

Neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem.] He, being a courtier, had learned to hold his peace, and observe when it was a fit time to speak, and to whom. For he would not trust to every body, knowing there was much falseness in men's hearts; and secrecy was necessary to keep his designs from being betrayed.

Neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.] They all went on foot besides himself, that there might be the less noise, and no notice taken of what he did. What beast it was on which he rode, whether horse or mule, is not worth the inquiry: it is likely a mule, on which great men were wont to ride in those countries.

Ver. 13. *And I went out by night, by the gate of the valley.*] This valley is mentioned again, chap. iii. 13. but whereabout it was, is not remembered, but only that it lay before the well called the Dragon-well.

Even before the Dragon-well.] So called, either from the silent sliding of the water (as a serpent creeps) from the fountain Siloam; or, from a dragon (as Bochartus thinks) which haunted this place since the city lay desolate; for serpents delight in such places, especially near fountains of water.

And to the dung-port.] Out of which dung was wont to be carried out of Jerusalem, when it was before inhabited.

And viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.] Try-

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ing (as Conradus Pellicanus reasonably conjectures) whether the foundation was still sound, and would support a new wall laid upon it; or whether it was rotten, and must be laid again.

Ver. 14. *Then I went on to the gate of the fountain.*] Either of Siloe, or of Gihon. The wall was not so broken down, but some part of it still remained, and the place where the gates were was known. (See chap. iv. 6, 7. vi. 1.)

And to the king's pool.] Which is generally supposed to be that which Hezekiah made, (2 Chron. xxxii. 3. 30.)

But there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.] Being full of rubbish, or of water.

Ver. 15. *Then went I up in the night by the brook.*] The same night he went by the brook Kidron.

And viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.] He seems not to have gone round about the whole city; for there were several other gates which are not here mentioned: but having seen in what condition so many parts of the wall were, by which he judged of the rest, he turned back into the city, and entered at the same gate from whence he went out, (ver. 13.)

Ver. 16. *And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did.*] These rulers (Conradus Pellicanus thinks) were gentiles, for they are distinguished from the Jews in the following words, and from other rulers among them; and therefore were the officers of the kings of Persia, who had hitherto obstructed the work.

Neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers.] To any of the people of the Jews, for he had not so much as acquainted the priests, nor the nobles, nor any that had authority among them, with his intentions.

Nor to the rest that did the work.] Whom he intended hereafter to employ in the work: or, he told none of those that went with him to view the ruins what his design was.

Ver. 17. *Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire.*] Not long after he took a fit opportunity to represent to them their low condition; and to let them understand what he intended, and had power to undertake.

Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.] Exposed to the scorn and insults of the people round about them.

Ver. 18. *Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me.*] He acquainted them how favourable God had made the king to him, and all the discourse he had with him, and the commission which he had received from him.

And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.] When they heard of the favour of God, and of the king.

Ver. 19. *But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it.*] It is probable, Geshem was the king's deputy in Arabia, as the two former were in Moab and Ammon. But others take them rather to have been all three great men among the Samaritans.

They laughed us to scorn, and despised us.] As men that made a vain attempt, which they would never be able to accomplish.

And said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?] This was the most odious calumny they could invent, that they intended to set up for themselves, and be no longer the king's subjects.

Ver. 20. *Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us.*] We have authority for what we do from a higher power than yours.

Therefore we his servants will arise and build: but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.] Do not you trouble yourselves about this matter; who have no part, either in the labour, or the merit, or the fame of it: for you are not of our religion; and therefore may mind your own business, and not meddle with ours.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *THEN Eliashib the high-priest rose up, with his brethren the priests.*] Now he shews by whom, and in what order, the wall was built: which was begun by Eliashib, the grandchild of Jeshua the high-priest; (as we read chap. xii. 10.) who with his brethren gave a noble example, in being the first that went about the work, and built the gate here mentioned.

And they built the sheep-gate.] Which was at the south side of the city, in that part of the valley which looked towards the city of David and the temple. The sheep used to enter in here which were to be sacrificed; and therefore, I suppose, the priests undertook this part of the work as most proper for them. Dr. Lightfoot hath taken a great deal of pains to find in what quarter these gates were; to whom I refer the reader in his Chorog. Century of the Land of Israel, chap. 26.

They sanctified it, and set up the doors of it.] When they had completed it, they blessed it by solemn prayers, and perhaps by sacrifices; as the first-fruits of this pious work: for we do not read that any other part, but this which they built, was sanctified. Some think this was done because of the relation that this gate had to sacred uses; but it was rather such a ceremony as was imitated by other nations, when they begun their walls; which they commended to the protection of their gods. Some translate it, *they made it an excellent structure:* others, *they cleansed* it from the rubbish, and the profanation which the Babylonians had brought upon it; restoring it to its ancient splendour. But our translation, I think, is best; for it being the priest's work, it became them to bless and sanctify it.

Even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.] They sanctified the rest of the wall, which they built as far as the tower of Meah on one side, and the tower of Hananeel on the other. But Pellicanus thinks, that Meah is not the name of a tower, but signifies a hundred; and makes the sense to be, They not only built the sheep-gate, but a hundred cubits of the wall to a tower so far off from the gate, and also to the tower of Hananeel. This *sheep-gate* some think is the same with the Προβατικὴ, mentioned John v. 2. which being the first that was built by the priests of God, and particularly commended to his blessing, had that singular gift bestowed upon the neighbouring pool, that it should miraculously heal those that

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first entered into it every day; and that from this time it had this virtue. Afterward they dedicated the whole wall, as we read chap. xii. 27.

Ver. 2. *And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.*] Whom some take for a principal person in Jericho.

Ver. 3. *But the fish-gate did the sons of Hassenaah build.*] This was a gate which looked towards the sea; from whence fish was wont to be brought, and sold here.

Who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.] They made a complete piece of work of this gate; to which they gave the last finishing; which was not done universally till after some time. (See chap. vi. 1. vii. 1.)

Ver. 4. *And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.*] These repaired the wall till they came to the old gate; for there was no other gate till they came there.

Ver. 5. *And next unto them the Tekoites repaired.*] The people of the city of Tekoa carried on the wall with those three beforenamed.

But their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.] They were either proud, and would not stoop to this work; or they were negligent, and cared not whether it were done or not. By *their Lord* some understand the leader and head of the whole family, who was active in it; others Nehemiah; and some God himself, whose work this was; unto which, therefore, well-disposed persons, though ever so great, *put their necks;* that is, laboured hard, not refusing to carry burdens, &c.

Ver. 6. *Moreover the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah.*] Some think it was called *the old gate,* because there were some remains of it from the times of the Jebusites, yea, of Melchisedec, by whom it was at first built.

They laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.] They imitated those mentioned ver. 3. as several others did, (ver. 13—15.)

Ver. 7. *And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on this side the river.*] These, and they that follow in the next verse, repaired as far as to the wall of the broad street. And among these was a great man, whose name was *Chisse* (so Pellicanus translates the word we render *the throne),* a petty prince in Syria, under the king of Persia; who, being proselyted, joined in this work.

Ver. 8. *Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries; and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall.*] These were two eminent persons; one among the goldsmiths, the other among the perfumers; who did not build the wall, because it was very good in this place; but only fortified it, and made it strong. Near to this was the broad street of the city, where there was a market-place for the selling of commodities.

Ver. 9. *And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half-part of Jerusalem.*] There were two principal overseers of the work, on the two sides of the city: this, as some think, in that part which was in the tribe of Judah; and the other, (ver. 12.) in that which was in the tribe of Benjamin. (See chap. iv. 19.)

Ver. 10. *And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah.*] The first of these repaired *against his house;* because that lay most convenient for him to bestow his cost upon it; and thereby he consulted his own safety, together with the public good.

Ver. 11. *Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahath-Moab, repaired the other piece, and the tower of the furnaces.*] The words we translate *the other piece,* are the *second measure.* But what the *first* was we cannot tell, and therefore are ignorant of the *second:* perhaps, half as much as the former had repaired. *The tower of the furnaces* is mentioned again, chap. xii. 38. as near to this place. (See there.)

Ver. 12. *And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half-part of Jerusalem.*] There was another part mentioned before, ver. 9.

He and his daughters.] Who are generally thought either to be heiresses, or rich widows; who piously contributed to this work.

Ver. 13. *The valley-gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung-gate.*] This was called the valley of Jehoshaphat, which lay between the city and the Mount of Olives; through which the brook Kidron ran, from the north to the south. The gate which led to this was the east gate; which was repaired, together with more of the wall than any others repaired, by these persons here mentioned.

Ver. 14. *But the dung-gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem: he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.*] He was a great man, who commanded part of a city, which had its name from the vineyards that were there, as Pellicanus probably conjectures.

Ver. 15. *But the gate of the fountain repaired Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of Siloah by the king's garden.*] This man also was a great benefactor, being a considerable person, as the former was.

And unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.] Which stood upon the high hill of Zion; from whence they descended by steps to Jerusalem.

Ver. 16. *After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk.*] Of the same name, but not of the same family with the writer of this book.

The ruler of the half-part of Beth-zur, unto the place over against the sepulchres of David.] Where David had a sepulchre for himself, and for his successors in the kingdom.

And to the pool that was made.] This is supposed to be the place mentioned 2 Kings xx. 20.

And unto the house of the mighty.] There the king's guard were lodged, who were all mighty men of valour. But we can only guess at the sense of these words.

Ver. 17. *And after him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the*

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half-part of Keilah, in his part.] In his street (as Pellicanus renders it), or with the men of his part or country where he was ruler.

Ver. 18. *After him repaired their brethren.*] Other Levites.

Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half-part of Keilah.] Of the other half of the city.

Ver. 19. *And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece.*] Or rather, *one piece;* because *another* is mentioned in the next verse.

Over against the going up to the armoury.] There is such a place mentioned in the forest, (Isa. xxii. 8.) which Solomon it is likely made; but this was in Jerusalem, then well known, and one of the most noted places in the city, because here all warlike provision was laid up.

At the turning of the wall.] At some corner, where the wall turned another way.

Ver. 20. *After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece.*] With great zeal, as if he was ashamed the work went on so slowly; or that they should repair only one piece, and leave the other undone.

From the turning of the wall.] From the place beforementioned.

Unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high-priest.] Who had the honour to begin this good work, (ver. 1.)

Ver. 21. *After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib, even to the end of the house of Eliashib.*] He carried on the work from the place where the other left off, from the entrance of the house to the end of it; which being the house of a great man, we may suppose very large.

Ver. 22. *And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain.*] Near to Jerusalem, chap. xii. 28.

Ver. 23. *After him.*] There was some eminent priest who engaged others with him, as Eliashib had done his brethren, (ver. 1.)

Repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, by his house.] These were some of the tribe of Benjamin, settled in Jerusalem, who repaired over against their own doors, as far as their houses extended.

Ver. 24. *After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad, another piece, from the house of Azariah unto the turning of the wall, even unto the corner.*] This, in all likelihood, was another of the tribe of Benjamin, who carried on the wall from the place where Azariah ended.

Ver. 25. *Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that was by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh.*] There are so many *turnings of the wall* mentioned, that none can now give an account of them, nor of the *king's high house* (which some take to have been a house built for that prospect). The *court of the prison* is often mentioned in the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

Ver. 26. *Moreover, the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water-gate towards the east, and the tower that lieth out.*] Not only the priests and Levites, but the meanest persons that belonged to the house of God, inferior officers, contributed to this work. And the *water-gate*, it is likely, was that at which these lower ministers brought in water for the use of the temple: near to which Ophel was, which seems to have been a great tower, (2 Chron. xxvii. 3.) *The tower which lay out* I can give no account of; but the next verse tells us where it was.

Ver. 27. *After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.*] The people of this place are mentioned before, ver. 5. whose nobles, perhaps, who at the first withdrew themselves from this work, lent their help, now that they saw every body engaged in it.

Ver. 28. *From above the horse-gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house.*] It was called the *horse-gate*, as some think, because they went through it to water their horses at the brook Kidron: or, there was a place for the standing of horses.

Ver. 29. *After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate.*] It is uncertain whether he speaks of the east gate of the city, or of the temple: but whichsoever it was, it seems to have been a principal gate, and therefore committed to the custody of an eminent person.

Ver. 30. *After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah.*] Some copies read *after me;* as if Nehemiah in modesty concealed his own work, and only intimated that he did something himself: but ours is the right reading.

And Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece.] He had more zeal, it is likely, than his elder brethren, and therefore is here particularly noted as a worthy man, of less estate, but of more virtue than the rest of his family.

After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber.] Which he had, I suppose, in the temple.

Ver. 31. *After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son, unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner.*] It seems the Nethinims had a part of the city assigned them for their habitation, which was among the merchants: near to whom there was a house of correction (as some think the word *Miphkad* imports), where they visited (as the Hebrews speak), that is, punished, men for their faults.

Ver. 32. *And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep-gate.*] There they began, (ver. 1.) and there they ended: which shews that they left not off till they had compassed the whole city with a wall, and that it was but one (as Pellicanus observes), not two or three, which was sufficient to preserve them from the incursions of their enemies.

Repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.] Some will have these to have been their names, taken at first from their professions.

No man can think (as the same Pellicanus notes) that the names of them that repaired the walls of Jerusalem were set down so diligently, as here they are, without some rational cause for it. And the reason was, because it was a work of great virtue to love and to do honour to their country; a work of piety to restore the holy city; a religious thing to defend the true worshippers of God, that they might serve him in quietness and safety; and a courageous thing, in the midst of so many enemies, to go on with this work in a pious confidence of the power of God to support them. The names, therefore, of such persons deserved to be preserved and transmitted to future generations, as a most noble example to them.

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CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *BUT it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.*] Though he boiled inwardly with anger, yet he seemed to contemn that which he feared, and scoffed at the Jews.

Ver. 2. *And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria.*] By *his brethren* are meant the commanders-in-chief in those parts; who mustered, I suppose, all their forces in Samaria, as if they intended to invade the Jews, and hinder the work they were about.

And said, What do these feeble Jews?] But first he exposes them to scorn, as a people that had no power.

Will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day?] He heard there were so many hands at work, as if they meant to build the wall, and keep a feast, and dedicate it by sacrifice, all in one day; and so takes an occasion to laugh at their foolish diligence, and the haste they made, as if they could begin and end at once.

Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt?] He represents it as impossible they should repair the wall, unless they could make the broken pieces, which were also mouldered, to become whole stones again.

Ver. 3. *Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him.*] One of *his brethren*, mentioned in the verse beforegoing.

And he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.] Foxes abounded in that country, especially about Jerusalem, since its devastation, (Lament. v. 18.) At the wall of which Tobiah jeered, saying, It was so low that those creatures might leap over it; and so weak, that they might throw it down, or break through it. This opinion, it is likely, made them neglect to interrupt them in their building till it was too late.

Ver. 4. *Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head.*] He beseeches God to take such notice of their scoffs, that, as they now despised his people, so they themselves might be laughed to scorn, and had in derision.

And give them for a prey in the land of captivity.] And carry them far away from the captives into some other land.

Ver. 5. *And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee.*] This seems something harsh, that he should pray they might never be forgiven; but he spake by the spirit of prophecy, as David did in Psal. cix. they being of such a malicious and implacable spirit against God and his people, that he foresaw they would never be capable of his mercy, but be utterly destroyed by him. And, indeed, there were several oracles upon which this prayer was grounded, and it was confirmed by the destruction of these nations by the Maccabees and their successors.

For they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.] By scoffing at them, and discouraging them in the work, which was for God's honour, and for the safety of his people. And therefore it highly provoked him that these men should set themselves with such spite against it.

Ver. 6. *So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof.*] Till it was raised to the half of its height.

For the people had a mind to work.] Were very much set upon it, and went about it cheerfully, notwithstanding their jeers and contempt.

Ver. 7. *But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites.*] Some of these people were never mentioned before; and therefore this shews, that Sanballat endeavoured to draw all the neighbouring nations into a confederacy against the Jews.

Heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped.] It seems the Chaldeans had not entirely thrown down the walls, but contented themselves to make wide breaches and gaps in them.

Then they were very wroth.] So incensed, that it moved them to take the following resolution.

Ver. 8. *And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.*] The last words in the Hebrew are, *to make an error in it;* that is, to put them by the work, or to make them not know which way to turn themselves.

Ver. 9. *Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.*] They committed themselves to the protection of the Almighty, whose servants they were, keeping a constant watch, that they might not be surprised, for they knew them to be very vigilant to do mischief.

Ver. 10. *And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed.*] They had wrought so long and so hard, that some of the Jews told him the labourers were quite spent.

And there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.] There was still a great deal of rubbish remaining, more than they were able to remove; and therefore they must desist, at least for the present, from building the wall.

Ver. 11. *And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.*] They pretended also to have intelligence, that the forenamed enemies did not intend to appear with an army before Jerusalem, but to march so secretly, that they should have no notice of their approach till they saw them in the city, and put them to the sword.

Ver. 12. *And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times.*] But there were some Jews who were neighbours to that people that found out their designs, and came to inform them of it a great many times: for *ten times* signify a great many in Scripture. (See Gen. xxi. 7.)

From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.] The words in the Hebrew are no more than these, *from all places whence they return unto us* (there being no words answering to those, *they will be upon you*); if any words be added, they should be *they informed us of our danger.*

Ver. 13. *Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall.*] Where the wall was not yet raised to its just height, (ver. 6.)

And on the higher places.] Where it was completely finished.

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I even set the people after their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows.] With such weapons as they were furnished withal.

Ver. 14. *And I looked, and rose up.*] When he saw how they were disposed, he rose up and made this speech to them.

And said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses.] All was at stake, therefore he exhorts them to be valiant, trusting in God, who was stronger than all their enemies.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.*] When they heard their plot was discovered, and they had no hope to surprise us, but we were ready to receive them, they laid aside their designs, and we went on with ours.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons.*] But, lest their enemies should imagine they were secure, and had quite laid aside their arms, and so might resume their enterprise, he ordered, that while half of his own servants wrought upon the walls, another half should stand by with weapons ready to put into their hands, if there were occasion.

And the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.] The rest, I suppose, followed this example; and the rulers stood at their backs to encourage them, and put them forward in their work.

Ver. 17. *They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.*] That is, they were well appointed for both, to build and to fight. For it is a figurative speech; it not being possible for them to work if both hands had not been at liberty. And the next verse saith, their swords were by their sides.

Ver. 18. *For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded.*] This expounds the foregoing words.

And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.] To give the alarm, if need should be, and so call them unto him for orders. It appears by this, that he was continually with them while they wrought.

Ver. 19. *And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.*] In several quarters of it, some of which were at a good distance from others.

Ver. 20. *In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.*] For while they lay scattered, they could not oppose their enemies successfully; but being united with him, and under his direction and conduct, he bids them not doubt of God's protection.

Ver. 21. *So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears.*] For the use of every man, if there should be occasion.

From the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.] All the day long, from break of day till it was quite night.

Ver. 22. *Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour in the day.*] It is likely, that many of them at night went into the suburbs, or neighbouring villages, and lodged there; but he would have them all lodge in Jerusalem, for the greater security of the city in the night, and that they might be more ready to work in the morning.

Ver. 23. *So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes.*] He, and his kindred, and family, and guard, gave them a noble example; for none of them put off their clothes when they went to bed, but lay in them, that they might be more ready to fight if any assault was made on the city.

Saving that every one put them off for washing.] These last words are variously expounded by interpreters, and the fewest approve of our translation. Rabbi Solomon repeats the word *not; They put not off their clothes, no, not for washing.* The Hebrew word is *water,* which some here take for *the water of the feet,* as the Hebrews speak, and make the sense to be, *no, not when they made water.* De Dieu, quite contrary, *except only to make water.* But it is a more simple sense, *Every man had his sword ready when he made water.* So the word *schicho* may be rendered, as we translate it in the margin, *every man went with his weapon for water.* But Grotius follows our translation, and takes these words for an exception to what went before: and the plain meaning is, they put off their garments only for those ablutions, which the law required, or custom had introduced.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *AND there was a great cry of the people, and of their wives, against their brethren the Jews.*] At this time there was a grievous complaint of the poor against their rich brethren: for though they were cured of their idolatry by their captivity, yet they were not cured of their other sins, but loved strange women, as we read before in the book of Ezra; and were so covetous, that they oppressed the poor and needy; and this at a time when their enemies threatened the destruction of them all. But this was the more heinous crime, because the twentieth of Artaxerxes, wherein this was done, began about the end of a sabbatic year (as Dr. Alix observes), which raised the cry of the poor to a greater height against their creditors, who exacted their debts of them contrary to the law, (Deut. xv. 3.) which was read to them publicly in such a year, (Deut. xxxi. 12.) For it was of such moment, that it moved Nehemiah to make the Jews take a solemn oath that they would observe this law, and release all the debts that were owing to them in this year, (chap. x. of this book, ver. 31.)

Ver. 2. *For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many.*] They had numerous families.

Therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live.] They had no way to keep them from starving, but by buying corn for them at unreasonable rates; which the

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rich demanded when they saw them in such necessity, that they must pay what they asked or die.

Ver. 3. *Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth.*] There had been a great scarcity for want of rain; which God denied, because they minded building their own houses more than his, as we read Haggai i. 9—11. Now the effects of such droughts caused among the people great scarcity of provisions, in which the rich had no compassion on their poor brethren, but forced them to sell all they had for bread.

Ver. 4. *There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards.*] They do not complain that they were constrained to borrow money, but that they could not have it without taking it up on usury, as it appears from ver. 7. which was contrary to the law of God; (Exod. xxii. 25, &c.) otherwise they could not have paid their tribute to the king of Persia, who laid it upon all his subjects every where, (Ezra iv. 13. vii. 24.)

Ver. 5. *Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children.*] They represent very pathetically that there was no difference between them and their brethren, but that they were poor, and the other rich; for they were all Jews of the same stock, from the same original, all alike circumcised; so that by nature, and by the favour of God, they were every way the same, and therefore ought to enjoy the same freedom that they and their children did.

And, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants.] In case of great necessity this was lawful, Exod. xxi. 7. But they were very void of compassion, who forced their brethren to do a thing so much against nature.

And some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already.] Some of the tender sex, who were least able to endure hardship, they had been already forced to part withal.

Neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards.] Their condition was very lamentable, for none would lend them money freely; and to pay their usury, they were forced to sell their children, whom they had not power to redeem, because their lands were mortgaged to those oppressors: so that they were in a worse condition than when they were in Babylon, being not in so much danger to be devoured by their cruel neighbours (who sought their destruction), as by their barbarous friends and neighbours.

Ver. 6. *And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words.*] It could not but move his indignation, to hear them complain one of another; but much more when he heard the reason.

Ver. 7. *Then I consulted with myself.*] It is not safe to do any thing in a fit of anger; but coolly to consider and deliberate what is fit to be done.

And I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers.] Whom he did not fear to reprove severely, when he found them in fault.

And said unto them, You exact usury every one of his brother.] And that a very heavy one; such as was used among the heathen, called *centesima*, the *hundredth part*, (ver. 11.) which was twelve per cent.

And I set a great assembly against them.] That he might put them to the greater shame. For this *great assembly* I take to be the whole body of the people, with their judges, as Bertram observes, de Repub. Jud. p. 171. (See Ezra x. 8. 14.)

Ver. 8. *And I said unto them, We, after our ability.*] Either he speaks of himself in the plural number, as great men are wont to do; or he means, he, with Ezra, and such-like lovers of their country, had done what follows.

Have redeemed our brethren the Jews, who were sold unto the heathen.] Had done their utmost to deliver the Jews out of the captivity of Babylon; whereby they were restored both to their own country, and to their liberty. And perhaps they had with their own money procured the freedom of such as were slaves to some of the Babylonians; who would not part with them, when they desired to go to Jerusalem, unless they were paid the price of them, being their own proper goods.

And will you even sell your brethren?] For that they might expect, since their parents could not redeem them.

Or shall they be sold unto us?] Must I redeem them out of your hands, as I have helped to redeem some out of Babylon?

Then they held their peace, and found nothing to answer.] There was such an express law of God against them, (Deut. xxiii. 19.) that they had nothing to reply; and therefore were silent, because they could neither deny the fact, nor were able to justify it.

Ver. 9. *And I said, It is not good that ye do.*] This encouraged him to proceed in his reprehension; and to tell them that they had committed a great sin. For that is the meaning of *it is not good:* a soft form of speech, used when they mean it is very bad; Prov. xvi. 29. and many other places.

Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God.] Being so lately delivered by him from oppression, and having so many enemies about them, to observe what they did.

Because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?] Who might justly upbraid them with inhumanity; and thereupon reproach their religion.

Ver. 10. *I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn.*] As a reward of their care and diligence in the public service.

I pray you, let us leave off this usury.] But what then would become of the poor people, who were too much oppressed already? And therefore he beseeches them to leave off this usury; seeing he and his rather waved their own right, than demanded any thing for their labour and toil in the discharge of their offices.

Ver. 11. *Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive-yards, and their houses.*] Though they had lent money upon the security of those lands, &c. yet, since they were the possessions of the poor, who were reduced to great straits, and could not pay them, he beseeches them to restore them, and that without delay.

Also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.] The hundredth part was an usury then practised in those countries, as afterward among the Romans; which was the hundredth part of what was lent every month; so that every year they paid the eighth part of the principal: thus it is commonly said. But Salmasius hath observed, that in the eastern

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countries there were never any laws to determine what interest should be taken for money lent for a day, or a week, or a month, or a year (for there were all these sorts of usury), but every one was left to demand what he pleased; and according to what was agreed they paid for what was borrowed: therefore we cannot certainly tell whether this was heavy or light usury. But among the Greeks and Romans there was a measure set (as he notes in his book de Fœnore Trapezitico), and Ἑκατοστὴ, the hundredth part, was among the Greeks the lowest usury; though it was more or less in several ages, as he there shews, and in his book de Modis Usurarum; where he notes the difference between the Greeks and Romans in this matter, cap. 6. p. 230, &c.

Ver. 12. *Then said they, We will restore them.*] They readily consented to restore their lands, vineyards, and houses.

And will require nothing of them.] Demand no interest for the money.

So will we do as thou sayest.] They so entirely agreed to what he desired, that it made a kind of jubilee among the people: for, no doubt, there was great joy when this was done.

Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.] While they were in this good mind he called the priests, and made them swear in their presence, who were witness to it, that they would keep their word.

Ver. 13. *Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied.*] He prayed God that they might lose all they had, who did not make good their promise; and predicted their poverty by an external sign, as the manner of the prophets was to do. For, folding up the skirts of his garment, and then scattering them abroad, he represented how God would cast them out of their possessions, and the fruit of their labours, who did not observe this oath.

And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the Lord.] God so wrought upon the people's hearts, that even they who had been guilty of taking usury, consented to this imprecation, and wished the same mischief to themselves, if they did not do as he required. And, which was more, they praised God, who had given them such a governor, and put into them this good mind, to submit unto him.

And the people did according to this promise.] Made an immediate restitution of what had been mortgaged to them, and released them of their obligation for money.

Ver. 14. *Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two-and-thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years.*] All which time he was not in Judea; but he ordered him, who was his deputy, in his absence, to do as he did.

I and my brethren.] He and his domestics; or those who, as I said, he deputed in his room.

Have not eaten the bread of the governor.] Taken the allowances which were made to the governors, appointed by the kings of Persia, to provide them a table. Which it was but reasonable they should have; that they who did the public business should be maintained at the public charge. But he would not do that which was lawful, when he saw it would be burdensome to his countrymen, and therefore lived upon his own estate which he had in Judea, and upon the salary which he had as cup-bearer to the king of Persia; in whose service, it is likely, he had enriched himself before he came to Jerusalem.

Ver. 15. *But the former governors, that had been before me, were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver.*] Who these were he doth not say, but spares their names, it being sufficient to declare he did not imitate them, whosoever they were. Nor doth he relate how much bread and wine they exacted, but only that they had besides forty shekels of silver every day, I suppose, to make provision of other things for their table. But from these words Scaliger concludes, that before Nehemiah and Ezra there had been other governors placed over them by the kings of Persia. And if we may believe the Jewish Annals, compiled by the author of Seder Olam Zuta, the first governor, Zerubbabel, returning from Jerusalem to Babylon, died there; and was succeeded in his government of Judea by his son Meshullam, and after him by his grandson Chananiah.

Yea, even their servants bare rule over the people.] They connived at the exactions of their servants, who demanded what they pleased.

But so did not I, because of the fear of God.] It was not vain-glory that made him thus generous, but his love to God, and to his country: for he loved religion better than riches; and took not his own due, that the people might serve God more cheerfully.

Ver. 16. *Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall.*] And all this while he took as much pains as any of them, in building the wall of Jerusalem.

Neither bought we any land.] Which they might have done of the poor at an easy price, if they had desired wealth; but they would not make any advantage to themselves of other men's necessities.

And all my servants were gathered thither unto the work.] They were constantly employed also in the same work, and received no pay for their labour, though it could not be done without neglect of his private business.

Ver. 17. *Moreover, there were at my table a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us.*] This was the greater expense, because they were not inferior people that were entertained at his table, but persons of quality among the Jews and strangers who came about business, and, perhaps, brought him intelligence concerning the state of the neighbouring heathen, and of their designs.

Ver. 18. *Now, that which was prepared for me daily was one ox, and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine.*] This shews that he kept a noble house, as we speak; and, indeed, it was very becoming a great man to entertain great persons, both of his own country and strangers, with magnificence.

Yet for all this required I not the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people.] They could not without great hardship maintain themselves.

Ver. 19. *Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.*] He expected his reward only from God, who he hoped would shew him the same kindness that he had done for his people. There is

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no reason to think he speaks too much of himself, and his own worthy acts; for it was no more than was necessary in such a state of things, that posterity might be furnished with an excellent example of extraordinary virtue; and no more than St. Paul was constrained to speak of himself in his Epistle to the Corinthians; of whom he would take nothing, that he might stop the mouths of false apostles, and covetous people. (See chap. xiii. 22.)

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies.*] Mentioned chap. iv. 7.

Heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates).] Not upon all of them, though some had been set up at the charge of particular persons, (chap. iii. 3. 6. 13, &c.)

Ver. 2. *That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together.*] Either to consult about the common good of their several provinces wherein they governed (of which perhaps they pretended they were to give an account to their master), or to establish a friendship and good correspondence one with another, or some such purpose.

In some one of the villages in the plain of Ono.] A place in the tribe of Benjamin, chap. xi. 35. 2 Chron. viii. 12. (See there.)

But they thought to do me mischief.] He would not trust them, suspecting they intended to kill him; of which, perhaps, he had received some private intelligence.

Ver. 3. *And I sent messengers unto them, saying.*] He shewed so much respect to them, as not to return an answer by those whom they sent to him, but dispatched a messenger of his own to them.

I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?] He did not know any business they could have with him of such great concernment, as that which he had in hand; and therefore he would not put a stop to it to confer with them. This was one reason, but not the only one for his refusal.

Ver. 4. *Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort.*] They were restlessly bent upon his destruction, and therefore importuned him often to give them a meeting. For they thought, I suppose, if they did not take this opportunity to overthrow what he had done, before he set up the doors upon the gates, they should never be able to enter the city afterward.

And I answered them after the same manner.] He still persisted constantly to give no other answer; whereby they might understand he was resolved to finish the work.

Ver. 5. *Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me, in like manner, the fifth time.*] There is no mention of Tobiah in all the foregoing negotiation, and now Geshem is left out; and Sanballat alone sent him a message, pretending, it is likely, special respect and kindness unto him, in informing him what was laid to his charge. Certain it is, he was the great contriver and manager of all the mischief intended against him.

With an open letter in his hand.] Before the message was delivered by word of mouth, but now by letter; yet open, that every one might see of what he was accused.

Ver. 6. *Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen.*] The report was spread among the nations thereabout.

And Gashmu.] The same, I suppose, with Geshem, mentioned ver. 1.

Saith it.] Undertakes to prove it.

That thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.] That he might establish his authority, and reign over them, according to the common report.

Ver. 7. *And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah.*] This was cunningly suggested, that he might not think there was any prophet on his side: as indeed there was, for he had corrupted Shemaiah, as it presently follows.

And now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.] How they should wipe off this suspicion, if it should be put into the king's mind, as he told him it certainly would.

Ver. 8. *Then I sent unto him, saying.*] In an open letter, I suppose, that every body might see it.

There are no such things done as thou sayest.] Nothing done to give a jealousy of a rebellion; nor any prophet that encouraged it.

But thou feignest them out of thine own heart.] He had invented this report to defame Nehemiah, without any ground for it.

Ver. 9. *For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.*] Their business was to contrive false stories, to put the Jews in fear; being confident they would be discouraged by such reports, as some were. Therefore he beseeches God to strengthen him that he might support others.

Ver. 10. *Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel.*] Who was a prophet, (it appears from ver. 12.) whom, it is likely, Nehemiah took to be his friend, and therefore went to consult and advise with him at his house.

Who was shut up.] Out of fear he pretended; and by this action would have had Nehemiah to understand what he himself should do for his own security: for it was the manner of the prophets to instruct the people by actions and signs, as well as by words. But others think he *shut himself up*, that is, retired, as a holy man, from the affairs of the world, to spend his time in meditation and prayer in some of the chambers of the temple; whither he advised Nehemiah to retire, and to take sanctuary there from the great dangers to which he was exposed.

And he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee.] By *the temple* he means the outward court of it, where he had a chamber; whither, as a friend in whom Nehemiah confided, he prayed him *to come*, that they might meet and consult together how to preserve Jerusalem, and where he might be safe himself from his enemies; who could not easily enter in there, it being a strong place, and besides privileged by its holi-

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ness, unto which even heathens, perhaps, might have such regard as not to violate it; whereas the gates of Jerusalem were not yet in such a condition as to keep them out. By this means he hoped Nehemiah would become contemptible, when the people saw his cowardice; and the Jews would be disheartened, as much as their enemies took courage. And, perhaps, he intended, with some priests, his confederates, to seize on him, and deliver him into the hands of Sanballat: at least, it would give some countenance to the calumny he had raised, of his affecting to be king; because he fled from his work, and durst not stand upon his integrity. Shemaiah also might think hereby to draw him in to offend God, by coming into that court where the priests only might come, and where it is supposed this prophet now was.

Yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.] I take the meaning to be, Even this very night will they fall upon thee; therefore consult thy safety, by fleeing hither.

Ver. 11. *And I said, Should such a man as I flee?*] Who am a governor, and ought to give a good example of undaunted courage; and have professed to put great confidence in God; and hitherto been marvellously preserved by him, and assisted in his undertaking.

And who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.] There might have been colour for this advice, if Jerusalem had been an open place, without any walls, without armed men in it, or that had no courage to defend it: but they had appeared on the walls to defend it, (chap. iv. 13.) and being so well appointed, he was resolved still to rely on God, and on their fidelity and valour; and not be so base as to desert them, till they deserted him; which they might well do, if they saw him flee from them for fear.

Ver. 12. *And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me.*] Not to secure him, but to betray him; as he plainly discovered in a little time: which shewed, there was no such danger, as this false prophet pretended.

For Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.] Tobiah was not idle all this time, but it is likely invented this plot, to bribe this man to be a false prophet: which, perhaps, was discovered to Nehemiah by some undoubted prophets of God, who were on their side.

Ver. 13. *Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin.*] That they might draw him in to offend God, by distrusting his care of him; and dishonour himself by base cowardice.

And that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me.] As a man guilty of what they accused him.

Ver. 14. *My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works.*] Their calumnies, and malicious contrivances, and foul practices, which he hoped God would take a time to punish.

And on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.] The wicked temper of this people is very wonderful, who had already got false prophets among them, both men and women, whom Nehemiah did not think fit as a judge to punish, but left them to the judgment of God. Nor do we read that he informed the king of Persia of the foul dealings of these men (which certainly he would have punished), but prayed God to reward them after their deeds: for he would have all know that he depended wholly upon the power of God to enable him to perfect this work, and not upon the help of human force.

Ver. 15. *So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.*] Which may seem incredible to those who do not reflect what a great number of people (who were not hired, but voluntarily) engaged in this work, and how full they were of zeal, and that the foundation of the wall was not razed by the Chaldeans; nay, there were some pieces of it standing, only great gaps being made in it. And other histories acquaint us with the like diligence; particularly Arrianus and Curtius relate, that Alexander the Great built the walls of Alexandria (which was seven miles in compass) in the space of twenty days.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things.*] When they heard how all the designs of their enemies were disappointed, and saw Jerusalem was built, and flourished.

They were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.] Being finished in so short a time, beyond all expectation, and in the midst of great fears and sad apprehensions.

Ver. 17. *Moreover, in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them.*] To add to all the other wickedness of this nation, there were false brethren among their great men, who held a correspondence with their most pestilent enemies against Nehemiah.

Ver. 18. *For there were many in Judah sworn unto him.*] Against the interest of their country, and of their religion; to such a height of impiety were many arrived.

Because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.] So dangerous were marriages with foreigners, which Ezra therefore had great reason to make void; for by these alliances they were engaged in wicked designs against their country.

Ver. 19. *Also they reported his good deeds before me.*] To such an impudence were they arrived, that they highly commended him as a very worthy man in the presence of Nehemiah, who knew so much of his wickedness.

And uttered my words to him.] Or informed him of all that Nehemiah did. For so we translate in the margin, *matters*, not *words*.

And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.] Still continued such practices as are mentioned ver. 6. that, if it were possible, they might put him into such fear, as would move him to do something to disgrace himself.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters, and the singers, and the Levites, were appointed.*] The porters were to attend the gates; but what the Levites and the singers had to do there is not easily resolved: perhaps they were to be ready against the time that the wall should be dedicated, which is mentioned chap. xii.

Ver. 2. *That I gave my brother Hanani.*] Who was the

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man that came from Jerusalem to Shushan, to acquaint him with the deplorable condition of the city, and implore his help, (chap. i. 2.)

And Hananiah the ruler of the palace.] So the house where Nehemiah dwelt is called, because he was governor for the king, and a kind of viceroy, who did all the king's business, and here gave audience to all people, as the king was wont to do in his palace.

Charge over Jerusalem.] He made Hanani, I suppose, principal governor over Jerusalem, and Hananiah was his assistant and deputy.

(For he was a faithful man, and feared God above many).] He saith nothing of Hanani, who was well known to be zealous for God and for his country, by the journey he took to Shushan (which I before mentioned); but he gives the reason why he joined Hananiah with him, because he knew he might be trusted, being a man of conscience, who acted out of religious principles, which a great many in those days did not. The reason why he took this care for the city, it is likely, was, because he himself was returning to Shushan, to give the king an account of the state of affairs in Judea; and therefore placed such men in Jerusalem as he knew would faithfully secure it in his absence.

Ver. 3. *And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot.*] Till it had been risen a good while, that they might see clearly round about them, and that all the people might be ready in case of any danger.

And while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them.] And at night he charges them to stand by and see the gates shut and barred in their presence. Or, as some expound it, they should not suffer any man to stir till they shut the gates, lest through carelessness they should chance to be left open. So De Dieu renders the words, *While the standers-by shut the gates, hold them fast;* that is, he gave them power to keep all there present, and not let them go away till this was done.

And appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house.] The gates being shut, he charges them to set the watch in proper places; every one keeping watch in that part which was next to his own house.

Ver. 4. *Now the city was large and great.*] And therefore required many watches.

But the people were few therein.] In comparison with the bigness of the city.

And the houses were not builded.] That is, not all that had been in former times, but a great deal of ground still lay waste.

Ver. 5. *And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people.*] Whatsoever good motion came into his mind he ascribed it to God, and not to his own prudent consideration, though that was employed in this business. For without God we can do nothing, who ought therefore to be in all our thoughts.

That they might be reckoned by genealogy.] That, by knowing of what family they were, and where they formerly dwelt, he might recall those of them whose habitations had heretofore been in Jerusalem, to come and settle there again, now that the wall was built, and they might dwell there in safety.

And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein.] The words following:

Ver. 6. *These are the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city.*] These are the very words which we read in the second chapter of Ezra, ver. 1, &c. from whence he seems to have transcribed them, and added something to them.

Ver. 7. *Who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah: the number, I say, of the men of the people of Israel was this.*] He that is here called Azariah, is called there Saraiah; and there are some other small differences in the names, but all the same, only here Nahamani is added.

Ver. 8. *The children of Parosh, two thousand a hundred seventy and two.*] I shall not transcribe all this genealogy, concerning which I have nothing to observe, but that in some few things it differs from that in Ezra. (See my annotations on Ezra ii. 5.) There are also some families named here which are not in Ezra, as in ver. 22. 48—52. which are all omitted in Ezra. For it must be considered, that one of these accounts was taken by Ezra in Babylon, the other by Nehemiah in Judea: and therefore it is no wonder that a greater number are sometimes mentioned in Nehemiah than in Ezra; for in the first account that was taken of them, many were ignorant of their genealogy; but before the last, the book of their genealogy was found: and yet in the whole number the two accounts agree, though in the particular sums they vary. Compare ver. 66. of this chapter with the second of Ezra, ver. 64. of which Dr. Lightfoot gives this account in his Chronicle of the Times of the Old Testament, p. 146. "The matter is to be conceived and apprehended thus: That Nehemiah found that list and catalogue of those that came up in the first of Cyrus, as it was taken then; and that he called over the names of the families as they lay in order there: he observed the order of that list in calling and listing them; but he took the number of them, as they were now when he numbered them. And some families were now more in number than they were when that first was made, and some were less; and some that were in that list were not to be found now: for some had more of the same stock come out of Babel since the first numbering; and some that had come up at first, and were then numbered, were now gone back." And so he observed, by comparing that list and the present number, how the plantation in Judea had gone forward or backward, increased or decayed, since the first return.

Ver. 65. *And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things till there stood up a priest with urim and thummim.*] It is the opinion of Jacobus Capellus, that Zerubbabel is here meant by the *Tirshatha*, (Ezra ii. 63.) Whosoever he was, he expresses his hope that God might in time restore the *urim* and *thummim* (as he had done the nation), and so give answer about obscure and difficult matters, as he had done in former ages. But till then these priests were not admitted to partake of the most holy things, because it did not appear by good proof

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that they were of the family of the priests, and *not to appear, and not to be, are the same thing* in law. But the Talmudists, as the same person observes, interpret these words as if it had been said, *Till the dead rise, or till the Messiah come.* For after the first temple was destroyed, "the cities of the Levites, with their suburbs, were wanting, and so were *urim* and *thummim*, and the kings of the house of Judah." (See his Historia Exot. et Sacra, ad A.M. 3557.)

Ver. 70. *And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work: the Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drachms of gold, fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments.*

Ver. 71. *And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand drachms of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pounds of silver.*

Ver. 72. *And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drachms of gold, and two thousand pounds of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments*] The offering mentioned in these three verses was made by different persons from those who are said to have offered in Ezra ii. 68, 69. and therefore no wonder the gold and silver, and other things offered, were different.

Ver. 73. *So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities.*] These are the very same words with those in the second chapter of Ezra, and the last verse; and in both places it is said *all Israel* dwelt in their cities. Which, though it be chiefly to be understood of Judah and Benjamin, yet it is evident some of the ten tribes did return with them, according to those prophecies, Jer. l. 4. Zech. viii. 13. And, indeed, there were many of the Israelites that did live in the tribe of Judah before the captivity, (2 Chron. x. 17. xi. 16.)

And when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.] When all the business beforenamed was over, the people were sent back, by Nehemiah's direction, to their several cities unto which they belonged: where they remained till the seventh month came; which was five days after the wall was finished, on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month, (chap. vi. 15.)

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *AND all the people gathered themselves together as one man.*] In this month was the first great feast that fell out after the building of the wall; as it was just after their first company returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, (Ezra iii. 1.)

Into the street that was before the water-gate.] Which gate is mentioned before, chap. iii. 26. the street before which being very capacious, they all might meet there; for the court of the temple was not large enough to contain such a multitude.

And they spake unto Ezra the scribe.] This, no doubt, is the same person mentioned in the foregoing book; who had been at Babylon, it is thought, since his first coming into Judea, and was now returned; beholding with great joy the wall of Jerusalem built, as before he had seen the temple.

To bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.] They called to mind that place in Deuteronomy, chap. xxxi. 10, 11, &c. where God requires the law to be read publicly every seventh year in the feast of tabernacles, which was appointed to be kept in this month. This, no doubt, Ezra was ready to perform; but such was the forward zeal of the people at this time, that they prevented him by their pious entreaties, that he would observe that law.

Ver. 2. *And Ezra the priest.*] So he is called, as before the *scribe;* both of these titles being put together in the foregoing book.

Brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women.] For the city being restored and reinhabited, the next thing that was proper to be done was to instruct them in those laws whereby they were to live.

And all that could hear with understanding.] That were not mere children.

Upon the first day of the seventh month.] Which was not the feast wherein the law was to be read; but, as Pellicanus well observes, all this month was in a manner holy, so that they continued employed in these holy exercises till the end of the two-and-twentieth day, which was the conclusion of the feast of tabernacles.

Ver. 3. *And he read therein before the street that was before the water-gate, from the morning until mid-day.*] In the Hebrew the words are, *from the light;* that is, from the break of day (as we speak), or the sunrising, until noon. Then, I suppose, they went to take some repast, it being a festival, and a day of great rejoicing, "a memorial of blowing with trumpets," Lev. xxiii. 24. on which he thought good to begin the reading of the law, that he might do more than they desired, if they spake to him of reading it on the feast of tabernacles.

Before the men and the women, and those that could understand: and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.] This is a general account of what he did: the particulars follow.

Ver. 4. *And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose.*] To raise him higher than the people; that he might be the better seen and heard by them all; whence, in the Hebrew, it is called *a tower of wood:* but was not like our *pulpits*, which contain no more than one person; but large and long, that many persons might stand in it, as appears by what follows. Vitringa hath lately described it largely in his book de Synagoga Veteri, p. 184, &c.

And beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.] It is evident by these words, that six persons stood on his right hand, and seven on his left, in the same pulpit, being in all fourteen.

Ver. 5. *And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people).*] He being in the very middle of the pulpit, and the forenamed persons on each side of him.

And, when he opened it, all the people stood up.] Out of reverence to the holy word of God. (See Judg. iii. 20.)

Ver. 6. *And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God: and all the people answered, Amen, amen.*] He seems to have used the words, wherein David ordered them to bless, 1 Chron. xvi. 36. where all the people answered, *Amen;* as they do here with great affection. But the Jewish doc-

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tors pretend, that in the temple the people never answered *Amen*, but said, *Blessed be the name of his glorious kingdom, for ever and ever.* So Vitringa notes in his book de Synagoga Veteri, p. 1096. and our Mr. Thorndike observed the same long before, in his Religious Assemblies, p. 230.

With lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.] Which were all postures in prayer, and in thankful acknowledgments to God.

Ver. 7. *Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law.*] It is thought by some, that these persons expounded to the people what had been read to them; for the same persons did not read, they imagine, and make them understand what was read. But Stephanus Morinus hath observed very well, that it is not likely that Ezra was a mere reader, and Levites the doctors and expositors of the law before Ezra and Nehemiah. It is far more likely that Ezra began to read; and that when he was weary, some of those who stood by him on each side went on where he left off; for it was too much for one man to read from morning to mid-day. And he also instructed these Levites, if there was any difficulty, to make the people understand what was read.

And the people stood in their place.] Listening both to what was read, and what was delivered as the explication of it.

Ver. 8. *So they read in the book.*] That is, Ezra and his assistants read not all the book of the law, but only Deuteronomy, as they do at this day.

In the law of God distinctly.] With a clear voice and distinct pronunciation.

And gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.] Ezra, and the other persons directed by him, gave the sense, and made them understand what was read. So the last words are commonly expounded. But Isaac Casaubon, in an epistle of his to Suffridus Calignon, (Epist. dcx.) disputes at large, that all the Jews take the meaning to be, that the people in their captivity having disused the Hebrew tongue, and been accustomed to the Chaldee, Ezra and his companions rendered the Hebrew words exactly into the Chaldee language. And to put all out of doubt, that this is their sense, he observes, that the Jews at this day retain this custom (which they received from Ezra) in their synagogues, to read the same portion of Scripture, first in Hebrew, and then in Chaldee; as he himself was witness at Frankfort. And he justifies those who take these words, *caused them to understand the reading*, to signify, *expounded the Scripture.* Though the word *micra* be no where so used in the Bible, to signify *the Scripture*, neither doth it signify *reading.* And another learned man thinks the Hebrew words may be most exactly translated, "Dabant intelligentiam per ipsam Scripturam;" *they gave the sense by the Scripture itself.* But there is not good warrant to assert this. And the discourse of Casaubon is grounded on a tradition of the Jews, which hath no better foundation than this; that they had forgot their language in Chaldea, and therefore they read the law in that tongue, which they understood better than their own. But if this were true, why did the prophets write in Hebrew after their return from captivity? And this very book shews the contrary, chap. xiii. 23, 24. where the Jews' language appears to have been spoken by the people. Nor is the custom of reading the Targum after the law very ancient, nor generally used in their synagogues.

Ver. 9. *And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites, that taught the people.*] Who had instructed them in their duty out of the law that had been read to them.

Said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.] They bewailed the ignorance wherein they lived; and the many violations of the law, whereof they had been guilty. Just as Josiah did when he heard the words of the law read out of a book found unexpectedly, (2 Chron. xxii.)

Ver. 10. *Then he said.*] That is, the Tirshatha gave this command, who was the principal person among those forenamed, having the same authority that Zerubbabel had. (See chap. vii. 65.)

Go your way.] Now that it was noon, it was time for them to refresh themselves.

Eat the fat, and drink the sweet.] Make a feast, and provide as good cheer as you are able, according to the manner on their festival days.

And send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.] It did not become religious people only to make much of themselves; but he would have them out of their fulness to feast their poor brethren, that they might rejoice with them.

For this day is holy unto our Lord.] Being the first new moon in the year, and the feast of blowing with trumpets, (Lev. xxiii. 24.) And nothing was more unsuitable to such festivals than mourning and lamentation; for they were appointed to be solemnities for mirth and gladness; and are therefore called *the days of your gladness*, in Numb. x. 10. And in Psal. xcii. 4. for the sabbath, the Psalmist saith, "Thou Lord hast made me glad through thy works; I will triumph in the works of thy hands:" expressing the subject of his gladness, the remembrance of the creation of the world, upon that day celebrated.

Neither be you sorry.] Inwardly grieved.

For the joy of the Lord is your strength.] Joy in the Lord for the great things he had done for them in restoring them to their own land, building the temple, and the walls of Jerusalem, was never more becoming than upon a festival day, which afforded other matter of joy. And beside, it would make them cheerfully perform the rest of their duty, and fortify them against troubles and adversities; nay, it was the way to remove them, or to keep them off: for when the service of God was their delight, he promised to keep off those plagues which were threatened in the law against transgressors, and to give them all the blessings they could desire.

Ver. 11. *So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.*] What Nehemiah had said to as many as could hear him, the Levites said to the rest of the people: going about, and persuading them to lay aside their heaviness, and make it a good day.

Ver. 12. *And all the people went their way to eat, and to*

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drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth.] As all nations were wont to do upon their festival days. There being very few among the Greeks, wherein they made lamentations; but they rather exceeded all bounds of decency in their jollity upon sacred solemnities, being wont, besides music and dancing (which were very proper), to entertain one another with jests and scoffs, and unbecoming laughter; as the illustrious Spanhemius shews, in his observations upon Callimachus's hymn, in Lavacrum Palladis, ad Versum 324.

Because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.] This was an extraordinary reason for their mirth, that they were illuminated in Divine knowledge, and understood the will of God better than they did before.

Ver. 13. *And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law.*] This was no festival day, but so desirous were they to be acquainted with the law (of the knowledge of which he had given them a taste), that they came again this day to beg further instruction. Which, it is evident from hence, Ezra gave them, not the priests and the Levites, who came to be instructed by him as well as the people.

Ver. 14. *And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month.*] It is probable that he read to them particularly the duties belonging to this month, wherein they were assembled, in which they found the feast of tabernacles was to be observed; and therefore they came to him for direction how it was to be kept, that they might obey the precept. And first he informed them that they must *dwell in booths:* which Maimonides shews how it is to be understood in his Seder Zeraim, where he explains the tradition of the ancients, who believed, that when God gave a precept he also gave the exposition of it, which he pretends was preserved by their wise men; which is a vain fancy of the Jews, to support the credit of their traditions. But the book Cosri thinks these words [*they found it written*] are to be understood of the common people; for the better sort understood well enough that such festivals were to be observed, and had not forgotten any of the precepts, (par. iii. sect. 63.)

Ver. 15. *And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying.*] Then he tells them that proclamation should be made in all their cities, beginning in Jerusalem, that this feast ought to be observed on such a day, (Lev. xxiii. 4. 34.)

Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive-branches, and pine-branches, and myrtle-branches, and palm-branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written.] The nearest mount to Jerusalem was the Mount of Olives, where it is likely all these trees grew. But the word *shaman*, which we translate *olive-branches*, our famous Dr. Castell thinks signifies *citrons*, which is not material, they being such branches as the mount afforded.

Ver. 16. *So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house.*] Which by the law was to be built flat, (Deut. xxii. 8.)

And in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water-gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.] They durst not make them without the walls of the city, for fear of their enemies.

Ver. 17. *And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths.*] They not only made them, but left their houses, and dwelt in them all the days of the feast.

For since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so: and there was very great gladness.] This is scarce credible, as Mr. Medo speaks, that for a thousand years none of the good kings in Israel should observe this festival, at least in this main circumstance *of dwelling in booths.* But so he thinks it was, and that this horrible omission of this feast alone foresignified the Jews would not acknowledge Christ, whom this signified to be Emanuel, God dwelling in our flesh. (See book i. discourse xlv. p. 354.) But I think this is not the meaning, that this festival had never been observed since Joshua's time; for we read in the foregoing book, that it was kept at their return from Babylon. But the meaning is, that the joy had never been so great as it was now since that time: for which there was a special reason, as the Jews observe in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 30. for they rejoiced in the days of Joshua, that they had got possession of the land of Canaan; and now they rejoiced that they were restored to it, and quietly settled in it, after they had been cast out of it.

Ver. 18. *Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God: and they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.*] There was a command that the law should be read on this feast, as I observed above, (Deut. xxxi. 10—12.) but not that it should be read every day. This was the effect of their great zeal to be instructed in the law of God, which made them desire to hear it on the second day of this month, which was a festival: (ver. 13.) and perhaps the eighth day, on which a solemn assembly was appointed, (Lev. xxiii. 26.) they continued the same holy exercise. But that seems contrary to this verse, which speaks only of *seven days.*

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *NOW, in the twenty and fourth day of this month, the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them.*] The feast being over, which ended upon the twenty-second day (all which time mourning was forbidden, as contrary to the nature of the feast, which was to be kept with joy), they now return to that which they were about before, (chap. viii. 9. 12.) and spent this whole day in humbling themselves before God for their sins. The reason why they did not immediately after the feast of tabernacles keep this fast, was (as Josephus Scaliger conjectures), because the twenty-third day was another festival, made by the constitution of the elders, by the same authority wherewith afterward they appointed the feast of Purim, mentioned in the book of Esther. It was called *the festival of the law*, still observed by the Jews on the twenty-third day of this month, because then they make an end of reading the law, which they begin again every year the next sabbath after. Now this being a day of joy, as other festivals were, on which they were forbidden to mourn, they deferred their mourning till this solemnity also was past, and then they fell to weeping again, as they did when they first heard the law read.

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Ver. 2. *And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.*] Who had been guilty of taking strange women to be their wives; for which Ezra had severely censured them, and constrained them to put them away. But so depraved were some among them, that it seems they transgressed again in this matter, as they did in other things, who confessed their own guilt, and the guilt of those that were before them, and, as a token of their true repentance, *separated* themselves from these strangers. Which they did in such a manner, that they *stood* at a distance from them, to shew that they renounced them. For so the word *stood* is to be taken in this place, not for a posture of prayer, wherein they confessed their sins; for, appearing in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads, it is more likely they lay down and bewailed themselves, as the manner was in such cases. And accordingly the Levites called upon them (ver. 5.) to *stand up;* which supposes that they lay on the ground, or fell on their knees, and were not standing when they spake unto them.

Ver. 3. *And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God.*] That is, the Levites stood up in a place built for them, like that whereon Ezra stood: (chap. viii. 4.) for otherwise they could not have been heard when they read.

One fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God.] They read the law and confessed (that is, praised God, ver. 5.) interchangeably. For in one fourth part of the day, that is, from the first hour to the third, they did the one, and from thence to the sixth hour (that is, till twelve o'clock) they did the other. Then they began the former again till the ninth hour, and from thence till the evening they spent their time in the other.

Ver. 4. *Then stood up upon the stairs, of the Levites.*] Or, upon the *scaffold* (as the margin translates it), which raised them above the people, that they might all see and hear.

Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the Lord their God.] They most earnestly beseeched him to be merciful to them.

Ver. 5. *Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever.*] After the Levites beforenamed had cried to God for mercy (the people, I suppose, begging it on their knees), another company of Levites bade the people stand up, and praise the Lord, and give him thanks as long as they had any being.

And blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.] The Levites, it is likely, praised him in these words, acknowledging that the noblest creatures could not reach his superexcellent perfections, and all the people repeated the same words after them.

Ver. 6. *Thou, even thou, art Lord alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all.*] As they confess the Lord to be the only God, so they attribute two things to him; that he is the Creator and the Conservator of the universe; for having made it, no doubt he takes care of every part thereof.

And the host of heaven worshippeth thee.] Sometimes the stars, and sometimes the angels, are called *the host of heaven.* The latter seems to be here meant; for the other are mentioned before, when he saith, *the heavens with all their host.* Concerning *the heaven of heavens,* see in Solomon's prayer, 1 Kings viii. 27.

Ver. 7. *Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham.*] Here follows a compendious history of the affairs of the Hebrew nation, in this confession of God's benefits, and their ingratitude. Which Nehemiah and Ezra, it is likely, composed in the form of a prayer, and delivered it to the Levites, whom they ordered to speak it distinctly before the whole congregation from their several scaffolds, which were conveniently placed in several parts of the assembly, that they might be heard.

Ver. 8. *And foundest his heart faithful before thee.*] In many instances, especially in that great trial of his faith and obedience, when he required him to offer up his only son to him, (Gen. xxii. and see also Gen. xv. 6. xvii. 5, &c.)

And madest a covenant with him, to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous.] True to his word in faithfully fulfilling his promises. (See Gen. xv. 7. 18. xvii. 2. 4. 7, &c.)

Ver. 9. *And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red Sea.*] They pass by all God's providences over Isaac and Jacob, to come to that which God had done for them since they were a nation; that is, since he had made good his covenant with Abraham, to multiply his seed as the stars of heaven; at which time he foretold him of the grievous affliction of his seed in Egypt, (Gen. xv. 5. 13.) from which he graciously delivered them, they here acknowledge, and completed their deliverance at the Red Sea.

Ver. 10. *And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land.*] Which are recorded in the book of Exodus, chap. vii. viii. &c.

For thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them.] Intending to make them their slaves for ever, as, for the present, they treated them with the utmost contempt and cruelty, (Exod. v. 17, 18.)

So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day.] See Exod. ix. 16.

Ver. 11. *And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land.*] See Exod. xiv. 21, 22.

And their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters.] So that they sunk down, and rose up no more to persecute them. The Hebrew word signifies the *strong* or *rough* waters. And so Bochartus observes out of many Greek authors, that that sea is called, and said, in short, to be κατὰ πάντα φοβερὸν, *in all regards formidable or terrible.* In his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 13.

Ver. 12. *Moreover, thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar, and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.*] Concerning which, see Exod. xiii. 21.

Ver. 13. *Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judg-*

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ments and true laws, good statutes and commandments.] This seems to relate, in the beginning of the verse, to the ten commandments, spoken by the mouth of God himself; but the latter part comprehends all the law delivered by him to Moses in the mount, (chap. xxi.—xxiii.)

Ver. 14. *And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath.*] The Scripture mentions the sabbath as a singular gift bestowed upon the Jewish nation, (Exod. xvi. 29.) It being a sign between him and them, that he was their God, who sanctified, that is, separated them out of all other people to be his peculiar people; that is, the worshippers of the Creator of the world, whom they acknowledged to be the Lord their God, while the heathen worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, and other creatures, as their gods, Exod. xxxi. 13. and Ezekiel xx. 12. 20. in which the prophet tells us, that God intended, by this, to shew that he had chosen Israel, as I said, to be his peculiar people above all other nations, and that they had no other God.

And commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.] Which are those beforementioned, which were not spoken by God himself, but delivered by him to Moses in the mount, who was his faithful servant, and delivered nothing but what he received from God's own mouth. The observation of which is often pressed upon them as an acknowledgment of him to be their Creator, who brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Ver. 15. *And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst.*] See Exod. xvi. 14, 15. xvii. 6.

And promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.] Which he set before them, and bade them go and possess it, as Moses tells them, Deut. i. 8.

Ver. 16. *But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments.*] A famous instance of this there was, when they refused to go up and possess the land, to the borders of which he had brought them: (Numb. xiv. 1, 2, &c.) and afterward more insolently rebelled against Moses and Aaron, who had been their conductors through the wilderness, (Numb. xvi. 3.)

Ver. 17. *And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks.*] Their ingratitude was the greater, because these wonders were not done among other nations, but were peculiar to them; which our Saviour makes a very high aggravation of the sins of their posterity, (Matt. xi. 21.)

And in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage.] See Numb. xiv. 4. where they consulted about it, and it seems came to this resolution, that they agreed upon a captain to lead them back to Egypt: or their resolving to do it was the same with the actual appointment of a captain, as it was in the case of Abraham's offering his son.

But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.] This was the character God gave of himself to Moses, (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7,) which he made good to all generations. (See Psal. cxlv. 8.)

Ver. 18. *Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy god that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations.*] This was the highest provocation, considering how lately he had spoken to them from heaven not to make a graven image, and how many cautions he had afterward given them against it.

Ver. 19. *Yet thou, in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness.*] But gave them an early instance of his clemency.

The pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.] Which testified that, notwithstanding their provocation, God was still among them, and continued his gracious presence with them, of which this was a glorious token, as Moses told them, Numb. xiv. 14.

Ver. 20. *Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them.*] The spirit of prophecy, which was upon Moses, God imparted to seventy other persons, that the people might be better governed, (Numb. xi. 16, 17.)

And withheldest not thy manna from their mouth.] But continued it till they came to Canaan; or else they might have been starved. (See Josh. v. 12.)

And gavest them water for their thirst.] When the whole congregation deserved to perish, according to their own wish, that they had died when their brethren died before the Lord, (Numb. xx. 3.)

Ver. 21. *Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing: their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.*] See Deut. viii. 4.

Ver. 22. *Moreover, thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners.*] Some translate the last words, *Thou didst divide them by angles;* that is, he parted those kingdoms among them as by a line. But others understand it of the people dispossessed by the Jews, whom he drove into corners.

So they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan.] Most of the inhabitants of which he destroyed, and the rest fled and hid themselves in corners. But it must be observed, that Heshbon being the city of Sihon, (Numb. xxi. 26.) the first words should be rendered, *the land of Sihon, even the land of the king of Heshbon.*

Ver. 23. *Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it.*] See Gen. xv. 5.

Ver. 24. *So the children went in and possessed the land; and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would.*] These words express the easy conquest they made of the whole country.

Ver. 25. *And they took strong cities.*] The walls of Jericho falling down flat before them.

And a fat land.] A fruitful country flowing with milk and honey.

And possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and olive-yards, and fruit-trees in abundance.] They were enriched with the estates of the people whom they destroyed, having houses ready built, and well furnished, together with all sort of trees planted to their hands.

So they did eat, and were filled, and became fat.] They wanted nothing, but rather had superfluity of all worldly blessings.

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And delighted themselves in thy great goodness.] Their highest pleasure indeed ought to have been in their thoughts how good God was unto them; but the meaning of these words is no more than this, That God had bestowed so many blessings upon them, that they took great pleasure in the enjoyment of them.

Ver. 26. *Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs.*] The pleasant life they led in the good land God gave them made them wanton, and forgetful of God and of his laws, which they regarded not at all.

And slew thy prophets, which testified against them to turn them to thee.] We read of many prophets slain by Jezebel, 1 Kings xviii. 4. xix. 10.

And they wrought great provocations.] By abominable idolatries.

Ver. 27. *Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and, according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.*] The whole book of Judges verifies this, that God delivered them for their sins unto the Moabites, the Canaanites, and divers other enemies, who grievously domineered over them; but when they cried to God for help, he was so gracious as to send such great men as Barak, Gideon, and others, to be their *saviours*, that is, deliverers from their tyranny.

Ver. 28. *But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee.*] No sooner did they begin to prosper, and the judge that saved them was dead, but they revolted from God, who had been so good to them.

Therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them.] God so abandoned them, that he let the Philistines rule over them forty years, (Judg. xiii. 1.) unto which, perhaps, this passage relates.

Yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them, according to thy mercies.] For nothing else could move him to it; they being through all generations unconstant and unsteadfast in their obedience.

Ver. 29. *And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law.*] By many remarkable punishments he testified how highly he was displeased with them, that he might reform them.

Yet they dealt proudly.] Which one would have expected should have humbled them; but they grew more bold and obstinate in their sins.

And hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments (which if a man do, he shall live in them).] That is, be a happy man.

And withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear.] Withdrawing the shoulder is a metaphor (I have observed before) taken from refractory oxen, that draw back, and will not submit to the yoke.

Ver. 30. *Yet many years didst thou forbear them.*] Before he suffered them to be carried captive out of their own land.

And testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets.] Whom he raised up (I have observed elsewhere) in every age, in every king's reign, to tell them their duty, and reprove them for their sins.

Yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.] At last he delivered them into the hands of the Chaldeans, as we read 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. who are called the *people of the lands*, because they had got possession of all the countries thereabout, which God put under their power, as he had done other countries beyond Euphrates.

Ver. 31. *Nevertheless, for thy great mercies' sake, thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them.*] But left them a remnant of the poorer sort in the land, and shewed favour to the captives in the land of Babylon.

For thou art a gracious and merciful God.] To which alone they owed their preservation from utter destruction.

Ver. 32. *Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy.*] Thus he began his address to God before he came from Shushan. (See chap. i. 5.)

Let not all the trouble seem little before thee that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.] For those kings first began to invade their country, and carried away the ten tribes, (2 Kings xv. 19. xvii. 3. 5, &c.) After which, calamities came upon Judah, their good king Josiah being slain, Manasseh carried to Babylon before the great captivity.

Ver. 33. *Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.*

Ver. 34. *Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments, and the testimonies wherewith thou didst testify against them.*

Ver. 35. *For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works.*] In these three verses they acknowledge the justice of God, in all the punishments he had inflicted on them, though heavy, and of long continuance. For from the highest to the lowest they had done all wickedly, and would not be reclaimed.

Ver. 36. *Behold, we are servants this day; and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it.*] God had, indeed, marvellously restored them to their own country; yet the marks of his displeasure for their sins still remained very visible: for they were but servants unto others, not owners and proprietors of the lands which God had given to their fathers. Out of which they had been cast for their wickedness, and had not yet perfectly recovered it, but laboured for their lords and masters.

Ver. 37. *And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins.*] For their land paid a great tribute to the kings of Persia, out of the profit of it, (Ezra vi. 8. vii. 24. and in this book, chap. v. 4.)

Also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure.] For their bodies were liable to be pressed to serve in the king's wars, or in his works; and their cattle subject to them, when they had occasion to send post about the king's business.

And we are in great distress.] Though they were permitted to live by their own laws (as we read in the book of

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Ezra), which was a great privilege, yet they lay under those public burdens, and were compelled to bear them. By which we may learn how vain their proud boasts were in John viii. 33. that they *were never in bondage to any man;* when they had long been slaves in Egypt, and lately in Babylon, and after they came from thence, as they here complain; and even they paid tribute to the Romans when they made those brags to our Saviour.

Ver. 38. *And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.*] In consideration of which, they resolved to renew their covenant with God of better obedience; which they promised under their hands and seals, as the only remedy to procure perfect deliverance. And, to make it more effectual, they seem to declare this in the presence of God, at the conclusion of the foregoing confession and prayer.

It signified little, indeed, as Pellicanus observes, what such an untoward people promised; for what regard would they have to their own hand-writing, who regarded not the ten commandments, written on tables of stone by the finger of God? But it was very useful, that there should be a public instrument to convince them of their impiety, and that they might be publicly confounded when they proved perfidious deserters, by shewing them their engagements, under their own hands, to future fidelity.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *NOW those that sealed were Nehemiah the Tirshatha, the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah.*] Nehemiah was the governor of the country under the king of Persia, and therefore the principal prince among them, who led the way to the rest; who are not mentioned, unless we suppose Zidkijah to have been a prince; for they that followed were priests.

Ver. 2. *Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah.*] I need not transcribe the rest of the names to the eighth verse, at the end of which it is said *these were the priests,* that is, the chief of them, for there are but twenty and one of them in all; and there is no mention of Ezra the priest among them; of which it is hard to give an account, unless we suppose him to be now gone to Babylon: which must be very lately; for he was at Jerusalem in the beginning of the seventh month; (chap. viii. 2.) though on the twenty-fourth day of it, when they fasted and prayed, we do not find him named throughout the whole ninth chapter; yet at the feast of the dedication he was come to Jerusalem again, (chap. xii. 36.) Some therefore think he was now hindered by sickness from being present at this sealing.

Ver. 9. *And the Levites: both Jeshua the son of Azaniah; Binnui of the sons of Henadad; Kadmiel.*

Ver. 10. *And their brethren,* &c.] There are fourteen Levites mentioned in these and the following verses, to ver. 14. which, perhaps, were all the Levites that were then present; or rather were the principal Levites, who were not priests: for some of these are mentioned before, as chosen to expound the law to the people, and to make public prayers to God, (chap. viii. 7. ix. 4, 5.)

Ver. 14. *The chief of the people; Parosh,* &c.] It had been tedious to make all the people subscribe and seal the writing; therefore the principal persons did it in the name of the rest, whose names, in number forty and three, are here recorded till ver. 28.

Ver. 28. *And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding.*] All that did not subscribe and seal, because they were too many, yet gave their consent to what the forenamed persons did. And not only the men, but their wives, and their children who were arrived at years of discretion, engaged themselves, as follows in the next verse.

Ver. 29. *They clave to their brethren, their nobles.*] They declared they were of the same mind with those that had sealed, and owned by word of mouth what they had set their hands unto; and said, it was their act, as much as their nobles' and brethren's, from whom they would not depart.

And entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his judgments and his statutes.] And more than that, they added an oath, whereby they obliged themselves to observe the law; and an imprecation upon themselves, wishing all the curses written in the law might fall upon them, if they did not do as the law required in all things.

Ver. 30. *And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons.*] Besides their general promise, they specify those things that were most difficult; as, not marrying with strangers, observing the sabbath, bringing oblations for the use of the temple, &c. The first thing here specified was of great importance; and they solemnly engaged to perform it: for though both Ezra and Nehemiah had found them guilty of breaking this law, yet they were so prone to offend in this thing, that it seems, notwithstanding all they could do, some continued to violate it.

Ver. 31. *And if the people of the land.*] That is, their heathen neighbours.

Bring ware, or any victuals, on the sabbath-day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath.] We do not find any express law forbidding them to buy what was offered to be sold on the sabbath-day; but they obliged themselves not to do it, that the rest might be better observed. For none would come to sell, when there were no chapmen for their commodities.

Or on the holy-day.] That is, on all days of rest from their labours, such as the Passover, the feast of tabernacles, and others.

And that we would leave the seventh year.] That is, let their land rest every seventh year, and leave the fruit of it, which grew up of itself, for the poor, as the law required, (Lev. xxv. 4, &c.)

And the exaction of every debt.] That is, remit in that year the debts which the poor owed them, (Deut. xv. 2, &c.)

Ver. 32. *Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God.*] We do not find this enjoined any where by an express law; but reason required it at this time; and therefore they obliged themselves to it by an ordinance of the elders, that the service of God at the temple might be maintained by this small duty, which was laid upon every one.

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Ver. 33. *For the shew-bread, and for the continual meat-offering, and for the continual burnt-offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin-offerings, to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.*] There was a treasury formerly in the house of God, out of which all these things were supplied: and when it was exhausted by the many great sums which were sent out of it to foreign princes in the days of Hezekiah, that prince maintained the burnt-offerings at his own charge, (2 Chron. xxxi. 3.) But both these failing for the present, there was this oblation made to furnish all the things here mentioned, and every thing else that was necessary for the service of God. And, no doubt, many good people dedicated things to the same use; whereby the expenses were well maintained.

Ver. 34. *And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood-offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law.*] They determined, by casting of lots, how much wood every one should bring in for his share, to maintain their fire continually upon the altar to burn the sacrifices; and in what order it should be brought (what family, that is, should begin first, and what should follow next), and at what times of the year. For there was another solemn feast (beside those I mentioned before), called *the feast of the wood-offering*, which took its original from hence; and, as Scaliger observes, was kept on the twenty-second day of the month Ab. But Mr. Thorndike observes, out of the Mischna, (in his Religious Assemblies, p. 269.) that it was held nine days in several months, whereof a great part fell in that month; and is meant by these words, *at times appointed, year by year.* The Talmudists also say, that every family, on the day when they brought in the wood, sacrificed a voluntary burnt-offering, called the *korban of wood*, as Petrus Cunæus observes, in his book de Republica Hebræorum, lib. ii. cap. 13. where he notes also, that herein Josephus differs from the Talmudists; that he mentions but one day of the feasts, which he calls ξυλοφορία: which was such a solemn festival, (as Maimonides saith, in his Furniture of the Temple, chap. 6.) that none might mourn on this day, nor fast, nor do any work.

Ver. 35. *And to bring the first-fruits of our ground, and the first-fruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the Lord.*] According to the command, Exod. xxiii. 19. Lev. xix. 23. (See below, ver. 39.)

Ver. 36. *Also the first-born of our sons, and of our cattle (as it is written in the law), and the firstlings of our herds, and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God.*] The law which gave all the firstlings to God is in Exod. xiii. the beginning, and ver. 11, 12. and God gave them all to Aaron the priest, in Numb. xviii. 15, 16.

Ver. 37. *And that we should bring the first-fruits of our dough, and our offerings.*] See Lev. xxiii. 17. Numb. xv. 19, 20. It was to be so large, that it is called *a gift* in Deut. xviii. 4.

And the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine, and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God.] See Numb. xviii. 12, &c.

And the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.] See Lev. xxvii. 30. Numb. xviii. 21.

Ver. 38. *And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure-house.*] As the people gave the tithes of their land to the Levites, so the Levites gave a tithe to the priests. And when the people brought them to the Levites, one of the priests was appointed to be present to inspect them, and to see that, without fraud, they tithed the tithes; that is, set out the tenth part of the tithes they had received for the priests, which was brought to the chambers, wherein it was deposited for the priests in God's house.

Ver. 39. *For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil.*] See Deut. xii. 6. 11.

Unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers.] Where other holy things were kept, and where God's ministers attended, for whose use they were designed, and were to be brought thither at their own charge. These chambers were in the court of the priests: but L'Empereur thinks the court of the people likewise might have such places in it, wherein these things were bestowed, being more than the other could contain. For (as the Jews observe) though the priests had a court proper to themselves, into which none might come but they alone, yet they were not excluded from the court of Israel; and if there was not room enough to receive all the things forementioned, there were receptacles under ground, besides the upper room mentioned Jer. xxxv. 4.

And we will not forsake the house of our God.] They promise, according to their covenant and oath, to be no more so negligent in these matters as they had been; and accordingly they did fulfil this promise, as we read chap. xii. 44, 45. unto the end.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *AND the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem.*] Their neighbours were so enraged to see the walls at Jerusalem built again, and were so restless in their designs to keep this city from rising to its former splendour, that it terrified many of the Jews from coming to dwell there, thinking themselves more safe in the country, where their enemies had no pretence to disturb them. The rulers, therefore, of the people came and settled themselves at Jerusalem, that they might invite and encourage others to come and inhabit it; and several persons, as the next verse intimates, did come and offer themselves freely to dwell with them there.

The rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities.] But though the rulers were settled here, and some followed their example, and all that formerly belonged to Jerusalem were ordered to return, (chap. vii. 4, 5.) yet still there was room for more citizens; and the city, considering how large it was, being very empty, they consulted to make it populous, by compelling every tenth man in Judah and Benjamin to quit his present habitation in the

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country, and come and dwell there; leaving the rest to dwell where they pleased. For which end they cast lots, that among ten men it might be known whom God chose to come thither; and the lot falling by a Divine appointment upon such a person, rather than another, no doubt, he removed the more contentedly to this city.

Ver. 2. *And the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.*] Beside those who were chosen by lot, it seems there were some that voluntarily chose to go and live there; whom the people highly commended and praised, beseeching God to bless and prosper them: for indeed they were worthy to be honoured as men that sought the welfare of their country, the glory of God, the restoring of their nation, the defence of their city, and had a zeal for the Divine service performed there.

Ver. 3. *Now these are the chief of the province.*] Of those Jews that came from Babylon into the province of Judea.

That dwelt in Jerusalem.] Whose names are mentioned ver. 4, &c.

But in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, to wit, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants.] But those that dwelt in the other cities of Judah, he would not reckon in this catalogue; whom he comprehends under the name of *Israel*, the *priests*, the *Levites*, the *Nethinims*, and *Solomon's servants*. By *Israel* he means all the people of the ten tribes, as well as Judah and Benjamin, who were the chief; but he calls them *Israel*, because those of Judah and Benjamin dwelt at Jerusalem, the rest of Israel were in the other cities of Judah.

Ver. 4. *And at Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin.*] For these were the tribes that anciently possessed Jerusalem; which stood partly in the one, partly in the other tribe. Therefore, in some places of Scripture, Jerusalem is reckoned as belonging to the children of Judah, (see Josh. xv. 63. Judg. i. 8.) and sometimes in the same words to the children of Benjamin, (Judg. xviii. 20. xxi. 28.) and here to both. But what part of the city belonged to the one, and what to the other, is not agreed among learned men. Pineda hath represented the several opinions about it at large, in his book de Rebus Solomonis, lib. v. cap. 5.

Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of Perez.] These were all of that family of Pharez, the son of Judah. If the names of these persons mentioned in this chapter be compared with the names of those who came back with Zerubbabel, it will appear, that they were the fourth, fifth, and sixth generation from Zerubbabel; which is a demonstration, that Nehemiah did not come to Jerusalem in the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus, but of Artaxerxes Mnemon. For this observation I am beholden to my worthy friend Dr. Alix.

Ver. 5. *And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Colhozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni.*] These were all of the same family, as the next verse informs us.

Ver. 6. *All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem, were four hundred threescore and eight valiant men.*] Who seem to me to have offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem, and help to defend it by their valour, whose chiefs were Athaiah and Maaseiah.

Ver. 7. *And these are the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah.*

Ver. 8. *And after him Gabbai, Sallai.*] These two and Sallu (beforenamed) were the chief men among them.

Nine hundred twenty and eight.] There were almost as many more of Benjamin as of Judah (who were but four hundred sixty and eight); for though Mount Zion was in the tribe of Judah, yet the city of Jerusalem was in the tribe of Benjamin; which made them have a great desire to see it inhabited, and inflamed the minds of the most valiant, who were best able to defend it, to come and live there.

Ver. 9. *And Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer; and Judah the son of Senuah was second over the city.*] The former of these was the governor of the city; and the other was his deputy; who is called *secondary*, because he was next to him in the discharge of that office. Who is he, as Bertram thinks, that is called in the second book of Maccabees, chap. iii. 4. προστάτης τοῦ ἱεροῦ, *the prefect of the temple;* and by Josephus, Antiq. xiv. 11. ὑποστρατηγὸς ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, *the under governor in Jerusalem.* (See his Repub. Jud. p. 163.)

Ver. 10. *Of the priests; Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin.*] Now he comes to speak of the tribe of Levi; many of which it was necessary should dwell there, to attend the house of God. And first he begins with the priests, who were his chief ministers.

Ver. 11. *Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, was the ruler of the house of God.*] This Seraiah was such a chief man among the priests, as he that is mentioned in 2 Chron. xix. 11. (See there.) Some take him to be the same with him that is called in the New Testament στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ, which we translate *the captain of the temple.*

Ver. 12. *And their brethren that did the work of the house were eight hundred twenty and two.*] Who discharged all the offices of the priests in the temple.

And Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah.

Ver. 13. *And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two; and Amashai, the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer.*

Ver. 14. *And their brethren, mighty men of valour, a hundred twenty and eight.*] Some of the priests were noted to be men of great courage, who, when there was occasion, fought for their country, especially to defend the house of God.

And their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of one of the great men.] Or, as the margin, *the son of Haggedolim*, was set over these valiant men; being descended (it is supposed by some) from some of the *great men* among the priests; as the word *Haggedolim* imports.

Ver. 15. *Also of the Levites; Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni.*] After the priests he gives an account of the Levites; among whom this person, and the two other mentioned in the next verses, were the chief.

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Ver. 16. *And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, had the oversight of the outward business of the house of God.*] There were a great many things to be done without the temple, as well as within, to prepare for the service of it; particularly, to gather the third part of a shekel, which every one was to give to make provision for it, (chap. x. 32.) which work was committed to these men. Though Bertram (de Republica Judaica, p. 160. 363.) thinks this may be the meaning, That they were judges and officers in the country, where their presence was necessary, when there were but few to discharge *such outward business in Israel*, as it is called in 1 Chron. xxvi. 29.

Ver. 17. *And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer.*] He was the precentor (as we call him in our choirs) who began to sing the hymn at morning and evening sacrifice; which seems to be that in 1 Chron. xvi. 7, 8, &c. in the latter part of which they pray to God, as in the former they give thanks.

And Bakbukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun.] The first of these seems to have supplied the place of Mattaniah when he was absent.

Ver. 18. *All the Levites in the holy city were two hundred fourscore and four.*] Who certainly attended there; unless we suppose, with Bertram, that they went forth some time about some *outward business*, which they were required to dispatch.

Ver. 19. *Moreover, the porters: Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, were a hundred seventy and two.*] Who had the custody of the gates of the temple.

Ver. 20. *And the residue of Israel, of the priests and the Levites, were in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance.*] He had said before that the rest of Israel dwelt in their own cities, (ver. 3.) and now he saith, that so did the rest of the priests and the Levites dwell in the cities anciently appointed for them.

Ver. 21. *But the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel.*] Which was a place upon the wall of Jerusalem, or a tower near it. (See chap. iii. 26. 2 Chron. xxvii. 3.)

And Ziha and Gipsa were over the Nethinims.] Two persons of their own body, I suppose, who were appointed to see them do their duty.

Ver. 22. *The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha.*] He was set over the Levites, to govern them, and see them discharge their offices in an orderly manner. The LXX. translate it Ἐπίσκοπος, and so doth the Vulgar; for he was supervisor of those below him.

Of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God.] They were ordered to look after the reparation of the temple; for which they had the more leisure, both because they did not come in their courses to Jerusalem, as others did, but were settled there; and were to attend at the temple only at certain hours, after which they might look after other business.

Ver. 23. *For it was the king's commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers' due for every day.*] Beside the forenamed reasons, they had great encouragement from the king, who ordered them a certain portion for their maintenance every day. Some are of opinion, that this was king David, who first appointed them to attend in a settled course; but it is more likely it was the king of Persia, who out of his munificence made them a daily allowance for their better support; they that sang hymns to their gods being persons much valued in all countries: and if David made any provision for them, it being lost, most likely was not yet restored.

Ver. 24. *And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah.*] We had the children of Pharez named before, who settled at Jerusalem, (ver. 6.) and now it appears that some of the posterity of his brother did the same; for here is one man mentioned who was of great authority under the king of Persia, as it here follows.

Was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.] The king appointed him to receive all petitions from the people, and by him returned them answers. This seems the plain sense, according to our translation. But some translate it, not *at the king's hand*, but *on the king's part*, that is, he heard all causes in civil matters between the king and the people; as, about his tribute, or any grievance of which they complained. And Bertram thinks it appears by the very context, that he was appointed by the king (so *at his hand*, or *by his hand*, may be understood) to see all things supplied which the people were bound to furnish for the temple: or rather, as Pellicanus thinks, to see that what the king allowed for public sacrifices to be made for him, and for his family, (Ezra vi. 10.) was duly paid out of the treasury of the province.

Ver. 25. *And for the villages, with their fields, some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba, and in the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and in the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and in the villages thereof.*] He gives no account of the families that dwelt in the country, as he doth of those that settled in Jerusalem, but only mentions the towns wherein they dwelt, which formerly had been walled cities, but now open villages, wherein houses were built, but not their walls.

Ver. 26. *And at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Beth-phelet.*] In this and in the following verses unto ver. 31. he mentions the other towns wherein the children of Judah dwelt, who did not come to inhabit at Jerusalem.

Ver. 27. *And at Hazar-shual, and at Beer-sheba, and in the villages thereof.*

Ver. 28. *And at Ziklag, and at Mekona, and in the villages thereof.*

Ver. 29. *And at En-rimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth.*

Ver. 30. *Zanoah, Adullam, and in their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and in the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beer-sheba unto the valley of Hinnom.*] It appears by this account that some of these great towns or cities without walls had little villages about them, but others had only fields and no villages in them, the country being as yet but thinly peopled.

Ver. 31. *The children also of Benjamin from Geba dwelt at Michmash, and Aija, and Beth-el, and in their villages.*] Geba had formerly been an eminent place in this tribe, and so was Beth-el.

Ver. 32. *And at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah.*

Ver. 33. *Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim.*

Ver. 34. *Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat.*

Ver. 35. *Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen.*] We read

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of Lod and Ono before in the first book of Chronicles. (See chap. viii. 12.)

Ver. 36. *And of the Levites were divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin.*] The rest of the Levites who were not settled at Jerusalem were distributed among the people of Judah and Benjamin, who dwelt in the forenamed towns, whom they taught and instructed in religion and good manners.

We read also 1 Chron. ix. 3. that some of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh dwelt at Jerusalem; but, I suppose, they were so few, that they are not here remembered; or, perhaps, they removed to some other place when Jerusalem continued without walls.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *NOW these are the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua.*] The chief of the priests, as they are called ver. 7. whom he thought fit to mention here, because he intended to describe the dedication and consecration of the city, where the ministry of the priests and Levites was to be employed.

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra.] If this was the same Ezra that wrote the foregoing book, or part of it, then he went back to Babylon after his coming up to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel, and came again instructed with a large power in the seventh year of Artaxerxes: but there are many reasons to prove he was not the same.

Ver. 2. *Amariah, Malluch, Hattash.*] He that is here called Malluch is called Melicu, ver. 14. and such differences are in some of the following names, which are repeated ver. 15, 16, &c. It being common among the Jews (as I have noted upon the book of Chronicles) to vary in the pronunciation of names, and sometimes to give two names.

Ver. 3. *Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth.*] The first of these is called Shebaniah, ver. 14. and the other two, in ver. 15. are called Harim and Meraioth.

Ver. 4. *Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah.*] The second of these is called Ginnethon, ver. 16. which is a small difference. And Abijah was the head of the course of priests from whom Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, sprung, as Bertram thinks, de Rep. Jud. cap. 18. p. 311.

Ver. 5. *Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah.*] The first of these is called Miniamin, and the next Moadiah, ver. 17. which are likewise very small variations.

Ver. 6. *Shemaiah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah.*

Ver. 7. *Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah.*] The first of these is called Sallai, ver. 20.

These were the chief of the priests.] Heads of the courses of the priests which David instituted, and were restored after their return from captivity, though as yet not so many as they had been before. (See Ezra vi. 18.)

And of their brethren, in the days of Jeshua.] Who was the high-priest at the return from captivity. The meaning seems to be, that they were not only heads of all those who were under them, but the chief of the heads, who were properly their brethren.

Ver. 8. *Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, which was over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren.*] They were appointed to see the psalm of thanksgiving sang every morning and evening at the burnt-sacrifice.

Ver. 9. *Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, were over against them in the watches.*] That is, these ministered in their courses as the others did, and kept their stations over against them in their turns of attendance, which are called *their watches*, or wards. (See ver. 24.)

Ver. 10. *And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada.*

Ver. 11. *And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua.*] In these two verses is an account of the succession of the high-priests, from the return of the captivity till the time that they began to bear the greatest sway in the Jewish nation. For this Jaddua is commonly thought to be that Jaddus the high-priest who went to meet Alexander the Great, in his pontifical habit, as he came from the conquest of Tyre and Gaza, and procured great privileges for the Jewish nation. Now this being granted, the Scripture history ends, as Grotius observes, where the very light of times (as he speaks), that is, the affairs of Alexander, begins: from which time all things in history are clear, the affairs of the Jews being recorded by many Greek writers (several of whom are now perished), as appears by St. Jerome upon Daniel.

Ver. 12. *And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah.*

Ver. 13. *Of Ezra, Meshullam,* &c.] As he had mentioned those who were chief of the priests in the days of Jeshua, so now he thinks fit to mention the sons of every one of them who officiated in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, either as assistants to their fathers, or succeeding them when they were dead. He begins with those three named ver. 1. and so proceeds in order to give an account of the rest, which reaches to ver. 22. and need not be transcribed.

Ver. 22. *The Levites, in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan,* (called Jonathan, ver. 11.) *and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers; also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.*] This is thought by many to be that Darius whom Alexander conquered, till whose time there were records kept of the principal families of the Levites, in the days of those four high-priests, as well as of the priests already mentioned.

Ver. 23. *The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, were written in the book of the Chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib.*] As there had been a register of them in the public records before that time from Jeshua to Johanan. Some think this refers to 1 Chron. ix. 14, &c.

Ver. 24. *And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God.*] These were particularly appointed for this office, which was of great importance.

Ward over against ward.] In their turns, one coming on when another went out, to attend in their courses, which are called *wards*.

Ver. 25. *Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, were porters, keeping the ward at the thresholds of the gates.*] Of the house of God, where they attended and performed their office; or, as some will have it, at the *treasuries*, as in the margin of our Bibles.

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Ver. 26. *These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.*] It is impossible to give a certain account why these are so particularly registered in this book; but we may be sure there was some great reason for it in those days: perhaps, that it might demonstrate their care to employ the best men in all offices for which they were fit; and that they took special care to preserve a faithful record of those who were to serve God as his ministers, as long as they were a nation; which they have not a long time been, and so all distinctions among them are confounded.

Ver. 27. *And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.*] As Solomon and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord when it was built, (of which see 1 Kings viii. 2 Chron. vii.) so now Nehemiah, having set things in good order, thought it meet to dedicate the city, whose wall was built, and gates set up, (ver. 30.) as a place in which God had chosen to dwell, by settling his house here. And therefore they assembled to beseech his blessing and protection upon this city; which being made strong, and well defended, they hoped to serve God in his house there with greater quietness and security.

The Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the oracle being wanting in the temple, this dedication gave no new sanctity, but only restored it to the old; for it was still *the holy city*, as it is called twice in the foregoing chapter of this book, chap. xi. 1. 18. See Selden, lib. iii. de Synedriis, cap. 13. sect. 6. where he observes, that it being said here it was dedicated *with a song* (for so it is in the Hebrew), there was some particular song of dedication, which had been formerly used, which was now sung upon this occasion. And some think, that ever after this time they made a yearly commemoration of this dedication, as they conceive there was of Solomon's dedication of the temple. For the heathen, who imitated the Jews (whose temple Solomon built two hundred and sixty-three years before Rome was built), were wont so to do. But Selden thinks Hospinianus rightly judges, that the Maccabees kept the first anniversary dedication, chap. 14. sect. 7. and upon another account.

Ver. 28. *And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi.*

Ver. 29. *Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth.*] These were the places where they had settled their habitations; from whence, upon Nehemiah's summons, they came to be present and assist at this solemnity.

For the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem.] That they might be the more ready to attend the service of God, when there should be occasion.

Ver. 30. *And the priests and the Levites purified themselves.*] With certain ablutions and expiations, that especially which is mentioned in Numb. xix. where a *water of separation* is prescribed to purify all uncleanness, ver. 9, &c. which is called *the water of purifying*, Numb. viii. 7.

And purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.] By sprinkling, I suppose, the same water upon them, and by prayers, and sacrifices.

Ver. 31. *Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks.*] So the LXX. translate the Hebrew words *shethe tothoth gedoloth*, δύο περὶ αἰνέσεως μεγάλους, *two great for praise;* that is, *two great choirs*, as the Vulgar translates it, which most versions follow. But our great Selden thinks the words should be translated, *two eucharistical sacrifices*, prepared for the altars, which were proper to the present business. The Spanish Jews translate the words, *two grand processions*, (lib. iii. de Syned. cap. 13. sect. 6. p. 210. and see Dr. Hammond upon Psal. xxiv. annot. p. 139.)

Whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall towards the dung-gate.] We add those words, *whereof one*, because of the other mentioned ver. 38. but in the Hebrew the words are, *going on the right*, &c.

Ver. 32. *And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah.*

Ver. 33. *And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam.*] Not Ezra the scribe, who was in a more honourable place, (ver. 36.)

Ver. 34. *Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah.*

Ver. 35. *And certain of the priests' sons with trumpets; namely, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph.*

Ver. 36. *And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them.*] They, in this verse and the former, were priests; and therefore Ezra, who was an eminent priest, led them up at the head of them.

Ver. 37. *And at the fountain-gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David.*] See chap. iii. 15.

At the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water-gate eastward.

Ver. 38. *And the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces, even unto the broad wall;*

Ver. 39. *And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish-gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep-gate: and they stood still in the prison-gate.*

Ver. 40. *So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me.*] The great man beforementioned translates the first words, *So stood the two eucharistical sacrifices in the house of God.*

The order wherein they thus marched, in a pompous manner, round about the city, now seems a little obscure: but the sense of the whole description is this; That they being met together in the same place, half of the rulers went upon the wall on the right hand, accompanied with several priests and Levites, and Ezra the scribe at the head of them, (ver. 36.) and the other half took the left hand, and walked upon the wall in the same order, accompanied with Nehemiah, who brought up the rear of them, (ver. 38.) and at length both parts of this *chorus* met in the temple; and there they stood still, and completed their praises and thanksgivings,

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and offered sacrifices, as it here follows. Where all the people walked it is not certain, but only that half of them went with Nehemiah upon the wall; the rest, it is likely, walking below, because the wall could not contain them.

Ver. 41. *And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets.*

Ver. 42. *And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer: and the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah their overseer.*] It doth not appear that they sounded the trumpets or sang while they were in the procession, but the song and the music began when they came to the house of God.

Ver. 43. *Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced.*] Feasting, I suppose, upon the eucharistical sacrifices which were then offered.

For God had made them rejoice with great joy.] By restoring the holy city to such a secure condition, that they praised the Lord there without fear of disturbance.

The wives also and the children rejoiced.] It was an universal joy.

So that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.] The singers sang with such loud voices, and had so many loud instruments, the women and children also shouting, that they might be heard at a great distance: or, the meaning may be, that the report of it was spread into far-distant countries.

Ver. 44. *And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the first-fruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them, out of the fields of the cities, the portions of the law for the priests and Levites.*] By *the treasures*, he means those places where the oblations, first-fruits, tithes, (which they had promised to pay duly, chap. x. 31, &c.) were laid up, and preserved for the use of the priests and Levites. Of which, that they might not be defrauded, a certain officer was at this time appointed, to see they were brought in according to the law, and to take care that every one had his portion.

For Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited.] They were so glad to see such a great concourse of them, (ver. 27, &c.) and that they performed their duty upon this occasion to the general satisfaction of all that were present, that their hearts were enlarged in love to them, which moved them to take care they should never want the provision appointed by God for them.

Ver. 45. *And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification.*] These and other ministers (who also were Levites) did their duty so carefully, that they were much in the people's favour. For the singers *kept the ward of their God*, that is, sang orderly in their courses, and praised God; and the porters *kept the ward of purification*, that is, duly observed the orders about *purification*, in not suffering any unclean person or unclean thing to come into the house of God.

According to the commandment of David, and of Solomon his son.] Who had regulated all things belonging to the duty of these persons. (See 1 Chron. xxv. xxvi.)

Ver. 46. *For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.*] There were other famous men joined with Asaph, *viz.* Heman and Jeduthun; but he was the principal person whom David employed in this regulation. And this verse gives the reason why the Levites and the singers performed their duty so accurately; because, from the time of David, who constituted their orders and offices, there were some great men who presided over them, and were careful both to instruct them in their duty, and keep them to it.

Ver. 47. *And all Israel, in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters every day his portion.*] Those men that were appointed to look after the treasures, mentioned ver. 44. did their duty so well, that these inferior officers, much less the rest of the Levites and priests, never wanted what was due unto them, but had it every day while Zerubbabel and Nehemiah governed.

And they sanctified holy things unto the Levites, and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron.] The people separated and set apart the tenth part of their crop for the use of the Levites; and the Levites separated from their tithes the tenth part of them for their priests. For the people had no right to the tenth part, but it was holy, that is, to be separated from the rest for God's ministers, the Levites; and the Levites had no right to the tenth part of their tithes which they had received from the people, but it was to be set apart (which is called *sanctified*) for the children of Aaron, that is, the priests.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *ON that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever.*] This was not done upon the day of the dedication of the wall of the city, but upon some day after Nehemiah was returned to Jerusalem from Persia, whither he went to wait upon the king, (ver. 6.) For it is not likely that the people, who were so well affected to the ministers of God, as we read in the foregoing chapter, should so soon forget and neglect them; or that those who were appointed to look after their concerns, (chap. xii. 44.) should be turned out of their office immediately, or lay aside all care of them: for it is apparent, from ver. 10. of this chapter, their dues were not paid them when Nehemiah was not there to look after them. But when he was returned, all this was amended, and other abuses corrected: he continuing the public reading of the law, at stated times, probably on the great festivals, when all the people met together, (such as those mentioned chap. viii.) upon some day of which that portion of Scripture was read, in Deut. xxiii. 3. which forbids the admission of the Ammonites and Moabites into the congregation of the Lord; the meaning whereof see in my annotations there. I will only add here, that they who by *the congregation of God*, in this place, understand the public assemblies for Divine worship, are very much mistaken: for no man, of any nation, was forbidden to come and pray to God at the temple, but men of every nation, who would become proselytes, were admitted into their communion; and if they would be circumcised, had like privileges with all other Israelites, even to eat the passover, (Exod. xii. 48, 49.) They therefore, that think the meaning is, they should be excluded from all public offices, interpret it better: but that is not the truth neither;

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for it is to be understood of marrying with them, as I have shewn in the explication of that law.

Ver. 2. *Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing.*] See upon Deut. xxiii. 4, 5.

Ver. 3. *Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.*] Who were born of strangers, whom the law would not allow to partake of the rites of marriage with Israelites.

Ver. 4. *And before this.*] That is, before this separation was made.

Eliashib the priest.] There were several of this name in those times, and some of them priests, (Ezra x. 6. 24. 26. 37.) But this seems to have been the high-priest, mentioned chap. iii. 1. for his family was much corrupted, as appears from ver. 28. of this chapter.

Having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God.] Here the singular number is used for the plural; for he had not the oversight of one chamber only, but of all the chambers, as the following verses, 5. 9. shew. But this may seem to indicate, that Eliashib was not high-priest, it being below him to be *set over the chamber* (as the phrase is in the Hebrew), though the high-priest, no doubt, had an inspection over them all.

Was allied unto Tobiah.] An Ammonite, as he is often called in this book; with whom he ought to have contracted no affinity, by suffering his grandson to marry with Sanballat's daughter; who was the fast friend of Tobiah, and the great enemy of the Jews. We read also in Ezra that several of the priests had married strange wives; and among the rest, some of the sons of the high-priest are there mentioned.

Ver. 5. *And he had prepared for him a great chamber.*] By breaking down the partitions, it is likely, between several little chambers, where holy things were laid, he prepared one great room for his reception.

Where aforetime they laid the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil (which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters), and the offerings of the priests.] All the offerings that belonged to the ministers of God (and the vessels wherewith they ministered), which there had been great care taken should be brought into these chambers, (the latter end of chap. x.) were now all profanely thrown out to make room for this man.

Ver. 6. *But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem.*] They took this boldness in Nehemiah's absence; and were the more audacious, because many of the nobles of Judah (it is likely) favoured this Tobiah, and were his friends, as they had been heretofore, (chap. vi. 17, 18.)

For in the two-and-thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king.] He was governor twelve years in this province; but did not continue all that time in Judea: for he sometimes stepped to Babylon, to give an account of his management to the king, who, it is likely (as I before observed), would not dispense with so long an absence from his attendance to his office at court. (See upon chap. ii. 6. v. 41.)

And after certain days.] In the Hebrew the words are *at the end of days*, that is, at the end of the year. For so the word *jamim* [*days*] often signifies in Scripture, Exod. xiii. 10. Lev. xxv. 29. (See below, ver. 15.)

Obtained I leave of the king.] To return to Jerusalem: from whence, it is probable, he heard of the forenamed disorders, and therefore once more begged leave to go thither, that he might redress them.

Ver. 7. *And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah.*] He was fully informed what evil had been committed, before he went about to reform it.

In preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.] In the court of the Israelites, which was a sacred place, into which no stranger might enter.

Ver. 8. *And it grieved me sore; therefore I cast forth all the household-stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber.*] His indignation was raised, as well as his sorrow, to see such a profanation: first, in bringing a stranger into the place where only Israelites were to come; and he an Ammonite, one of the worst of the strange nations, and a greater enemy of the Jews than many of the Ammonites; for whose sake he had removed the holy things, and put Tobiah in their place, who brought his household-stuff along with him; and all this done by the high-priest, who ought to have opposed such an attempt, and, indeed, was the only man that could have hindered it, till Nehemiah came, whose authority, as governor under the king of Persia, was superior to his; by which he threw all his goods out of the chamber, and forced him also to depart. Here is no mention of his reprehending Eliashib, which is an argument, that he died after Nehemiah went from Jerusalem.

Ver. 9. *Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers; and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat-offering and the frankincense.*] He gave order, that the chambers, which had been thus profaned, should be restored to their former sanctity by the water of purification, mentioned in the nineteenth of Numbers; whereby things, as well as persons, were cleansed from their impurities. And when the chambers were thus prepared, he brought in again all the vessels, and other things, (mentioned ver. 5.) which had been thrown out to make room for Tobiah.

Ver. 10. *And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them.*] For either the people did not pay them well, when they saw they were not laid up for their proper use in the place appointed, or Eliashib employed them for the entertainment of Tobiah; which he might as well do, as bring him into the sacred place: into which when they were not brought, the people, not knowing what became of them, might keep them to themselves. (See Bishop Montague, of Tithes, p. 347.)

For the Levites and the singers that did the work were fled every one to his field.] This made those that attended the service at Jerusalem forsake the city, and betake themselves to their country concerns, where they might make provision for the sustenance of their families. And, indeed, it is a great artifice of the devil, as Wolfius here observes, by his instruments to defraud the ministers of religion of their necessary maintenance, that he may thereby abolish religion itself.

Ver. 11. *Then contended I with the rulers, and said.*] He earnestly expostulated with them, and reproved them.

Why is the house of God forsaken?] There was no account to be given of it, but the negligence of the magistrates; whom he awakens to their duty, by representing to

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them that God himself was highly affronted, by having none of his servants to attend him at his house.

And I gathered them together.] He recalled the Levites to Jerusalem out of the country; whither they were fled to look after their own estates.

And set them in their place.] Every one to his proper work and business.

Ver. 12. *Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn, and the new wine, and the oil, unto the treasuries.*] When they saw these things were likely to go the right way, and be employed to their proper uses, they brought them to their proper place. For the people (as Conradus Pellicanus here notes) readily obey, if the magistrates and the priests be not remiss in their duty.

Ver. 13. *And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe; and of the Levites, Pedaiah; and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful; and their office was to distribute unto their brethren.*] There had been some appointed heretofore unto this office, (chap. x. 44, &c.) but they not performing their trust, Nehemiah sought out some persons, here mentioned, who had the general reputation of being men of integrity; whose business it was to give every one of their brethren his portion.

Ver. 14. *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.*] It is very natural here to observe, that to make provision for the maintenance of God's ministers, and of his worship and service, is a work of high esteem with God. For these are the *good deeds* (as appears by the foregoing verses) for which Nehemiah recommends himself to the Divine favour and remembrance. And therefore, what shall we think of the times wherein we live; when men account them the most religious to God-ward, who would unfurnish the house of God most, and who most rob his priests? This is the reflection which Mr. Mede made upon these words of Nehemiah, book i. discourse xxxiv.

Ver. 15. *In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses: as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day.*] The treading wine-presses, shews that he came back in the latter end of the year, (as I have explained *in the end of days*, ver. 6.) when he found them carrying in sheaves and wine, and all manner of burdens (that is, doing all manner of work), on the sabbath, as if it had been a common day.

And I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.] Or, as Pellicanus translates it, *I contested with them, that they should sell provisions on such days as they might be sold, and not on the sabbath.*

Ver. 16. *There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware.*] The city of Tyre was a place of great trade, and, lying on the sea, abounded with fish, which they brought from thence to Joppa, and so to Jerusalem. Tyre was nigh to Sidon, which had its name (as Justin saith, lib. xviii.) "ab ubertate piscium," *from plenty of fish.*

And sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.] Not only in the country, but in the holy city, as Jerusalem was called, where holy assemblies were to be held, and God worshipped solemnly, on the sabbath.

Ver. 17. *Then I contended with the nobles of Judah.*] As I had done before, ver. 11. for they who did not correct abuses when it was in their power, were more in fault than they that committed them.

And said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day?] For if they had exercised their authority, the people durst not have done as they did.

Ver. 18. *Did not your fathers thus? and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city?*] He bids them reflect and consider, that this was one of the crimes of which their fathers were guilty; for which God suffered them to be carried captive out of their land, and their city to be destroyed. (See Jer. xvii. 19—21, &c.)

Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel, by profaning the sabbath.] This aggravated their guilt, that they would not beware of those sins which had been their ruin; and would bring greater judgments upon them, because they were not amended by what they had suffered.

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark.*] That is, when they who sat there could not see to do any thing, which was about sunsetting, the mountains about Jerusalem intercepting the light there sooner than in other places.

Before the sabbath.] In the evening of that day.

I commanded, that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath; and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath-day.] It seems, he could not trust to the common porters of the gates; and therefore appointed some of his own family, who he knew would neither be careless nor corrupted, to see the gates were kept shut, and all traffic hindered.

Ver. 20. *So the merchants, and sellers of all kind of ware.*] Who came from Tyre and other places, (ver. 16.)

Lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.] In the open fields (as appears by the next verse), where, perhaps, they pitched their tents, and opened their packs, hoping to sell their wares on the sabbath to the country people, though they could not get admittance into Jerusalem.

Ver. 21. *Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall?*] He solemnly declared to them, and called God to witness, that he would not suffer them to lodge there any more.

If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you.] Seize their persons and their goods, and punish them as offenders.

From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.] Such power have good magistrates; especially, when they are resolute. And it is very observable, that these being men of other nations, were not bound by the law of the sabbath, and did not transgress in breaking it; yet he would not permit them to make the Jews, who were under the obligation of the law, to break it; and thereby trouble the commonwealth of Israel, by drawing the people into sin. It is also observable, that though buying and selling was not a servile work, yet he thought this comprehended in those words, "Thou shalt do no manner of work."

Ver. 22. *And I commanded the Levites, that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath-day.*] He thought the Levites would be more reverenced than his servants; and therefore

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appointed them to this office of keeping the gates on the sabbath-day, that it might not fail to be sanctified as it ought to be. And they being also on that day to attend upon other offices which were holy, he commanded them also to cleanse themselves by some known purification, which might procure them the greater reverence. There was another reason why he joined the Levites with his servants to look after the gates on the sabbath-day, because he would have this watch continued, when he and his servants were gone from Jerusalem, till this evil custom was quite broken.

Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.] He had beseeched God to remember his good deeds; (ver. 14.) but, to shew that he did not think there was any proper merit or worthiness in them, which required a reward as a debt in justice due unto them, he here explains himself, and desires to be rewarded, or rather pardoned, out of God's free goodness, according to *the greatness* or *the multitude* of his mercies.

Ver. 23. *In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab.*] They had at this very time married strangers, as Pellicanus thinks; and by what Nehemiah did for their correction, one would think some were again revolted into that sin, which they had most solemnly renounced both before him and before Ezra, (chap. x. 30. Ezra x.) So hard is it to root out tares, which will be continually sprouting up again.

Ver. 24. *And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.*] Whom they had married. For their mothers, with whom they were bred, spake to them in the language of their own country, and not in the language of the Jews; which it seems by this was very different from that of Ashdod, though they were neighbours to the Philistines. And so was the language of the Egyptians, and other countries thereabout, very different, as Bochartus observes in his Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 1. (See Scaliger, de Emend. Temp. lib. vi. p. 580.) But there doth not seem to have been such difference between the language of the Canaanites and the Hebrews in the time of Abraham; for he made use of no interpreters, that we read of, in his conversation with them. Yet it is probable, that by length of time these people had altered their language very much, which was preserved pure among the Jews.

Ver. 25. *And I contended with them, and cursed them.*] He expostulated with them, and denounced God's judgment against them; or, as Aben Ezra thinks, he excommunicated them, and cast them out of the society of God's people. But that was in use only when they could not punish offenders according to their law, which now they had power to do; and accordingly it follows, that he did inflict punishments upon them.

And smote certain of them.] Ordered the officers to beat some of the most notorious offenders, either with rods, or with scourges, according to Deut. xxv. 2.

And plucked off their hair.] Which was a great disgrace in those eastern countries; (see Isa. i. 6. Jer. xlviii. 37.) the hair being esteemed a great ornament, and a token one was a free-man. Therefore *plucking off the hair* was a putting them to shame, and making them look like vile slaves.

And made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.] He also took an oath of them that they would reform. But this he had done before; (chap. x. 29, 30.) and therefore, since the most sacred promises of amendment did not keep them fast to God, he also severely chastised them in the manner before related, that nothing might be wanting to make them better.

Ver. 26. *Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things?*] He argued also with them, and persuaded them to amend, from the example of the greatest men, who had been undone by such marriages, particularly king Solomon.

Yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless, even him did outlandish women cause to sin.] As much as to say, If such a man as he, who excelled all men in wisdom, and was so highly in God's favour, that he preferred him before all his brethren to be king over all Israel, was not safe from seducement by strange women, how shall ye be able to preserve yourselves from their enticements?

Ver. 27. *Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God, in marrying strange wives?*] That is, Would you have me connive at this wickedness, and so bring guilt upon myself, and ruin upon you?

Ver. 28. *And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high-priest.*] It is supposed that Eliashib died before Nehemiah returned from Persia, and Joiada his son succeeded him, one of whose sons had offended in this matter. He was his grandson.

Was the son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite.] He is said by Josephus to be that Manasseh, who, by Sanballat's interest, procured leave to build a temple in Mount Gerizim, to which all the Jews that had married strange wives resorted, (lib. xi. cap. 8.) and, as Solomon Virga saith, in Schebet Judah, he made proclamation in all the countries round about, that whosoever would come to his temple, they should pay neither first-fruits nor tithes, but only make voluntary offerings; by which he gained many of the poor sort to him. (See Selden, lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 15. p. 623.)

Therefore I chased him from me.] That he should not serve at the altar; which Josephus will have to be decreed by the great Sanhedrin, who, if he would have before them renounced that unlawful wife, and put her away, offered to continue him in the exercise of his priesthood. See Selden, de Succession. in Pontif. lib. ii. cap. 6. and lib. ii. de Synedr. cap. 15. p. 649. where he observes, that Solomon Virga saith, he was put out of his ministry at the temple by an assembly of all the priests, who met together and expelled him. But there was no need of their authority, for Nehemiah himself *chased him from him*, that is, banished him from Judea, as Bertram expounds this phrase, in his de Repub. Jud. cap. 13. p. 165, &c.

Ver. 29. *Remember them, O my God.*] To punish them (that is, according to their deserts), as he desired God to remember him by rewarding him for the good he had done. But Rasi takes it for a prayer to God, to reform them and render them good for evil.

Because they have defiled the priesthood.] God required greater purity in the priests than in other Israelites, and in the high-priests especially, who might marry none but a

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virgin of his own people. (See Lev. xxi. 6, 7. unto ver. 16.)

And the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.] There was a covenant made with Phinehas (Numb. xxv.) of an everlasting priesthood, which they had violated, because the covenant was mutual, binding them to observe the laws of the priesthood, as God engaged himself to preserve them in their office. What covenant was made with the Levites, I do not find; but I suppose the meaning is, they dishonoured the whole tribe of Levi, who were set apart for Divine ministries. For it is likely some of the Levites had transgressed in this matter, by the bad example of the priests. This great corruption of the priests seems to have been the occasion of God's sending Malachi, the last of the prophets, to correct it, after Ezra and Nehemiah had not been able to root out this corruption. And the covenant here mentioned, was that made in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, wherein they engaged to put away their strange wives. Thus Dr. Alix, whose judgment I prefer to my own, in this point.

Ver. 30. *Thus cleansed I them from all strangers.*] That is, both priests and Levites were separated from their strange wives.

And appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business.] To observe their courses of attendance at the house of God, and every one to perform there that business which was proper to him.

Ver. 31. *And for the wood-offering, at times appointed, and for the first-fruits.*] He commanded them to observe the decrees which had been passed some time ago, (chap. x. 34, 35.) Maimonides, in his treatise of the Manner of offering Sacrifices, chap. 14. gathers from these words, that it was lawful for any man, freely to vow either wine, or frankincense, or oil, or wood, to burn on the altar: for this, saith he, was a kind of sacrifice or offering, as Nehemiah here informs us.

Remember me, O my God, for good.] He concludes his book with a short prayer to God, wherein he commends himself, and all he had done, unto God's gracious acceptance. As it becomes all men, especially those who are employed in Divine things, if they have done any thing that is good, to remember it was by God's help and assistance, not by their own power; beseeching the Father of mercies, by his only-begotten Son, to make it serviceable to his church, and his own good. Thus Joh. Wolfius concludes his commentary upon this book.

THE

BOOK OF ESTHER.

THERE is a great variety of opinions concerning the author of this book. Whom a great number of late interpreters, and some of the Hebrew doctors, take to have been Mordecai; which is the common opinion of the Latins, and of Clemens Alexandrinus among the Greeks; which, they think, is sufficiently warranted by those words in the ninth chapter, ver. 20, &c. where it is said, *Mordecai wrote all these things, and sent letters unto the Jews,* &c. This, they think, relates to this whole history, which he wrote as it is recorded in this book: but those words plainly relate only to the decree of observing the feast of Purim perpetually; which supposes they had been acquainted with the occasion and ground of it, before those letters came, as Huetius observes; who therefore is of the same opinion with the Talmudists in Baba Bathra, that this book was written by the men of the great synagogue. Which opinion he the rather embraces (though I see no ground at all for it), because it comprehends theirs who think Mordecai was the author, and theirs who ascribe it to Ezra, and theirs who think it was Joiakim the son of Jeshua the high-priest; for all these might well have been in that synagogue. Whoever was the author, Maimonides saith (in his More Nevochim, par. ii. cap. 45.) their wise men openly declare, the book of Esther was dictated by the Holy Ghost; that is, as he explains it, by a motion or impulse (as he calls it) from the Spirit of God, who excited him to write this history, as by the same motion others indited psalms, and gave wholesome precepts, to regulate the lives of men. (See chap. x. 3.)

And that this history fell out after the captivity of Babylon was ended, and after the time of Darius the Mede, is very evident: for Shushan was not the royal city of the Medes, but of the Persians. Nor had the Medes so large a dominion, as from India to Ethiopia. But in what reign of the Persian kings these things fell out, is hard to determine. (See the last verse of this book.)

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass, in the days of Ahasuerus.*] This was a Persian, but which of them is a great doubt; for learned men think several of them had this name. There are, I think, eight several opinions about him here mentioned. Our great primate Usher takes him to have been Darius Hystaspes; but he married the daughter of the great Cyrus, to confirm himself in his kingdom, and would not have so easily parted with her as Ahasuerus did with Vashti. The great Scaliger therefore thinks him to have been his successor Xerxes; whose wife's name being Amystris, he takes her for Esther, this name being in the Persian language Ham-Esther. But this hath been con-

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futed by many learned men, particularly by Jacobus Capellus; who observes, that this Amystris was the daughter of a powerful man among the Persians, whom Herodotus calls Otanes. Several other reasons he gives against this in his Historia Sacra et Exotica, ad A. M. 3640. 3650. where by good arguments he proves it was not Artaxerxes Longimanus, nor Darius Nothus, nor Artaxerxes Mnemon, but concludes, that it was the next king, Ochus, which agrees well with his Persian name, which was Achasch, to which Verosch being added as his surname, he was called by the Persians Achasch-Verosch, which the Greeks translated Ahasuerus.

(This is Ahasuerus which reigned from India even unto Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven-and-twenty provinces).] We are told by Herodotus, that Darius conquered India, (lib. iv. cap. 44.) And there might well be so many provinces between that and Ethiopia, whether we understand thereby the country beyond Egypt, or that near Arabia. Herodotus seems to direct us to the former, when he saith, That Darius found by his conquests, that Asia, in that eastern part of the world, was like to Lybia.

Ver. 2. *That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom.*] Enjoying peace and quietness throughout his large dominions. Some think, this phrase, *when he sat on the throne of his kingdom*, signifies when he began to reign. But this is confuted by ver. 3. which saith, *in the third year of his reign* he did what follows.

Which was in Shushan the palace.] This was a noble city, which Strabo calls Πόλιν ἀξιολογοτάτην, *a most famous and highly-to-be-praised city*; where Cyrus and the Persian kings, after the conquest of the Medes (whose country was remote), settled their royal seat, that they might not be far from Babylon. The country about it also was wonderfully fruitful, producing a hundred, and sometimes two hundred fold, as he writes, lib. xv. p. 727. 731. It was built, as Pliny saith, by Darius: (lib. vi. cap. 27.) or rather enlarged, by building there a most magnificent palace, as Ælian explains it; (lib. xiii. de Animal. cap. 59.) which Aristotle, in his book de Mundo, calls Θαυμαστὸν βασίλειον οἶκον, *a wonderful royal palace*, shining with gold, and amber, and ivory.

Ver. 3. *In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants.*] By his *servants* are meant his subjects; who were called servants in the eastern countries. And it was the manner of the Roman emperors sometimes to feast all the people of Rome, as well as the senate.

The power of Persia and Media.] And first he speaks of the feast made for the great men, whom he calls the *power of Media and Persia;* men in power, as we now speak.

The nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him.] He explains who they were; the governors of provinces, and other noble persons, who were all then at his court. The word *parthemim*, which we translate *nobles*, some would have to be the corruption of the Greek word παράτιμος, *honourable persons;* and Junius, with others, deduce it from the Greek word πρῶτος. But the Greeks were not yet got among them; and therefore it is a Persian word, signifying governors, as R. Solomon expounds it: and Joseph Kimchi thinks they were such great men as governed that tract of land that lay upon the river Phrath, that is, Euphrates. But Hottinger will have it to be a compound word from *par*, which signifies *high*, and *ram*, which signifies *spirit;* as much as to say, high-spirited or heroic persons: which seems to me to be but an ingenious conceit.

What the occasion of this feast was, is variously conjectured. Some think, it was begun on his birth-day. The Targum saith, a great rebellion had been lately suppressed, which filled him with joy. But the next words seem to inform us, that it was to shew his magnificent greatness to all his subjects. For in those countries they delighted much in making great feasts; as we read afterward, that Alexander (when he was there) entertained τετρακοσίους ἡγεμόνας, *four hundred captains*, or great commanders, who all sat in silver chairs, &c. as Duris tells us in Athenæus, lib. i. Deipnosoph. cap. 14.

Ver. 4. *When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty, many days, even a hundred and fourscore days.*] Which was for the space of six months; from the vernal to the autumnal equinox; which is a hundred fourscore and seven days. For Vashti kept a feast of seven days, at the end of his feast for the women of Susa, as Ochus did for the men, (ver. 7. 10.) Thus Jacobus Capellus. Some indeed will have it, that he was thus long in making preparation for this splendid entertainment, which did not last many days. But this custom is continued still to this day, of keeping an annual festival a hundred and eighty days, if we may give credit to Dr. Fryar, who lived lately in this country, and gives us an account of it in his Travels, (letter v. cap. 12. p. 348.)

Ver. 5. *And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days.*] Not only to the inhabitants of Shushan, but to all that were present in the city, out of all parts of his dominions, the Israelites not excepted, as the Targum saith.

In the court of the garden of the king's palace.] In the entrance of the royal palace; which was very spacious, and planted with all sorts of fruit-trees, and aromatics, as the Targum explains it.

Ver. 6. *Where were white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble.*] How the Targum came to fancy that these hangings, being spread from one tree to another, were tied to them with silken purple strings, I know not; for the text saith expressly, they were hanged on pillars of marble, set up, no doubt, for that purpose.

The beds were of gold and silver.] On which they sat, or rather lay, at their meat. The *beds* themselves were of *melitim* (as Jonathan expresses it), of the softest wool; that is, the Milesian, which is the best in the world, as Bochartus hath observed out of many authors, in his Phaleg. lib. i. cap. 8. But the *bedsteads* were of *gold and silver;* that is, studded with gold and silver, or overlaid with plates of them, as the manner was; as Dietericus shews in his Antiq. Biblicæ, p. 388.

Upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble.] In the Hebrew, Upon a pavement *of bahat, and ses, and dar, and sochereth*, which signify several sorts of stones, as Bochartus hath proved beyond contradiction: but what stones are here meant is not easy to resolve, nor is it of much moment to know. He hath spent a largo

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chapter to prove that *dar* signifies a *pearl;* which, though very precious, it is not incredible was used in this Persian luxury, among other stones, to adorn this pavement. Which he justifies by many good arguments; and shews there are examples of such profuseness in other histories, (Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. v. cap. 8.) Drusius also hath said a great deal about *sochereth,* to which I refer the learned reader, Miscellanea, cent. i. cap. 74.

Ver. 7. *And they gave them drink in vessels of gold (the vessels being diverse one from another), and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.*] There was a great variety of wines, it is likely, as well as great plenty; and great variety of vessels to drink in, different from all that they had seen. So Drusius translates those words in the parentheses, *variantia diversa vasa,* as the Jews are said, chap. iii. 8. to have laws different from all other people, where there is the same word. (Miscellanea, cent. i. cap. 16.) Strabo saith, these princes were so luxurious, that they had their wine from Syria, called *chalybonium;* and the water they drank with it, from Eulæus, it being πάντων ἐλαφρότατον, *the lightest of all other waters.*

Ver. 8. *And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel.*] The plainest translation seems to be, *the drinking according to custom, none did compel.* It was customary to compel men to drink more than they had a mind to do; but this prince left every man to his liberty, that no man should incur any displeasure if he did not drink what others would impose upon him. But Drusius thinks the word *dath* never signifies a custom.

For so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.] Which made the feast most acceptable, when every one drank for his own pleasure, and not for other men's. And such had been the custom of the ancient Persians, who (as Xenophon tells us) were very sparing in eating and drinking, though in his time they were grown extremely riotous. But nothing was more barbarous than their pressing men to drink beyond their inclinations; which the son of Sirach expresses by the word βλίβειν, (Ecclus. xxxi. 37.) it being no less inhuman to force a man to drink when he is not thirsty, than to deny him drink when he is ready to perish with thirst. According to an ancient saying of Sophocles in Athenæus, lib. x. Τὸ πρὸς βίαν πίνειν, ἴσον κακὸν τῷ δι' ἀνάγκην βίᾳ. *To compel a man to drink by force, is as bad as to compel him to endure thirst for want of drink.*

Ver. 9. *Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women.*] I have before said, it is not likely (as primate Usher thinks) that this was Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, whom Darius Hystaspes married: for the reason of that match being to strengthen himself in the kingdom, he would not have so lightly parted with her. Jacobus Capellus thinks, by the addition of the word *Par* to her name, she was called by the Persians *Par-Vashti,* which by the Greeks is pronounced *Parysatis,* the mother of Artaxerxes Mnemon. But she could not be the wife of Ochus, who was his son.

In the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.] Where she entertained the wives of the princes, and other women; not in the open air, as the men were, but more privately, as was fit for women, who were not wont to eat together with men.

Ver. 10. *On the seventh day.*] Which was in the conclusion of this feast.

When the heart of the king was merry with wine.] Which made him a little forget himself, and not consider what became both his own state and that of the queen.

He commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king.] These eunuchs (as the word is translated in the margin) were men of principal authority in the court; where they had great offices about the king. And therefore he did her honour enough, in sending so many of them to wait upon her, and let her know his pleasure.

Ver. 11. *To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown-royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look on.*] It is a very absurd conceit of the former Targum, who saith, he commanded her to be brought quite naked, that her comely proportions might be seen, as well as her face. And yet in Pirke Eliezer they are so bold as to say, it was the custom of the Persian kings to have their wives publicly dance before them naked. It was too much, she thought, that he should expose her countenance to be beheld, especially by all the people: which was contrary to the custom of that country; where they kept their wives very close from the sight of all men but themselves.

Ver. 12. *But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains.*] Which she might do out of modesty, not pride: because, as I said, it was contrary to the custom; and the great men, inflamed with wine, might be provoked by her beauty (as Jacobus Capellus speaks) to lust after her.

Therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.] It was the more immoderate, because his blood was heated with wine; which made his passion too strong for his reason. Otherwise he would not have thought it decent for the queen, nor safe for himself, to have her beauty (which was very great) exposed in this unusual manner. Josephus saith, he was the more enraged, because he sent more than once to her, but still she refused to come. Which is not probable; for though it would have become him to send again to know her reason for refusing, yet he persisting in his command, one would think she would have yielded obedience.

Ver. 13. *Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times.*] What had been done in former days; or, what was fit to be done on all occasions: men well versed in ancient histories (as Vitringa explains it), and in the laws and customs of their country; who were able to give counsel in all dubious and perplexed cases, such as this was, which rarely happened. (De Synag. Veteri, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 8.)

(For so was the king's manner towards all that knew law and judgment.] It was his constant practice; and he did not forget this laudable custom even in his drink, to consult with his counsellors before he resolved any thing; who were skilled in the laws of their country, and could judge what advice was to be given in all cases.

Ver. 14. *And the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media.*] These are called the king's seven counsellors in Ezra vii. 14. who took their

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original from Daniel, who, being in great power under Darius the Mede, and having a great hand in framing the government of that state, caused the Persian court (as Mr. Mede conjectures) to resemble that of heaven, ordaining seven chief princes to stand before the king, as seven great angels are said in Scripture to stand before the throne of God. (See book i. discourse x.)

Which saw the king's face.] Who were his principal ministers, and admitted into his presence; which was not allowed to every one, but only to the great men of the kingdom. (See Grotius upon Matt. xviii. 10.)

And which sat the first in the kingdom).] Next to the king; being his royal judges, who determined what was right among the Persians, and were the interpreters of the laws of the country. Of whom Herodotus makes mention, lib. iii. cap. 14. 31. and Plutarch, in Artaxerxes, as primate Usher observes.

Ver. 15. *What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?*] These words make it plain, that the forenamed great persons were the supreme judges what was law; and that the king did not govern arbitrarily, by his own will and pleasure, but by the laws of the kingdom.

Ver. 16. *And Memucan answered before the king and the princes.*] He is the last of the seven princes, mentioned ver. 14. which inclines me to think, that the puny judge, as we now speak, delivered his opinion first (as they do here), and so they spake in order till they came to the first. And thus I find the latter Targum takes it, *He was the least of them, and therefore gave his opinion first.* But others take it quite contrary, that Memucan was the president of the council, or the king asked him first what he thought of the matter.

Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.] He declared it to be a crime of such a dangerous nature, that it would have a mischievous influence upon the whole kingdom, if it were not severely punished.

Ver. 17. *For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women.*] This transgression of the king's commandment (as Maimonides explains it, in More Nevoch. par. i. cap. 23.) will be known every where; for it could not be concealed, being a public affront to his majesty.

So that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.] His opinion was, that then they would take upon them to disobey their husbands, and slight their commands, when they heard what Vashti had done, and was not punished for it.

Ver. 18. *Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen.*] He repeats it again, that it would have this effect immediately, especially on the great women, who, from this time forward, would take example by the queen, and say to their lords, Are you more honourable than Ahasuerus the king, whose wife would not come when she was sent for? So the latter Targum.

Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath.] Contempt in the wives, and wrath in their husbands, which would make great brawlings and contentions in all families.

Ver. 19. *If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes.*] He would not have a mere order given, but a law made, which, as it follows, should stand inviolable. The same Targum saith, that Memucan had married a wife, who, being richer than himself, was very proud, and would not speak to him but in her own language; and now he took this opportunity to be revenged of her, and make her do whatever he pleased.

That it be not altered.] This was cunningly done, saith the same Targum; for if she had recovered the king's favour, when his anger was over, this counsel might have cost him his head. But what made laws unalterable among them is uncertain. The Targum saith, because the king confirmed it by an oath, and then it became immutable: or, it was sealed, not only by the king, but by all the princes, as one would guess from Dan. vi. 8. 12. 15.

That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.] This was a very rigorous decree. But Drusius observes, that the Persians were inclined to be severe to their wives.

Ver. 20. *And when the king's decree, which he shall make, shall be published throughout all his empire (for it is great), all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.*] For none would dare to disobey, when they heard that the greatness of the queen could not preserve her from such a heavy punishment.

Ver. 21. *And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan.*] With whom all the other six judges concurred in their opinion.

Ver. 22. *For he sent letters into all the king's provinces; into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language.*] The meaning seems to be, that this decree was published in every province, after the manner that such things used to be proclaimed, and in their own tongue, that every one, women as well as men, might understand it.

That every man should bear rule in his own house; and that it should be published according to the language of every people.] The decree runs thus in the Hebrew, *That every man should bear rule in his own house, and speak in the language of his people.* It seems the Persians had yielded so much to their wives, that when they had married a stranger, they suffered her to bring her own language into the family. But this decree altered that custom, and allowed no other language to be spoken in the family but that of the man, and of the people among whom he lived. (See De Dieu.) And thus the former Targum, *Every man shall rule in his own house, and compel his wife to speak in the language of her husband, and in the language of his people.* Which, indeed, was a token of dominion; all conquerors endeavouring to bring in their own language into the country which they have conquered. The latter Targum hath only these words, that *every man shall be honoured in his own house, and speak according to the language of his people;* that is, give his commands in his own language, which every one was bound to learn.

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CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *AFTER these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.*] When his anger was abated, and the wine gone out of his head, his ancient love began to revive to Vashti, whose beauty was exceeding charming; but then he remembered withal her undutiful behaviour, and the decree he had passed against her, which was irrevocable, so that he was in a great strait. Yet the latter Targum saith he called for the seven princes, who had given him the forenamed counsel, and said unto them, I am no longer angry at Vashti, but at you, who, from what I said in my drink, took occasion to destroy her; and thereupon commanded them all to be slain. For which there is no ground; but by what follows it appears to be a fable.

Ver. 2. *Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king.*] The same servants, in all likelihood, mentioned ver. 14. of the foregoing chapter, who continually attended him. And when they saw him afflicted, contrived by a new love to blot out the remembrance of the old.

Ver. 3. *And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace.*] The better to divert him, they propound that a great number of the most beautiful virgins that could be found should be brought from all parts to Shushan, that out of them he might take his choice which of them he would make his queen.

To the house of the women.] Or rather *of the virgins;* for the house of those who were women or wives was different from this, and under another governor, (ver. 14.)

Unto the custody of Hegai the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women.] Of the virgins, as Shaashgaz was of the women or concubines, (ver. 14.)

And let their things for purification be given them.] In this house, saith the former Targum, there was a place for bathing, and they were furnished with ointments and perfumes, and all other things necessary either for ornament or cleanliness; for the Hebrew word signifies both.

Ver. 4. *And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen in the stead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.*] He approved of the advice, and gave order about it.

Ver. 5. *Now, in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai.*] Who is thought by some to have come to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel (because one of that name is mentioned in his company), but returned back again to Babylon, being one of the king's servants; for he was one of his guard, or keeper of the door; or, as we translate it, he *sat in the king's gate,* (ver. 19. 21.) But this was another Mordecai, as appears from the time wherein he lived, in the latter end of the Persian empire.

The son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.] The latter Targum here gives his pedigree down from Benjamin, the son of Jacob, but mixed with such fables that no credit can be given to it.

Ver. 6. *Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.*] Mordecai was not then carried away, but Kish, who is mentioned just before, from whom Mordecai was descended. (See our Rainoldus, Cens. lib. Apocryph. prælect. cxlvi.) And Bonfrerius also hath well observed, (in his appendix to his Præloquium to his Commentaries on the Scripture, chap. 7.) if he himself was then brought from Jerusalem, he must be at least a hundred and ten years old (supposing this history to have fallen out in the time of Darius Hystaspes) when he came into the place of Haman; for, from the captivity of Jeconiah, till their deliverance from captivity, was eighty-one years; and from thence to the reign of Darius Hystaspes was almost twenty years, as Eusebius saith; and Haman was hanged in the twelfth year of this king; so here are a hundred and ten years. But it is not credible that a man of such a great age should be advanced to such authority as he had; and more incredible that Esther, who was his cousin-german, should be beloved of Ahasuerus when she was an old maid, as she must have been, if Mordecai was of these years.

Ver. 7. *And he brought up Hadassah (that is, Esther), his uncle's daughter.*] Her Jewish name was *Hadassah,* signifying in Chaldee a *myrtle,* as the former Targum saith; but her Persian name was *Esther,* which he fancies was from the Greek word Ἀστὴρ, a *star.* But the other Targum derives it from *satar,* which signifies *hidden,* because she was hidden in Mordecai's house a long time, and no man saw her but he; or rather, because her nation was concealed, and not known. Primate Usher thinks, that as Vashti was Atossa, so Esther was she whom the heathens called Artystona; who, as Herodotus saith, was the wife Darius loved above all other, and had her statue made of pure gold, (lib. iii. cap. 88. and lib. vii. cap. 69.) He saith, indeed, that she also was another daughter of Cyrus, and sister to Atossa; but he was either ignorant (as that great man thinks) of the Persian genealogies, or out of envy concealed their original. It is more likely he gives a true account of her descent, as he doth of other things, and she was not Esther.

For she had neither father nor mother.] Her father died, saith the former Targum, when her mother was big with child of her, and her mother died as soon as she was brought to bed.

And the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai (when her father and mother were dead) took for his own daughter.] The Vulgar translates it, *adopted her* for his daughter. Which doth not signify such an adoption as among the Romans (as Mr. Selden observes), but only paternal love and care to bring up a child who had lost her parents. For the Hebrew doctors are so far from acknowledging any *adoption,* that they say he took her to make her his wife. So Jarchi by *bat* [*daughter*] understands *beth,* a *house;* which the LXX. follow, he educated her εἰς γυναῖκα, *to be his wife,* (lib. de Succession. cap. 4. p. 18.)

Ver. 8. *So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.*] The words which we translate *was brought,* may be translated *was taken;* and that by force, as the word sometimes signifies, and as the former Targum here explains it, *she was brought by violence.* The latter Targum tells the manner of it at large, That Mordecai, hearing of this order, hid his cousin

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in a private place where the officers could not find her. But when the virgins were gathered together, and Esther was missing, whom all the neighbours knew to be a very great beauty, they procured an order from the king to Mordecai, that upon pain of death he should produce her; which he did. But perhaps I take too much notice of these Jewish fables.

Ver. 9. *And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him.*] That is, Hegai, who was much taken with her countenance, and her mien, and her sweet disposition (it is likely), and all other things, which he thought would make her acceptable to the king.

And he speedily gave her her things for purification.] That she might be fit before the usual time to go in unto the king, that is, in a year's time, as some understand it, (ver. 12. 16.)

With such things as belonged to her.] For her clothes and diet, which the former Targum makes to be very sumptuous.

And seven maidens.] One for every day of the week, saith the same Targum, whose names he gives us, and the days of the week on which they waited.

Which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house.] Persons of quality, fit to attend her.

And he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women.] And did her so much honour, that he assigned her and her maids the best apartment in the house of the virgins.

Ver. 10. *Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred; for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it.*] Lest she should be contemned, and looked upon as no better than a slave.

Ver. 11. *And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.*] He might walk there without being suspected, because he belonged to the court, and was a man of condition; for those that were carried away in Jeconiah's captivity (as his ancestors were) were of the better sort, (2 Kings xxiv. 14, &c. Dan. i. 4.) And Esther might find means, by some of those that attended her, to let him know the state of her health, and of her affairs.

Ver. 12. *Now, when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months.*] They were kept close so long, that the king might be sure he should not be imposed upon by a child begotten by another man. And besides, it was suitable to the state of the king to have them wait a great while, before they were brought into his company: and another reason here follows. Herodotus explains the first words, lib. iii. cap. 69. where he saith, the Persian women go in to their husbands, ἐν περιτροπῇ, *in a circle*, by turns.

(For so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours.] It is observed by Pliny, lib. xiii. cap. 1. that ointments were first invented by the Persians; which were very necessary in so hot a country, where men and women are apt to sweat much, and so smell rankly, without great care to keep themselves clean and sweet. For which purpose the oil of myrrh was much used, being very fragrant, and apt also to make the skin soft and smooth, and to cleanse it from scurf. The sweet odour served to the same use, to take away all ill scents, and, as some think, to make the body more vigorous.

There are many authors (as Fortunatus Scacchus observes) who take the word *mor* to signify not *myrrh*, but that fragrant herb which we call *marum*, or, as some think, *marjoram*, from which excellent oils were drawn: (lib. i. Myrothecium, cap. 50.) but he takes it, as we do, for *myrrh;* from whence not only a noble oil was drawn, but being beat to a powder, such a fumigation was made with it, as was offered unto their gods. Whence Athenæus blames Alexander's arrogance, for suffering Σμύρνα, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα θυμιάματα, *myrrh and other sweet odours to be offered to him*, (lib. xii. cap. 8.)

Six months.] This was a long time, which was set (first with that oil, and as many more with sweet odours) for their purification: or rather for their abstersion or cleansing, as the same Scacchus observes: for there were no such purifications here used, as were among the Jews; but it is a known thing, that, as women in all countries were wont to spend a great deal of time in their dressing, and trimming up of themselves, that they might appear well abroad; so much more in this country, and when they were to go to the bed of a great king. A year, indeed, was a long time; but Athenæus saith, that among the Sybarites (who were a delicate, luxurious people) there was a sanction that the women, when they were called to the public sacrifices at great festivals, πρὸ ἐνιαυτὸν τὴν παρασκευὴν ποιεῖσθαι, *were to make preparation for it a year before.*

And with other things for the purifying of the women).] Whatsoever was proper for this purpose, was used in their preparations for the king's bed.

Ver. 13. *Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.*] Whatsoever ornaments or attendants she desired.

Ver. 14. *In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines.*] She returned no more into the former house, having lost her virginity: but was treated in another house, as one of the king's wives: for so concubines were, of a secondary sort, as I have often noted.

She came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.] For every one's name was registered, as the Targum saith, and the night, I suppose, when she went in unto the king.

Ver. 15. *Now, when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai (who had taken her for his daughter), was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing.*] But was contented with her own natural beauty, and desired nothing of art to recommend her.

But what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed.] Yet she did not refuse what he, who had been so kind to her, ordered for her.

And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.] All that beheld her, as she passed from the house of the women to the king's house, admired her beauty: which needed no ornament, for the greatest ornaments of virgins are modesty (as Pellicanus speaks), silence, well-disciplined eyes, a serene countenance without levity, a horror of all wantonness; which meeting all in her, made her acceptable to every one that saw her.

Ver. 16. *So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house-royal.*] She was not sent back in the morning

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unto the second house of the women, as the rest were, but the king kept her in his own house, intending to make her more than a concubine.

In the tenth month (which is the month Tebeth), in the seventh year of his reign.] He made the great feast we read of in the foregoing chapter in the third year of his reign, in the end of which Vashti was sent away. How it came to pass that it was so long before Esther was advanced to succeed her, seems difficult to resolve: but we are to consider, that a great deal of time was spent in gathering the virgins together, and that she was a year in preparing herself for admission to the king; and several, it is likely, went in before her, who had also their time for preparation; and took some time, it is likely, to try how he liked her wit, humour, and conversation.

Ver. 17. *And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen in the stead of Vashti.*] She being at this time, as Jacobus Capellus computes, twenty years old, ad A. M. 3645. But some make a question whether she did not commit a great sin to come at this dignity, not considering the custom of those times and countries. For those persons whom the king took into his bed after the manner beforementioned, were not harlots, but became his wives of a lower sort; for whom he provided ever after, and they were no longer chargeable to their parents or friends; nor might any other man marry them. Such a one Esther would have been, if he had not liked her so well as to do more for her. Which, no doubt, was ordered by a special providence of God, who thus rewarded her virtue, and also preserved the whole nation of the Jews from perishing.

Ver. 18. *Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast.*] So it was called, because it was made in honour of her, and, if we may believe Josephus, lasted a whole month.

And he made a release to the provinces.] At this feast he gave the people some ease in their imposts, and forgave them some of the duties they were bound to pay him. Some have affirmed, that this is reported by Herodotus to have been the custom of the Persian kings at their marriages. But I can find no more than this in him, that ὁ καθιστάμενος Βασιλεὺς, &c. *when he was made king, he remitted the tribute that was due to him from all the cities,* (lib. vi. cap. 59.)

And gave gifts, according to the state of the king.] He made great presents to the queen, as the manner of the Persian kings was; who gave to their queen at their marriage such a city to buy them clothes, such a one for their hair, another for their necklaces and other ornaments, and so for the rest of their expenses. Here the latter Targum tells an idle tale, how the king desired Esther to tell him what country she was of, and who were her ancestors from whom she descended. To which she answered, that her parents dying when she was an infant, she did not know who were her forefathers: which the king hearing, he released all men of their taxes, and gave them gifts, saying, I will be kind to all people of all nations, because I will be sure to be kind to the people of Esther, who are among some of them.

Ver. 19. *And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate.*] This doth not signify that there was another inquisition for virgins after Esther was married; but, to join this history with what follows, he repeats what was said before, ver. 2. that at the time when this second collection of virgins was made for the choice of a new wife, as there had been one before when Vashti was married, then Mordecai was in attendance at the gate of the palace; and so proceeds to shew how he discovered a plot against the life of the king.

Ver. 20. *Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people, as Mordecai had charged her.*] Which he would not have her to discover, lest she should be hated for her nation's sake, or her nation be envied for her good fortune.

For Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.] A rare example of virtue, that she should be so observant of him when she was a queen; for most forget what they were, when they are unexpectedly grown very great.

Ver. 21. *In those days (while Mordecai sat in the king's gate), two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.*] These were two great men, who, perhaps, kept the door of the king's bedchamber, and were incensed at the divorce of Vashti (whose creatures they were), or at the advancement of Esther, knowing her to be related to Mordecai, who they were afraid would be raised to greater power than themselves. Thus the former Targum writes, "Doth not the queen by her power with the king intend to turn us out of our places, and put in Mordecai?" therefore they resolved to poison him, as both that and the latter Targum understand it.

Ver. 22. *And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name.*] One of their servants, whose name (as Josephus saith) was Barnabazus, discovered the conspiracy to Mordecai, who found means to inform Esther of it, and she acquainted the king with it from Mordecai.

Ver. 23. *And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out.*] His information which he gave to the king appeared to be true, upon a due inquiry into the matter.

Therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the Chronicles before the king.] In the day-book, wherein all memorable things were recorded, to be read (as the Targum observes) before the king, when he required. Here we may see the infelicity and the danger of the most potent persons: the life of a great king depending upon the fidelity of one single person, whose service was neglected by the court, though a memorial was made of it. Thus all masters of families are obnoxious to the perfidiousness of their servants that wait upon them. They are the words of Conradus Pellicanus.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *AFTER these things.*] About five years after, as appears from ver. 7.

Did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite.] He was descended from the royal race of the Amalekite kings, and grown into great favour in this court, as Daniel and his companions, who were of noble blood also, (Dan. i. 3.) The latter Targum hath given us the pedigree of Haman, up to Eliphaz, the eldest son of Esau.

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And advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.] Either of his own or other nations. For it is likely the Persian kings, as the Chaldee before them, had many kings and princes, whom they had conquered, with them, who had the honour sometimes to sit on royal seats before them, (2 Kings xxv. 28.)

Ver. 2. *And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed and reverenced Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him.*] To bow the knee or the body to all great persons was a common respect; for which there needed not a particular command to require this of every body with respect to Haman, since no doubt they did it to all princes, and would much more do it to him, who took place of them all, and was the prince's favourite. There was therefore some kind of Divine honour intended in this; such as was paid to the Persian kings themselves, to whom the Greeks would not pay this sort of respect, because it was accounted Divine. And the word *reverence* imports something beyond *bowing*, which was falling flat upon their faces to the ground. Such prostrations the kings of Persia expected: and Ahasuerus, to express his great affection to Haman, would have it paid to him. The former Targum I believe thought of this, when he saith, *They in the king's gate bowed down to his image which he had set up, and worshipped Haman.*

But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.] Because he was of a nation devoted by God to destruction, with whom therefore the Jews would have no friendship, nor shew them any kindness, but remember the injuries they had done them, (Deut. xxv. 18, 19.) But this doth not seem a reason weighty enough, why he should not pay him civil respect, which was given to all men in great place, especially since by denying it he might expose his whole nation to danger. This is an argument that there was something more intended: and accordingly the author of the apocryphal additions to this book understood it, who represents Mordecai praying after this manner: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that it is not contumacy, nor pride, nor desire of vain-glory, that makes me not worship Haman; for I would willingly kiss his feet, for the safety of Israel: but I do it, that I may not prefer the glory of a man to the glory of God; nor adore any one but thee my Lord alone."

Ver. 3. *Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandments?*] I suppose it seemed strange to them, that one single person should refuse to do what every body did, especially since thereby he disobeyed the king: therefore they expostulated with him, to make him sensible of his duty and his danger.

Ver. 4. *Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them.*] Seemed not to regard what they said, and perhaps gave them no answer.

That they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand.] Whether he would persist in his stiffness, and what would be the issue of it.

For he had told them that he was a Jew.] Being much pressed by them, he confesses the reason why he could not do as they did. For, that they might not think it was pride or sullenness that made him not comply with the king's order, he acquaints them plainly of what religion and what nation he was; who might not shew any respect to an Amalekite (as some take it), or worship any but God alone, as I take the meaning to be. And thus the latter Targum here explains it: when they asked him why he did not obey the king, he answered, "What is the son of man that he should exalt himself? what is he that is born of a woman, who comes lamenting into the world, and is of few days, and then returns to his earth, that I should worship him? No, I worship God, the living God, who endures for ever," &c. And so he goes on, describing very well the glorious majesty of God, the Lord of heaven and earth, and thus concludes, "He is to be praised by us, and before him we ought to bow down ourselves."

Ver. 5. *And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.*] It is likely he did not mind what every one did that was in the king's gate (where there was a great crowd), till he was told of Mordecai's neglect; and then he marked him when he next passed by, and was highly enraged at him.

Ver. 6. *And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of king Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.*] He disdained to take so poor a revenge as to rid himself of one man alone, but resolved to make the whole nation suffer, who he knew were enemies to that nation from whence he sprung.

Ver. 7. *In the first month (that is the month Nisan), in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is the lot, before Haman, from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.*] It was the manner of the eastern country, by casting lots into an urn, to inquire what days would be fortunate, and what not, to undertake any business in: according to which superstition Haman endeavoured to find what time of the year was most favourable to the Jews, and what most unlucky. And first he inquired what month was most unfortunate, and found the month Adar, which was the last month in the year, answerable to our February. For, as Guil. Schickard observes, there was no festival solemnity in this month, nor was it sanctified by any peculiar rites. And then he inquired the day, and found the thirteenth day was not auspicious to them, (ver. 13.) Some think there were as many lots as there were days in the year, and for every day he drew a lot; but found none to his mind, till he came to the last month of all, and to the middle of it. (See Hottinger's Smegma Orientale, p. 75.) Now this whole business was governed by a wonderful providence of God; by whom these lots were directed, and not by the Persian gods, to fall in the last month of the year; whereby almost a whole year intervened between the design and its execution, and gave time for Mordecai to acquaint Esther with it, and for her to intercede with the king, for the revoking or suspending his decree, and disappointing the conspiracy.

Ver. 8. *And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus.*] Or rather *had said:* for it is not likely he would cast his lots till he knew his mind, for fear he should lose his labour.

There is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom.] For a great number of them, being well settled in the land of their captivity, would not return to Judea when Cyrus gave them leave; whom Haman represents as a despicable people, or vagrants and stragglers (as the latter Targum un-

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derstands it), dispersed here and there up and down in his dominions.

And their laws are diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws.] A proud, high-spirited people (as the same Targum represents the sense), who live by laws of their own, and will observe none of the king's; for they will neither eat of our meat, nor drink of our wine, nor keep our festivals; but have several of their own, on which they will not work, nor do the king's business. All which he sets forth at large in that paraphrase.

Therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.] The former Targum thus glosses upon these words, "The king gets nothing by them, while they live in this kingdom; but what will he not get if he destroys them all?" The other Targum makes him represent them as griping usurers, which was to the damage of the king's people.

Ver. 9. *If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed.*] He desires, not only a verbal command, but an order in writing, for their utter extirpation as a pestilent people.

And I will pay ten thousand talents of silver.] He promises to compensate the loss of the tribute which they paid yearly by a vast sum of money, which he would pay immediately. But he intended not to pay one farthing of it himself, it being easy to raise it out of the spoil of the Jews' goods, (ver. 13.)

To the hands of those that have the charge of the business.] Not of those who had the charge to kill them, but of those that received the king's money; as appears by the next words, *to bring it into the king's treasuries.* And so the same Targum, "I will pay it into the hands of those who coin the king's money;" that is, into the mint, as we now speak.

Ver. 10. *And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.*] Without any examination into the condition of the people, he consented to their destruction. So loath are men that love their pleasure to take any pains to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Ver. 11. *And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given unto thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.*] He gave him power to draw up what decree he pleased, and seal it with his own ring; but as for the money, he loved him so much, he would have none of it.

Ver. 12. *Then were the king's scribes called.*] As there were sacred scribes among the Jews, who were men learned in the law, so there were political both among them and other nations, as L'Empereur observes upon Bertram, de Repub. Jud. p. 381. And there were two sorts of them; one of which was employed in writing public letters or contracts, and other acts that were to be signed by authority, the more honourable and highest of which were such as are called here the *king's scribes*, whom the Chaldee calls the *king's notaries*, and we now call *secretaries of state.*

On the thirteenth day of the first month.] This was not wisely projected, to let his design be known so long before it was to take effect; for the king's mind might alter, or the Jews might find some way to deliver themselves, or might steal out of the kingdom.

And there was written (according to all that Haman had commanded) unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province, according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.] He himself indited the decree by the royal authority, and made it, no doubt, as strict as it was possible; and perhaps commanded it to be executed under great penalties, by all manner of officers, who were required to take care to see it done. And that none might be ignorant, it was written in the language of every people, and in the character they could read.

Ver. 13. *And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces.*] Concerning these posts which were in use among the Persians, see Herodotus, lib. viii. cap. 98. where, describing the dispatches which were sent into Persia to carry the news of Xerxes's overthrow, he saith, Τουτέων δὲ τῶν Ἀγγέλων οὐδέν ἐστι θᾶσσον, ὅτι παραγίνεται δυπτὸν ἐον, &c. *There is nothing upon earth swifter than these messengers, whom neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor night, can hinder from finishing their course speedily.* The manner of which he there sets down, which the Persians, he saith, call Ἀγγαρήιον.

To destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.] This was a strong motive to such a bloody execution, that they who killed them should enrich themselves by their spoil.

Ver. 14. *The copy of the writing, for a commandment to be given in every province, was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.*] Copies of this original decree of the king were sent into every province, and there ordered to be published, requiring them to be ready against that day.

Ver. 15. *The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment; and the decree was given in Shushan the palace.*] He procured a new commandment from the king, requiring their speedy delivery of this decree, that the people might not want time to prepare for its execution; and he also got it signed by the king's council; for that seems to be meant by its being *given in Shushan.*

And the king and Haman sat down to drink.] It is likely Haman made an entertainment for the king, to thank him for his great kindness to him in this grant.

But the city Shushan was perplexed.] The Jews that lived there, who were very numerous, knew not what to do: and it is probable other people in the city were very fearful what would become of them; not knowing but that they might also suffer in such a massacre: and perhaps some of them were related to the Jews, or had made friendship with them, and therefore were much concerned at this horrid decree.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *WHEN Mordecai perceived all that was done.*] Which it is likely he heard by some friend before it was publicly known, but did not express his grief till the edict was hung up.

Mordecai rent his clothes.] Both before and behind, saith the latter Targum.

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And put on sackcloth with ashes.] As the manner was, in great sorrow.

And went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry.] Saying, as the same Targum expresses it, What a heavy decree is this which the king and Haman have passed upon us? Not against a part of us, but upon us all, to root us out of the earth: whereupon all the Jews flocked about him; and he caused the book of the law to be brought to the gate of Shushan, covered with sackcloth; and therein he read those words of Moses in Deut. iv. 30, 31. "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shall be obedient to his voice (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God), he will not forsake thee, nor destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them." After which he exhorted them to fasting, humiliation, and repentance, according to the example of the Ninevites.

Ver. 2. *And came even before the king's gate.*] That his cry might come to the ears of Esther.

For none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.] But he durst not take his place in the gate, because none that were in mourning might come there: so careful they were, not in the least to disturb the king in his pleasures. By this it appears, as from many other places, that in the gate they made their court, as we speak, and dispatched all public affairs (as I have noted often before), which was here practised more than in other places, because the Persian monarchs lived more retired than other princes, few but those who attended them being admitted into their palace.

Ver. 3. *And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.*] All day long they fasted, and wept, and lamented themselves; and in the night many lay, not in their beds, but on the ground in sackcloth and ashes.

Ver. 4. *So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her.*] As a piece of news, or perhaps they understood there was some relation between them.

Then was the queen exceedingly grieved.] Imagining some mischief had befallen him, and not knowing what it was.

And she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him.] That he might come to court, and take his place in the gate.

But he received it not.] This, no doubt, very much increased her grief.

Ver. 5. *Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her.*] In whom the king had a great confidence, and whom she could entrust with such a message.

And gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.] What was the cause of his weeping and wailing, and why he would not accept of the garments which she sent him; as the latter Targum very well explains it.

Ver. 6. *So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate.*] Where, it is like, he still continued lamenting their miserable condition.

Ver. 7. *And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him.*] How he had refused to worship Haman (as the former Targum explains it), and how this had incensed him against the whole nation.

And of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.] The ten thousand talents he had offered, to procure the king's consent to their destruction.

Some of the Jews here add another marvellous thing which *had happened* to Mordecai the very night before Hatach came to him, which he desired Esther might be acquainted withal: whether it be true or false, I think fit here to remember it (it seeming to be so piously designed), as I had it, near threescore years ago, from a great man in the Jewish learning, who quotes for it R. Moses Almosnino, in a book called Jede Moseh (the hands of Moses), where he says, That Mordecai going home in great heaviness, reflecting on the danger his whole nation was in, met three boys coming from school, whom he examined what they had learned that day; one of them told him his lesson had been in Prov. iii. 25, 26. "Be not afraid of sudden fear, nor of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh: for the Lord shall be thy confidence," &c. Then Mordecai cried out, I am confident this desolation shall not be so speedy. Then the second child told him he had learned that day, Isa. viii. 10. "Take counsel together, it shall come to nought; speak the word (or pronounce the decree), it shall not stand; for God is with us." O the wonderful goodness of God, said Mordecai, that thus out of the mouth of babes and sucklings ordaineth strength. And what have you learned? said he, to the third child; who answered, Isa. xlvi. 4. "Even to your old age I am he (that is, the God); unto hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear: even I will carry, and will deliver you." Now, blessed be God, cried Mordecai, that hath not left us comfortless; his hand shall be with us, as in former ages, &c. But another great man, in this learning, hath lately admonished me that this rabbin is but of yesterday, and designed to elude the prophecy of Psalm viii. quoted in the gospel, and therefore unworthy to be mentioned in this place.

Ver. 8. *Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther.*] That she might be fully satisfied what was intended.

And to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.] He charged her, I suppose, in the name of God, or, as she loved her nation, to go and earnestly to beseech the king to be merciful to the Jews, as the Targum expounds it.

Ver. 9. *And Hatach came, and told Esther the words of Mordecai.*

Ver. 10. *Again, Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai.*

Ver. 11. *All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know.*] That is, nobody, either in the court or in the whole kingdom, was ignorant.

That whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called.] Here the king kept retired from all company, but such as he called for, or was pleased to admit.

There is one law of his to put him to death.] Let him be of ever such quality there was no exception; but one law reached all that were so presumptuous. This seems to have

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been an ancient law in that country, mentioned by Herodotus, lib. i. and Athenæus, lib. xii. But the former Targum will have it, that it was procured by Haman, that none might come into the king's presence unless he introduced them.

Except such to whom the king shall hold out his golden sceptre, that he may live.] Which, I suppose, was so seldom done, that few would venture to stand in need of a pardon. A sceptre was the ensign of the highest and most absolute authority: so that, as Wagenseil observes, when Mordecai was advanced to the greatest dignity next to the king, having royal apparel, and a great crown on his head, (viii. 15.) yet he had no sceptre; for that was proper and peculiar to the king.

But I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.] Which might justly make her fear his love was cooled to her, and then her person and petition might not be acceptable to him.

Ver. 12. *And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.*] There seems to have been more than one person that went with this message, to confirm the truth of what she said.

Ver. 13. *Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews.*] He would not have her flatter herself with a vain imagination, that because she was queen she should be spared; for she would find no more privilege in the king's house than the rest of the Jews did abroad.

Ver. 14. *For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.*] He did not know whence, but he confided in God, that by some means or other he would preserve them from utter destruction.

But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed.] He would have her believe that God would cut off her and her family for self-love, and want of zeal to preserve her nation.

And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?] Rather than refuse to intercede for her people, he would have her think (though there was danger in it) that God had raised her up to the dignity in which she was, on purpose that she might be the deliverer of her people, and therefore go courageously about it.

Ver. 15. *Then Esther bade them to return Mordecai this answer:*

Ver. 16. *Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan.*] Not all into one public congregation, for that might have given suspicion of an intended insurrection, but in several private assemblies.

And fast ye for me, neither eat or drink three days, night or day.] None, or very few, could keep a fast for three days and nights, without tasting any meat or drink: the meaning therefore is, that they should make no set meal in their families, neither dinner nor supper, but only eat and drink so much at night as would support them in prayer to God for a blessing upon her undertaking; or, as Josephus understands it, they should abstain from all delicacies, and be content with hard and coarse fare. But Drusius thinks this fast was only one whole day and two nights, according as it is said of our Saviour, that he lay three days and three nights in the grave; and then they might fast so long without taking any refreshment: and in those hot countries we read of monks that fasted four or five days.

I also and my maidens will fast likewise.] It is not likely her maidens were Jews; yet notwithstanding they might be disposed to fast with her; which was not unusual with the gentiles in time of great distress, as appears by the story of the Ninevites, whose fast the Targum thinks Mordecai imitated, making the cattle, oxen, and sheep to abstain, as well as men and women.

And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law.] Being thus recommended to God, she resolved not so much to regard the law, as the preservation of her people; for there are in some cases such violent circumstances, that to observe the law, as Grotius notes, would be to offend the chiefest law. Whither Puffendorf refers what we read in Valerius Maximus, lib. iii. cap. 7. n. 1. cap. 8. n. 6.

And if I perish, I perish.] This is not a speech of despondence, but of courage and resolution; being as much as to say, I am content to perish in so good a cause; and if I perish for it in this world (as the Targum glosses), I shall have my portion in the world to come.

Ver. 17. *So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.*] Betook himself to fasting and prayer (unto which he called all the Jews) as long as Esther required, omitting the joys of the paschal feast, and turning it into a fast, if we may believe the former Targum: for that paraphrast thinks, that Haman laying his plot in the month of Nisan, (ii. 7.) and Mordecai presently applying himself to defeat it, these things must fall out about the Passover, which was in this month. But in memory of this the Jews keep a fast on the thirteenth of Adar, which they call *Esther's fast.*

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *NOW it came to pass, on the third day.*] In the conclusion of the fast, or, as the former Targum, on the third day of the Passover.

That Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house.] But first, saith the latter Targum, she made a solemn prayer to God, with many tears, as soon as she was dressed, saying, "Thou art the great God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of my father Benjamin: as thou didst deliver Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, out of the fiery furnace, and Daniel from the lion's den, so deliver me now out of the hand of the king, and give me grace and favour in his eyes," &c. And so he goes on in a very long prayer.

And the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.] So that he could see every one that came into the court.

Ver. 2. *And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight.*] He was much moved, saith the former Targum, to see trouble in her countenance, and her eyes full of tears; and so immediately comforted her in the manner following.

And the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand.] In token of his favour, and inviting her approach. But the other Targum says, that the officers about him, as soon as she entered, ran to apprehend her, that she might be put to death: but the king stopped them, by his shewing she was acceptable to him. So true is that

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of Solomon, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will," (Prov. xxi. 1.)

So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.] Kissed it, saith the Vulgar, or put her hand under it, saith Grotius, in token of her subjection and thankfulness for his favour.

Ver. 3. *Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.*] This is an usual form of speech among kings, when their hearts are enlarged, and they overflow with affection to others, or when they give them the freest liberty to demand what they please, as Grotius explains it upon Matt. xiv. 7. It is a foolish addition, which the latter Targum here makes, that he excepted one thing, which was the building the house of the sanctuary at Jerusalem, which he would not grant, because he promised Geshem, Sanballat, and Tobiah, it should not be built, lest the Jews should rebel.

Ver. 4. *And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.*] It was very prudent not to open her mind presently, but first to endear his affection by feasting, music, dancing, and whatsoever might please him: and it was no small pleasure, it is likely, that she invited his favourite to come to her entertainment together with him. There was also a singular providence of God in this matter, which so disposed her mind, that the high honour the king bestowed on Mordecai the next day might fall out between this and that, and make way for her petition.

Ver. 5. *And the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said.*] Get himself ready with all speed.

So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Ver. 6. *And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine.*] At the conclusion of the entertainment: for they did not drink wine, but water, at the beginning of their feasts.

What is thy petition? and it shall be granted unto thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.] This shews it was not a sudden passion of love that made him speak so kindly to her before, but he had a settled affection for her, which disposed him to be very bountiful, and shewed he was much pleased with her entertainment.

Ver. 7. *Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is,*

Ver. 8. *If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said.*] That is, make her request to him: which she thought would be more seasonable, when she had won his heart by fresh expressions of her desire to please him, and obtained also a new promise from him, that he would deny her nothing: for there was need of a great preparation, to dispose him to do so great a thing for her, as to revoke or suspend his own decree. The latter Targum, after his fashion, gives several frivolous reasons why she invited Haman to the banquet twice; but the last of them is tolerable. The Israelites were in great expectation of the issue of this feasting, and hoped to see Haman presently cut off; but she was resolved to turn their thoughts the right way, that is, from her unto God, looking for mercy from their heavenly Father.

Ver. 9. *Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart.*] To think he was in such favour with the queen, as well as with the king.

But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.] The Targum still repeats it, that he saw Mordecai would not rise up before his image.

Ver. 10. *Nevertheless Haman refrained himself.*] From taking any sudden revenge.

And when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.] The daughter of Totni (saith the latter Targum), one of the king of Persia's governors beyond the river.

Ver. 11. *And Haman told them of the glory of his riches.*] How splendidly he lived.

And the multitude of his children.] It was a glory in this country, as Drusius observes, to have abundance of children; but the Targum had no shame, when he affirms he had two hundred and fourscore, besides those ten that were princes in the provinces, and besides Shimstæus the king's secretary.

And all the things wherein the king had promoted him.] What offices and dignities he had conferred upon him.

And how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.] So that he took place of the greatest princes who were natives of the country, and of all the officers in the court.

Ver. 12. *Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.*] He did not fail to relate the peculiar honour the queen had done him, which he could not but look upon as a token that he was established in the favour of the court.

Ver. 13. *Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.*] How small a matter will spoil all the satisfaction of those who are arrived at the top of human felicity! immense riches, glory, and honour, gave not Haman so much pleasure, as he felt pain from one man's disrespect unto him: and yet he might have given himself ease before this, by speaking one word to the king to displace Mordecai, or put him to death, if his pride and passion would have let him be contented, without the destruction of a whole nation.

Ver. 14. *Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high.*] That men might see him that was hanged on it afar off, and be struck with the greater terror, by that spectacle, of giving any disgust to Haman.

And to-morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon.] They advised him not to wait till the general slaughter of all the Jews, but to rid him presently of Mordecai; for which he had now a fair opportunity, being to attend on the king to-morrow unto the banquet.

Then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet.] When his heart was eased of this trouble, the dispatch

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of his enemy, and the banquet, giving him a double pleasure.

And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.] And set up before the door of Mordecai's house, saith the former Targum, against the plain words of this history, vii. 9. where it is said, they stood in Haman's house; from whence, it is possible, he intended to remove them to the door of Mordecai: that Targum hath a great deal of frivolous stuff about this consultation which Haman's friends had how to destroy Mordecai; some advising one way, and some another, but none approved of till this was propounded. The reason given for it is foolish; but at last he concludes piously, that the Jews were extremely troubled at the sight of the gallows, and all cried to God in the words of the Psalmist, (cxxiii. 2.) "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us."

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *ON that night could not the king sleep.*] Now follows a wonderful turn of affairs: God so disposing it, that the king could take no rest in the night; and instead of music and singing, and diverting himself with his wives and concubines, he called for the records of the kingdom to be read to him.

And he commanded to bring the book of records of the Chronicles; and they were read before the king.] These were *diaries*, wherein was set down what passed every day, which we now call *journals*, (as I observed, ii. 13.) And in them it was the manner of the Persians to set down the names of those who had done the king any eminent service; as Grotius notes out of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Procopius.

Ver. 2. *And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.*] It was a singular providence of God, that they should read in that very part of the book wherein the service of Mordecai was recorded. And the latter Targum, to increase the wonder, saith, that Shimstæus, who brought the book, and opened it at this place, seeing this which was written of Mordecai, turned over the leaves, and would have read in another part of the book; but the leaves flew back again to the same place where he opened it, and he was forced to read that story to the king.

Ver. 3. *And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.*] Great men sometimes are unmindful of the highest services that are done them, and take no care to reward them. Though some think the king ordered him a reward, of which, by the artifice of those in the court, who hated the Jews, he was deprived. But there was a special providence in it, that he went without a reward then, which procured it for him most opportunely at this time. It is not improbable, that, as Josephus saith, the history of some of his ancestors was read before they came to his reign; wherein was set down what services men had done, and what preferment or gifts had been bestowed upon them; which moved the king to ask, when they came to this story of Mordecai, what had been done for him?

Ver. 4. *And the king said, Who is in the court?*] For he was resolved immediately to shew how sensible he was of his service.

(Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him).] He was come very early to court, that he might gratify his revenge, and go with more pleasure to the banquet. This was another part of God's providence, to bring him so soon to court when the king was thus disposed.

Ver. 5. *And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.*] Which he durst not do, as great as he was, without leave.

Ver. 6. *So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?*] The king, in all probability, would not have asked this question, but ordered himself what he thought fit, if God had not intended that Mordecai should have the greatest honour done him, and that by the judgment of his greatest enemy.

(Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?)] He had reason to think so, because he had already heaped so many favours upon him, and was now invited by the queen to keep him company at her banquet.

Ver. 7. *And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,*

Ver. 8. *Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear.*] When he went abroad, and appeared publicly among his people; which should rather be translated, *the royal robe*, an external garment, or stole, coming down to his feet, which none wore but himself.

And the horse that the king rideth upon.] I suppose it was a horse which none might ride upon but himself; like the mule among the kings of Israel, which was peculiarly appointed to their own use, as I have noted on 1 Kings i. 33. Herodotus (lib. i.) mentions such a generous and most noble horse belonging to the king of Persia.

And the crown-royal which is set upon his head.] That is, upon the horse's head, upon which there was a royal ornament; as there is now at Rome, called a *fiocco*. For *keter* is a large word, signifying any ornament about the head or the neck. And that this refers to the horse, not to the king, is plain in the Hebrew, and from the next verse, and ver. 10, 11. where there is no more mention of this *keter;* but only of the robe, and of the horse to which this royal ornament upon his head belonged. (See Ludovicus de Dieu.)

Ver. 9. *And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.*] This proclamation, in all likelihood, was made by some public officer.

Ver. 10. *Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate.*] It is very likely these words astonished Haman, and made

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as great commotions in him, as the Targum here describes: but he durst not dispute the king's command, nor ask him what Mordecai he meant (there being many of that name), when the king had plainly told him on whom it was he intended to bestow this honour. But if he made any difficulty to obey this command, or desired to be excused, the king bade him say no more, but go (as the verse concludes), and *let nothing fail of all that he had spoken.*

Ver. 11. *Then took Haman the apparel, and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.*] At which sight (saith the latter Targum) Esther praised God in the words of the Psalmist, cxiii. 7, 8. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill: that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people." And Mordecai said those words, Psal. xxx. 11, 12. "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; I will praise thee, O Lord God my redeemer, that thou hast not let mine enemy triumph over me."

Ver. 12. *And Mordecai came again to the king's gate.*] Returned to his duty, clothed not in sackcloth, as the Targum represents him (for then he might not have come there), but in his own raiment. Shewing he was not puffed up with the honour that had been done him; but foreseeing, no doubt, the happy event which followed.

But Haman hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered.] Which was a token of sadness and dejection.

Ver. 13. *And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends.*] Who were waiting to hear what was become of Mordecai, whom they advised to get hanged on the gallows.

Every thing that had befallen him.] How cross every thing had fallen out to him that morning.

Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife.] They whose counsel he had used in his divination by lots, now changed their mind; and his wife concurred in opinion with them, that these were bad omens.

If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.] They had observed, it is likely, how the Jews had been wonderfully raised from under great oppressions, since the time of Cyrus; and thence conclude there was a particular providence that took care of them. And it is possible they had heard something of the oracle against the Amalekites, that they should perish by the hands of the Jews. And, as Dr. Jackson excellently notes, (book i. on the Creed, chap. 21.) Those plots which would have crushed other nations, did often turn to their advancement, and the fall of their enemies. Whence both their rising and falling, and consequently the success of such as opposed them, was in the apprehension of wise men of other nations merely fatal; altogether incorrigible by worldly policy. Whence these wise men of Chaldea (as he calls them), upon the first notice of the wind's turning for them, read Haman's destiny. And accordingly Achior's speech to Holofernes, Judith v. 17, &c. (whether truly uttered, or feigned by the penman of the history), was framed according to the known experience of those times, and contained such advices as a faithful counsellor, well acquainted with the estate of the Jews, should have given to his lord, who did not so well understand it.

Ver. 14. *And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.*] He hearing their opinion, that these things boded some evil to him, was very slow, we may well suppose, in his motion; and could have been content, perhaps, not to have gone to the banquet: or he was musing what to do for his preservation, which made him stay longer than he should have done, before he waited on the king to it.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen.*

Ver. 2. *And the king said again to Esther on the second day, at the banquet of wine.*] When his heart was merry, and highly delighted with his entertainment.

What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.] This promise, renewed the third time, gave her courage to present her suit to him.

Ver. 3. *Then Esther the queen.*] Lifting up her eyes to heaven, as the Targum enlarges it.

Answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king.] Thus she prefaced to her request, when she only beseeched him to accept of a banquet from her.

Let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request.] That is, the life of her people.

Ver. 4. *For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish.*] For Haman had offered a great sum of money to purchase their destruction. She uses so many words, that she might express the outrageous mischief intended against them, which was no less than their extermination.

But if we had been sold for bond-men and bond-women I had held my tongue.] For that might have turned to the king's profit, and they might, at one time or other, have recovered their liberty.

Although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.] The king would not have gained so much as he would have lost by it. But there is another interpretation which Aben Ezra mentions, who takes the Hebrew word *hatzar* not to signify an *enemy*, but *distress, misery*, and *trouble*. Which makes this sense, *If they had sold us for slaves, I had not troubled the king with my petition, because that misery of ours would not have been so much to the king's damage.* (See De Dieu.)

Ver. 5. *Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?*] It seemed incredible that any man should entertain such a thought (for the king, I suppose, had forgot the decree Haman had obtained from him), to cut off a whole nation. In the Hebrew the words are, *Who is he whose heart hath filled him to do so?* A speech like that in the New Testament, Acts v. 3. "Why hath

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Satan filled thine heart?" Made thee so daring and presumptuous. The like, Eccles. viii. 11.

Ver. 6. *And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.*] She found now that she need not fear to speak plainly.

Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.] For he could not but see the danger he was in to lose his greatness and his life. And his fear was the greater, now he knew the queen was one of that nation whom he had conspired to destroy.

Ver. 7. *And the king, arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace-garden.*] To take breath, and cool himself; being in a great commotion, by variety of passions boiling and struggling in him. For as he loved the queen, so he loved Haman; and yet was full of indignation that he should engage him in such an odious design.

And Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen.] Who he thought might have so much tenderness, as to take compassion upon him and forgive him.

For he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.] Which he discerned by the king's countenance, and by his going out of the room in a great fume and violent passion; which, it is likely, broke out into threatening words.

Ver. 8. *Then the king returned out of the palace-garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was.*] They sat, or rather lay upon beds, as they ate and drank: and Haman fell down as a supplicant at the feet of Esther, laying his hand upon her knees, and beseeching her to take pity upon him. I have not read any where that this was the manner among the Persians; but it was among the Greeks and Romans, to embrace the knees of those whom they petitioned to be favourable to them. Insomuch, that it was a rite in their religious worship to touch the knees of their gods. (See Pliny, lib. xi. cap. 45.) And thus Sulpitius Severus takes it to have been done here, "Deinde regressus rex, vidit Aman reginæ genua amplexum."

Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house?] The king finding him in this posture, interpreted it, as if he were so impudent as, before the king's face, and in his own palace, to offer violence to the queen's chastity. Not that he believed this was his intention; but in his furious passion he turned every thing to the worst sense, and made use of it to aggravate his crime.

As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.] That he might not see the face of the king any more; or rather, as a man condemned, this told him his doom: for it is likely the king, when he saw him in that posture, made a sign what they should do with him, which immediately was performed. Though Aben Ezra saith, this was always done to those with whom the king was angry, though they were not put to death; to shew them what they deserved, never to see the king more.

Ver. 9. *And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king.*] The latter Targum saith, that this Harbonah was one of Haman's counsel, who advised him to set up the gallows to hang Mordecai; but, seeing this strange turn of affairs, incensed the king, by telling him what Haman designed against him who had saved the king's life.

Behold also the gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman.] Upon which he intended to make Mordecai an example to all those that should presume to offend him.

Then the king said, Hang him thereon.] But whether dead or alive is not said, as Salmasius observes; who shews, by many instances, (in his book De Cruce, p. 494.) that it was the manner of the Persians, first to cut off the heads of malefactors, and then to hang them on a gibbet. Josephus, indeed, saith, that he commanded Haman, ἐκ σταυροῦ κρεμασθέντα ἀποθανεῖν, *to be put to death hanging on a cross:* but crucifying was not a Persian punishment; nor did the Romans let the bodies of malefactors die on the cross themselves; but they extinguished them some other way.

Ver. 10. *So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.*] The latter Targum here adds a great deal of frivolous stuff, how the king sent for Mordecai, and charged him to see the execution done upon Haman; and how he begged of Mordecai to spare his life, at least not to hang him, who had been so great, like a varlet, &c. but he concludes very well, that now was verified the observation of Solomon, (Prov. xi. 8.) "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead."

I cannot think fit to end this chapter without taking notice of a reflection which a great man of our own church made long ago upon it: that, in this wonderful deliverance of the Jewish nation, there was no extraordinary manifestation of God's power, no particular cause or agent, that was in its working advanced above the ordinary pitch of nature; and yet the contrivance, or suiting of those ordinary agents appointed by God, is more admirable than if the same end had been effected by means truly miraculous. That a king should not sleep is not unusual, nor that he should solace his waking thoughts by hearing the annals of his own kingdom, or the journals of his own reign, read to him, &c. But that he should lie awake at that time especially, when Haman was watching to destroy the Jews, and that, in the chronicles of the kingdom, they should light on that place where Mordecai's unrewarded services were recorded; and that he should resolve forthwith to do him honour; and Haman come in at that very nick of time when the king was so disposed; and should ignorantly determine what honour should be done him, and be made the instrument of it: this was from the keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, and was truly marvellous in his people's sight, as Dr. Jackson speaks in his second sermon upon 2 Chron. vi. 39, 40. where he observes, that miracles are in their nature more apt to affect the sense; but such secret contrivances of God's wisdom and providence do more affect the understanding: the one works astonishment, the other admiration. For which reason, miracles were more frequent in the infancy of our religion, to enforce unbelievers to give ear to the words of life, and to take God's promises (which otherwise they might have slighted) into serious consideration: but now the ways of God's wisdom, or secret dispositions of his providence, are more apt to cherish the seed of life sown in the hearts of believers. Miracles by continual frequency would cease to be miracles, and not be wondered at; whereas the unsearchable ways of God's wisdom in contriving extraordinary successes, by means ordinarily, will incessantly breed in us matter of admiration: and his wise contrivances are still,

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in one kind or other, most visible, but we want eyes or hearts to observe or contemplate them.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *ON that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman, the Jews' enemy, unto Esther the queen.*] That is, he bestowed on her the whole estate belonging to his family (for that is meant by *his house*); his lands, his goods, his servants, his cattle, all the money he had treasured up. For by his crime all was forfeited to the king; who could not more fitly dispose of it, than to her who would have been the greatest sufferer by him.

And Mordecai came before the king.] By Esther's intercession.

For Esther had told what he was unto her.] Which was not known at court till now; though two eunuchs, who were her confidants, knew something of it, (ii. 21.) and he, perhaps, who carried messages between them, (iv. 5. 13.)

Ver. 2. *And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman.*] Which he had formerly given him, (iii. 10.) but now had resumed.

And gave it unto Mordecai.] In token that he put the same confidence in him, to be the keeper of his signet.

And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.] Not over his family, for that was destroyed; but over his lands and goods, which the king had given to Esther. Of which she made Mordecai her steward, that he might manage that vast estate, which Haman, no doubt, had heaped up, for her advantage.

Ver. 3. *And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears.*] The danger was not yet over, and therefore she renews her petition in the most humble and most moving manner; for tears flowing from so great a person have a great power to move compassion. But she had not yet delivered her petition, these words only expressing what she intended and was prepared to do.

To put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.] By repealing that bloody decree which he had obtained from the king, (iii. 13.)

Ver. 4. *Then the king held out the golden sceptre towards Esther.*] Who, it seems, had adventured to press into the king's presence once more, without being called. Which he did not take ill, but graciously invited her to come to him by this token.

So Esther arose, and stood before the king.] She rose from her knees, and stood before him to make her request.

Ver. 5. *And said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes.*] She uses such variety of expressions for the same thing, to insinuate herself into the king's favour, by an entire submission to his pleasure. For she knew what an unusual thing it was that she was about to desire.

Let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces.] This edict which Haman procured, some think, was not made in such a manner as to become immutable, like that, i. 19. but might be revoked by another edict more peremptory. But this, I think, is a mistake; for it was sealed with the king's ring, which he himself saith, ver. 8. *no man may reverse.*

Ver. 6. *For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?*] If she herself should be spared, she represents to him that it would break her heart to see all her kindred, nay, her whole nation, destroyed.

Ver. 7. *Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen, and to Mordecai the Jew.*] Who, I suppose, was sent for to hear the king's answer to her petition.

Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews.] That is, intended to destroy them all. By what the king had done to shew his resentment against Haman, they might easily believe he would deny them nothing that was necessary for their preservation.

Ver. 8. *Write ye also for the Jews.*] As Haman had done against them.

As it liketh you.] In as full words as you can desire for your safety.

In the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring.] To give it the same authority which the former writing had.

For the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.] This seems to me to signify, that the king could not do what Esther desired; (ver. 5.) for it was contrary to the law of the Medes and Persians to reverse any decree. But he promises to do what he was able to make that decree ineffectual, by giving them power to defend themselves against all that should assault them. And for that end he bade them draw up a letter, in words as strong as they could devise, which would hinder the former decree from being executed, though he could not annul it. And accordingly we find, by what follows, that there is not a word said of revoking Haman's decree; but only that they should stand for their lives, and destroy all, little and great, that should attempt to execute the decree sent by Haman. Thus he chose to fill his realm with blood, rather than revoke a rash decree; which was agreeable enough to the temper of Ochus, who is represented by Valerius Maximus as very cruel. So Jacobus Capellus observes, ad A. M. 3650. where he saith he doth not remember any heathen writer who mentions such an absurd law as this of the Medes and Persians; though Ælian mentions one not much less unreasonable.

Ver. 9. *Then were the king's scribes called at that time.*] As they had been before by Haman to write his decree, (iii. 12.) The author of the apocryphal additions to this book hath forged a copy of this letter; wherein the king tells his subjects, that it was not levity which made him change his mind, and contradict the former decree; but he found he had been deceived by the false suggestions of those whom he highly honoured; as many other great kings had been before him. Which letter discovers the ignorance of him that wrote it, in that he calls Haman a Macedonian, who intended to dethrone him, and take away his life.

In the third month (that is the month Sivan), on the three-and-twentieth day thereof.] A little more than two months after the former decree.

And it was written (according to all that Mordecai com-

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manded) unto the Jews.] That they might prepare themselves for their defence the best they could; and let all men know what power the king had given them.

And to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces.] Who were commanded (as they were in Haman's decree, iii. 12.) to be assistant to them, and furnish them with means to defend themselves.

Which are from India unto Ethiopia, a hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language.] This doth not prove that there were so many distinct languages spoken in his dominions, and many different ways of writing; but, as Bochartus observes, whatsoever any people spake, or what character soever they used (which might be the very same in some provinces), there were letters wrote to them in that language and in that character, (lib. i. Phaleg. cap. 16.)

Ver. 10. *And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus's name, and sealed it with the king's ring; and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries.*] It is very difficult to render this verse word by word, though the sense be very plain. For the first words, *bejad haratzim*, seem to me to signify *by the hand of couriers*, as we now speak; for *ratzim* signifies *runners* or *racers*. And the next, *basusim*, undoubtedly signifies on *horses:* the former Targum saith, of horses whose spleens were cut out, and their hoofs pared; which Bochartus shews was sometimes practised, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 11. Then here follows *rocheve hareches*, riders on a swift beast called *reches*. But what animal that was is very uncertain. Many say a dromedary; with which Drusius is unsatisfied, but leaves it in doubt, (Miscellan. cent. ii. cap. 73.) Bochartus thinks it is a word added to explain what went before, signifying that he sent the posts upon the swiftest horses; for *reches* was a kind of horse. (See 1 Kings iv. 28.) Our translation takes it for *mules*, which Ælian saith, were ἄγαν δρομαίους, *exceeding swift runners*, and therefore used in the Olympic races, as Bochartus observes, Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 21. Then the next word, *ahashteranim* (which we translate *camels*), he takes to be a Persian word; for there is a word at this day in that language of the same sound and signification, *viz. asthera:* (see his Phaleg. lib. i. cap. 15.) Then follows *bene haramachim*, which we translate *young dromedaries;* and the latter Targum, the *foals of mares*. And so Bochartus shews that *ramec* doth signify a *mare;* from whence he thinks the word *marc* among the ancient Gauls was derived, which Pausanias tells us signified *a horse:* for there was such a transposition of letters as is in the word *forma*, which comes from μορφή. In his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 42. there is extant a work of a very learned young man of our own (now with God), who, after that he had observed that neither the latter nor the ancient Jews, nor the Gemarists themselves, knew what to make of this word, hath made a long discourse about it. (See Guil. Guisius, in his Annotations upon that title in the Mischna, called Kelaim.)

The sense of the whole is, that he sent men on horseback (naked, as the first Targum will have it, that they might be lighter), and upon other creatures as swift as horses, and upon mules both old and young, according as the places were nearer or farther off. So he ordered the letters to be sent with great speed by the post, which carried them from stage to stage, till they came to the place whither they were directed.

Ver. 11. *Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together.*] Notwithstanding that former decree sent by Haman.

And to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.] It must be presumed that some would obey the former order, out of their hatred to the Jews; therefore this gives them authority, if any attempt was made upon them, either in great bodies or small parties, not only to defend themselves and repel them, but to make as great a slaughter of them as they were able (for he uses many words to express the liberty he gave them to destroy their enemies), not sparing children and women; and to possess themselves of their goods, as men used to do in war, and as Haman had procured them licence to take the goods of the Jews, (iii. 13.)

Ver. 12. *Upon one day, in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.*] Which day was chosen and appointed by Haman for their destruction.

Ver. 13. *The copy of the writing, for a commandment to be given in every province.*] To warrant them to do what was therein commanded.

Was published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to revenge themselves on their enemies.] Furnish themselves with arms, and all things necessary for their defence, and to annoy their enemies on that day. The latter Targum makes bold to insert a copy of this letter, which imports, that the king was deceived by Haman, who persuaded him to write the former letter; but now he had hanged him, because he found the Jews to be an innocent people, worthy of his protection: and especially commended Esther and Mordecai, whom he had taken into his favour: and therefore sent this new signification of his will and pleasure to them in the behalf of the Jews. There are many expressions in it, which, no doubt, he never used; but the sense of it is good.

Ver. 14. *So the posts which rode upon mules and camels went out.*] Here are two of the same words used again, *reches* and *ahashteranim;* the latter of which is translated *camels*, as it was before; which, though they be not swift creatures, yet are very fit to travel through dry countries better than horses, being very patient of thirst and labour.

Being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment.] Who gave them a strict charge to make all the speed possible to disperse this new order.

And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.] As that sent by Haman was; (iii. 15.) and, as I there observed, signed, it is probable, by the king's counsellors.

Ver. 15. *And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white.*] In such robes as the princes of Persia were wont to wear.

And with a great crown of gold.] Not like that of the king's; but such a coronet as was used by the greatest peers of the realm.

And with a garment of fine linen and purple.] This was his inner garment, as the former was the outward. The former Targum hath made an extravagant description of

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the riches of the habit, wherein Mordecai appeared; his tunic costing four hundred and twenty talents of gold; and many such things which he saith about his sword, and the chain of gold about his neck, which it would be a vanity to mention. But one thing he saith, which is pious, if it were truly related; that Esther looking out of her window, saw him walk in this state: and he spying her, said those words of the Psalmist, (cxxiv. 6.) "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given me a prey unto their teeth." To which she replied in the words of Psal. cxxii. 7. "Our help standeth in the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth."

And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.] At his advancement, and at the fall of Haman, who designed the ruin of such an excellent person.

Ver. 16. *The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy.*] All these words signify the same thing, expressing the highest joy and satisfaction.

And honour.] They were much respected by the people.

Ver. 17. *And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came.*] His commandment was, that the decree should be published with all speed; and both of them were known together: what decree the king had made, and how he pressed the delivery of it, (ver. 14.)

The Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day.] Not only in Shushan, but every where else, they entertained one another, and their neighbours, with good cheer, being full of joy at this unexpected alteration of their affairs. For they doubted not this new decree of the king's would be observed by his people; and they were resolved to defend themselves against those that did not observe it, and destroy them.

And many of the people of the land became Jews.] Many of the Persians became proselytes to the Jewish religion, as both the Targums explain it; but that they were circumcised is not probable. Such persons there were in all times, especially in the days of David and Solomon, when the affairs of the Jews were very prosperous. But the Jews say they did not admit them presently, until the court of judgment approved them as sincere converts. See Selden, de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. ii. cap. 2. 4. where he observes, that such persons ever after went by the name of Jews (as Dio himself takes notice), and were not reckoned gentiles if they fell to idolatry, but called apostates. (See p. 149, &c. 160.)

For the fear of the Jews fell upon them.] The liberty granted them by the king's edict, and the power of the queen and Mordecai, made the Persians stand in awe of them and of their God, who had so marvellously disposed things in their favour. (See the next chapter, ver. 2, 3.)

But this hath made some admire that such a marvellous and memorable thing should not be related, nor so much as touched, by any exotic writer whatsoever. Of which Jacobus Capellus hath given a plain reason, that the history of Ochus is described by no writer, but only Diodorus Siculus: and he meddles with the affairs of Persia no farther than as they cohere with the affairs of Greece.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *NOW, in the twelfth month (that is the month Adar), on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them.*] As they often boasted (it is likely) and threatened, since the decree, which Haman sent, came to them, for they had gotten start of the other, and put the Jews into great terror and confusion, and their enemies into high expectation of their ruin.

(Though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them).] As it appeared presently when the time was come for the executing both the decrees.

Ver. 2. *The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt.*] As some did, being possessed with hatred to them, and being combined, it is likely, upon the receipt of Haman's decree, to endeavour to destroy them. It cannot be imagined, that when Haman perished, all his friends and potentates perished with him; but he had a great party every where, some of which were so furiously enraged at his fall, that they could not contain themselves from shewing their indignation at those who were the occasion of it.

And no man could withstand them.] But they fled before them.

For the fear of them fell upon all people.] When they heard that Haman had lost all his authority and his life, and that his family was destroyed, and how Mordecai was in great power (as it here follows), and the queen herself was a Jew, no doubt it daunted all those who were disposed to execute the first decree. And though some were so desperately envenomed against the Jews, that they did rise up to assault them, yet they had not such courage as the Jews had to oppose them.

Ver. 3. *And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews.*] Which was a great advantage to them, and disheartened their enemies, who hoped for their assistance.

Because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.] They were men of the times (as we speak), and would have been as ready to execute Haman's decree, if he had continued in power, as to aid the Jews in this: which it was their interest to do, being afraid to be turned out of their places by Mordecai, who was the chief minister, if they did otherwise.

Ver. 4. *For Mordecai was great in the king's house.*] Having the management of all the queen's affairs in the court, where she was beloved of the king; who also (it appears by the foregoing chapter, ver. 15.) gave him the highest authority in the kingdom.

And his fame went out throughout all the provinces.] It is soon known every where who is the favourite at court, which makes all addresses to be paid to him.

For this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.] In the esteem of the people, who not only stood in awe of his power, but highly applauded his wisdom and justice in the management of all affairs: for one cannot but think he was very eminent in those noble qualities.

Ver. 5. *Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction.*] That is, they that had no swords slew them with clubs and staves, and such-like weapons as they could procure; as the former Targum understands it.

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And did what they would unto those that hated them.] Had them perfectly at their mercy.

Ver. 6. *And in Shushan the palace.*] That is, in the city where the king's palace was.

The Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.] It is commonly thought that these and the rest mentioned ver. 15, 16. were such as they knew were confederate with Haman, and perhaps Amalekites (as the latter Targum saith); for Mordecai, they think it is likely, required them to kill none but those who declared themselves forward to execute Haman's decree. But I see no ground for this: if men were quiet, and did not rise up against them, they had no authority to hurt them, much less to kill them. Therefore these five hundred, and the rest killed in other places, were men who could not conceal their wicked inclinations, but openly assaulted them; and such Ahasuerus gave them power to destroy, (viii. 11.) And Dr. Alix thinks the conjecture of the Targum is right; that these five hundred men were Amalekites, who followed the fortune of Haman: and by their slaughter were accomplished the prophecies against Amalek. Some others, it is likely, joined with them; but they were the most enraged against the Jews, and the readiest to attempt their destruction.

Ver. 7. *And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,*

Ver. 8. *And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha,*

Ver. 9. *And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha.*] It is too curious an observation of some of the Jews, that the letter *vau* before the last of these names is larger than ordinary, to shew, that though this was the youngest son of Haman, yet he was the most violent against the Jews of all the rest. Or, as others will have it (for such conceits are endless), this being the numeral letter for the number six, it signifies this was the sixth son of Haman, but placed last, out of contempt, as the vilest of them all.

Ver. 10. *The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they.*] It is likely they were in the head of the rest, who were so bold as to attempt the destruction of the Jews in this city; being mad with rage, and resolved to revenge their father's death; and rather perish than not execute his design as far as they were able.

But on the spoil laid they not their hand.] The king had granted them leave to take it, (viii. 11.) but they would not meddle with it, that they might not seem to desire any thing but their own safety, and that the king might have the greater kindness for them, into whose exchequer these goods were to come, if he pleased.

Ver. 11. *On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace, was brought before the king.*] Who required an account, that he might know how people stood affected towards the Jews.

Ver. 12. *And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces?*] That was not yet known, but he thought in all likelihood they must have killed a great many more.

Now, what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee; or what is thy request farther? and it shall be done.] If this did not satisfy her, he asks her what she had to desire farther, and he would not deny her.

Ver. 13. *Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree.*] That is, kill as many of their enemies as they could find; for some that appeared against them, perhaps, escaped their hands, whom they might meet withal the next day.

And let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.] By their father, I suppose.

Ver. 14. *And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan.*] That both her petition and request should be granted. This was a new decree, authorizing them to do on the fourteenth day as they had on the thirteenth.

And they hanged Haman's ten sons.] For their great infamy, that they might be exposed to public reproach, and their bodies remain unburied, being left to rot upon the gallows, or to be devoured by crows and vultures, and such-like ravenous creatures. For, though the Jews suffered none to hang on a tree (so they called a gallows) longer than till the evening of the day, whereon they were hanged, yet other nations let them hang till they were there consumed; as appears from the story of the Gibeonites, (2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10.) and from the vulgar saying among the Romans, "pascere in cruce corvos," *to feed ravens on a gibbet.*

Ver. 15. *For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan: but on the prey they laid not their hand.*] The former Targum saith still, these three hundred men were of the family of Amalek. But whosoever they were, I take them to have been such as the day before rose up against them, but in the conflict escaped by flight, and now were found out and killed.

Ver. 16. *But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives.*] This they did upon the thirteenth day, when they defended themselves from those that rose up against them to destroy them.

And had rest from their enemies.] Who could not stand before them; but ceased to molest them.

And slew of their foes seventy and five thousand.] There is some reason to think these were Amalekites, as the former Targum saith: for, it is likely, many of that nation might be dispersed throughout the king's provinces as well as the Jews; and being the old enemies of the Jews, might be very forward to help to destroy them. But whosoever they were, the Jews prevailed against them, and slew so many thousands, that thereby we may judge what a great number of Jews still remained in other countries, and did not return to their own.

But they laid not their hands on the prey.] It is likely Mordecai, in his letters, had charged them not to make use of the liberty the king had given them to take the spoil, (viii. 11.) because they universally avoided it.

Ver. 17. *On the thirteenth day of the month Adar.*] This is to be referred to the foregoing words; the slaughter was, made in the provinces on the thirteenth day of this month, when they should have been destroyed themselves.

And on the fourteenth day of the same, rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.] And so the Jews in the provinces made the next day a festival of rejoicing for their great deliverance. For there never was any day

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of joy and gladness for any blessing, without feasting and liberal entertainment of each other, and of the poor.

Ver. 18. *But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.*] The Jews, indeed, in the city of Shushan, made the fifteenth day a festival, because they had liberty to avenge themselves of their enemies, not only on the thirteenth, but on the fourteenth, which were both days of slaughter; and therefore they rested not till the fifteenth day.

Ver. 19. *Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.*] This verse gives an account of the reason of the different observation of the festival in Shushan, and in the country towns throughout the king's provinces. There they had leave only on one day to slay their enemies, which was the thirteenth of Adar; therefore the fourteenth was a day of gladness to them: whereas in Shushan the fifteenth was the day of gladness, the fourteenth being, by the king's leave, made like the thirteenth, another day of slaughter. But this was at the first done thus, only of their own free accord; afterward the law established it otherwise.

A day of gladness and feasting, and a good day.] A day of thanksgiving and praise to God, as well as of feasting one with another, and of sending portions to their neighbours out of their good cheer, that the meaner sort might feast and rejoice also. And as, to add to their joy, they sent them meat from their tables; so the Jews have made a constitution, that they should make a collection of money to send to the poor at this time of the year, that they may provide themselves things necessary to make a feast. Which money it is unlawful (as Guilielmus Schickardus observes) to apply to any other use, but only the making themselves merry at this time. (See Nehem. viii. 10.)

Ver. 20. *And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far.*] That which they had done at the first voluntarily, he thought good to turn into a law, and sent it into the whole realm.

Ver. 21. *To stablish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly.*] But, to make these more solemn times, they now keep a fast before the feast (after the example of Esther) on the thirteenth day of the month Adar.

Ver. 22. *As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.*] For in the provinces they had done their work before the fourteenth day, and then rested and rejoiced: but in Shushan not before the fifteenth; and then they rejoiced there.

Ver. 23. *And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them.*] That is, to keep these days as festivals every where throughout all generations.

Ver. 24. *Because Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur (that is the lot) to consume them, and to destroy them:*

Ver. 25. *But when Esther came before the king, he commanded, by letters, that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.*] These two verses give an account why this festival was ordained, which they took care should be understood by all posterity: who observe it at this day; and tell us it consists in these three things: in *reading*, in *rest* from labour, and in *feasting*. The reading begins in the evening, as soon as the stars appear; when the history of Haman is read from the beginning to the end, out of a Hebrew manuscript written on parchment: for it is not lawful to read it out of a printed Bible, no more than they do the law itself, as Schickard observes out of their writers, who say, three prayers go before this reading. In the first of which they praise God for counting them worthy to attend this Divine service: in the second, they thank him for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors: and in the third, that they have lived to observe another festival in memory of it. After this they go to supper upon spoon-meats; and next morning to the synagogue, where the history is read over again with the same ceremonies. After which they have done with religion and piety, and spend the two days in idleness, and eating, and drinking. Surenhuysius hath given a full account of this reading, and the benedictions, in his notes upon the Megillah, p. 387. And for their rest and feasting, they say in their books, that the first is kept so sacredly, that they will not so much as set or sow any thing in their garden on these days; but play at chess, and such-like games, or spend the time in music and dancing, till it be time to feast. And then they indulge themselves so far, that they think it not unlawful to drink so much, as not to be able to distinguish between the blessing of Mordecai and the curse of Haman, as they themselves speak. Insomuch, that our learned primate Usher calls this feast, *The Bacchanals of the Jews.*

Ver. 26. *Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur.*] A Persian word, signifying a *lot*.

Therefore, for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them.] This seems to refer to the foregoing words; *wherefore they called these days Purim*, because of what was contained in the letters of Mordecai, and because of what they had seen when these things fell out, and what they heard reported of them in the places where they could not see them. But we take them to be the reason of what follows; *viz.* of the keeping these days.

Ver. 27. *The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them.*] All that should become proselytes to their religion.

So as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time, every year.] According as Mordecai had written, so they engaged without fail to keep these two days in the time appointed; *viz.* on the fourteenth day they kept the festival in the country all over the king's dominions, and on the fifteenth they kept it in Shushan. The former of these the Jews now call in their calendar *the lesser feast of Purim*, and the latter *the greater feast*.

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Ver. 28. *And that these days should be remembered, and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city.*] Accordingly at this day they kept this festival, as they did in more ancient times: for in the second book of Maccabees, xv. 37. we find, that Judas having obtained a great victory over Nicanor, they ordained it should be commemorated upon the thirteenth of Adar, *the day before the feast of Mordecai,* which was this of Purim. This shews, that in those days they kept this deliverance in memory by celebrating this feast, and that the thirteenth of Adar was not then a fast.

And that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.] This is but a repetition of what was said before, to make them more seriously attend to their obligation; which was laid upon them all throughout all generations. Accordingly now, as they tell us in their books, the little children, the women, they that are base born, and servants, &c. are bound to keep this feast.

Ver. 29. *Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.*] These days were first recommended to their observation by the authority of Mordecai, ver. 20. But either they were neglected, or sometime intermitted, or were thought not to be sufficiently established; therefore the first order was confirmed and ratified by a second, which was backed by the authority of the queen. And the opinion of Maimonides is not improbable, that this was also an ordinance of the prophets; *viz.* Haggai, Zechariah, and others, that lived in the days of Esther. But this cannot be true; for they were dead long before this time.

Ver. 30. *And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus.*] And consequently as far as Jerusalem; for Syria and Judea were among his provinces, and the Jews should have been killed there, as well as in the rest of his dominions: and were bound to thank God for their preservation throughout all ages; for otherwise they had not been any longer a people.

With words of peace and truth.] Full of sincere love and affectionate desires of their happiness. "Verbis amicis et sinceris." Or, as others will have it, wishing their prosperity, and exhorting them to live in love and peace, and to be faithful in their religion; and particularly in keeping their promise of observing these days. But after all, Conradus Pellicanus seems to me to have guessed the best at the meaning of these words *peace* and *truth;* which he thinks were the salutation at the top of the letter.

Ver. 31. *To confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves, and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.*] Some learned men understand these words, as if they meant, that these days of Purim were therefore appointed, that they might be a memorial of that deliverance, which was obtained of God by fastings and prayers unto him; which, if it be admitted, gives no ground to conclude from thence, that they observed a fast upon this occasion, as well as a feast. The Jews, indeed, think quite otherwise; and, if we may believe their calendar, have ever since kept a fast on the thirteenth of Adar, which was the day appointed for their extirpation. Upon the hearing of which decree, all places were filled with doleful lamentations, there being no help for them if God did not deliver them; unto whom therefore they cried with fasting and prayer. In memory of which, they undertook to keep a yearly fast, as well as days of feasting and gladness, which immediately ensued. But their calendar is a new piece, and of no credit at all; nor do we find the least indication that Esther or Mordecai enjoined any thing but a feast, no mention being made of a fast in their decree: and therefore it was voluntarily undertaken by the Jews themselves in after-ages, as this verse seems to import. Which the former Targum thus paraphrases (and the latter to the same purpose): "To confirm these days of Purim, as Mordecai the Jew, and Esther the queen, appointed concerning them; and as the Jews ordained for themselves, and for their posterity, to keep in memory the matter of their fastings and their prayers."

Ver. 32. *And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.*] Either she made a new decree by her sole authority to enforce the former; or the meaning is, that she commanded the forementioned decree, which confirmed the days of Purim, to be recorded and made a public act, in a book where, perhaps, this whole history was contained. Which record testified in time to come what passed in her days; *viz.* their danger, and their wonderful deliverance, and the decree of Esther concerning the observation of these days.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *AND the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.*] Having great occasion for money, he laid a new tax upon all his provinces, both in the continent (as we speak) and in the isles of the sea, belonging to his dominions. Some think, that the imposts which he released to his people at the marriage of Esther, (ii. 18.) which continued for some years, were now revived; and that this is all which is meant by these words. But this doth not well agree with this phrase, of *laying a tribute* on them. Our primate Usher understands by the *isles* here mentioned, those in the Ægean Sea, which were conquered by Darius Hystaspes, who was the first that laid a tribute on his subjects; for Cyrus, and Cambyses before him, laid none; but, being begun, they continued it to the reign of this king, *ad Annum Per. Julian.* 4219. Strabo saith, (lib. xv. p. 735.) that the tribute exacted on the sea-coast was paid in silver; but that from the land, in such commodities as every country afforded, in wool, drugs, cattle, &c.

Ver. 2. *And all the acts of his power, and of his might.*] Which was so great, that the Egyptians in their hieroglyphics represented Ochus by a sword. And Plutarch (as Jacobus Capellus observes) calls him the most terrible of all the Persian kings.

And the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?] These words signify, that as this king did great things, so they were to be ascribed very much to the management of Mordecai, after he was advanced to the highest authority in the kingdom. But it was not the design of the author of this history

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to relate such things; for which he refers to the public records of the kingdom, which were kept in some part of the king's house, (it appears from vi. 1.) and were extant in those days when this book was written.

Ver. 3. *For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus.*] I cannot but observe here, in the conclusion of this book, that Mordecai is so often called *the Jew* by this author, (see ix. 29. 31.) that it hath inclined me to think it was not written by one of that nation, but by some proselyte of Persia who was converted, as many were at this time, (viii. 17.) to the Jewish religion. Some of which might be in these times divinely inspired, as Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, was in the apostles' days, (Acts vi. 5.) But I have no authority for this, which I mention as a mere conjecture.

And great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren.] His greatness did not make him forget his brethren; by whom he was highly esteemed, and much honoured by every one of them.

Seeking the wealth of his people.] And no wonder he was so acceptable, for his study was how to do them good.

And speaking peace to all his seed.] Advising and promoting whatsoever was for their advantage; and speaking still to the king for that which might tend to the happiness and prosperity of his nation, which he advanced to the utmost of his power. Unto which a most earnest desire of the coming of the Messiah contributed exceedingly; and the serious study of the law, which he recommended to them, as the only means of living happily. Thus Conradus Pellicanus concludes his commentary on this book; but where he found this I cannot tell. It is only highly probable, that so good a man as Mordecai was very solicitous they should be obedient to the law of Moses (as Malachi was), and live in expectation of the Messiah, concerning whom Moses prophesied. For, as Epiphanius, and Seder Olam, and others, observe, this book of Esther is the last canonical book of the Old Testament; and the nearer they approached to the coming of Christ, the more desirous holy men were to see him. Others, indeed, think Malachi is the last Divine writer; but, on the other side, it seems probable, that he, having taken no notice of the deliverance under Esther, prophesied some time before it.

END OF VOL. II.

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INDEX

TO

VOLUMES I. AND II.

*** The numeral Letters denote the Volume; the Figures the Page; and *a* the first, *b* the second Column.

AARON, three years elder than Moses, i. 163. *b.* an account of his wife and her family, i. 183. *b.* an agent to work miracles under the direction of Moses, i. 185. *b.* the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, i. 289. *a.* a more particular account of their consecration, i. 301. *a.* the reasons of his making the golden calf, i. 317. *a.* his excuse for making of it, i. 321. *b.* a complete account of his consecration and his sons to the priesthood, i. 372. *a.* &c. the manner in which he began his priestly function, i. 374. *a.* &c. Aaron and his sons alone were to officiate as priests, i. 497. *b.* his family had no inheritance in the land, but an ample provision was made for them, i. 572. *b.* his death, i. 585. *b.*

Abarim, a ridge of hills whereof Nebo was one, ii. 40. *b.*

Abdon, a judge of Israel, ii. 183. *a.*

Abel, the signification of the name, i. 21. *b.* his employment, *ibid.* the nature and acceptance of his offering, i. 22, *b.* his sacrifices set on fire by a flame from the Schechinah, *ibid.* murdered by his brother, i. 23. *b.* the children of Seth used to swear by his blood, i. 31. *a.*

Abiathar, the high-priest, flies to David with the *Urim* and *Thummim*, ii. 287. *b.* takes the part of Adonijah, ii. 381. *b.* is degraded from the priesthood and confined, ii. 388. *a.*

Abib, the name of one of the Hebrew months, why so called, i. 203. *b.* the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, i. 417. *a.*

Abigail, her speech and present to king David, ii. 293. *b.* &c. is married to him, ii. 295. *a.*

Abijah, his victories over Jeroboam, ii. 613. *a.*

Abijam, a king of Judah, ii. 437. *b.* his wicked reign and death, ii. 438. *b.*

Abimelech, the name of all the kings of Palestine, i. 79. *a.* he was a worshipper of the true God, i. 79. *b.* &c.

Abimelech, his speech to the people, and his cruelty to the sons of Gideon, ii. 166. *a.* &c. he takes the city of Shechem, ii. 171. *a.* is killed by a piece of a millstone thrown upon him, ii. 172. *a.*

Abishag the Shunammite, a young virgin brought to David, ii. 381. *a.*

Abishai, his advice to David to kill Saul, ii. 296. *a.*

Abner makes Ish-bosheth the son of Saul king, ii. 310. *a.* is reconciled to David, ii. 313. *a.* slain by Joab, ii. 315. *a.* the manner and place of his burial, ii. 316. *a.*

Abominable, an abominable thing not to be eaten, i. 706. *a.*

Abomination, the meaning of the word, i. 429. *a.*

Abraham, a fable concerning him, i. 46. *a.* not the eldest son of Terah, i. 57. *b.* the time of his birth, i. 58. *a.* a fiction concerning him, i. 58. *b.* a promise that all the world should be blessed in him, i. 59. *a.* a notable instance of his faith, *ibid.* his obedience constantly rewarded, i. 60. *a.* an account of his learning, i. 61. *a.* why called the *Hebrew*, i. 63. *b.* his posterity compared to the stars, i. 66. *a.* the changing of his name, and the reason of it, i. 70. *a.* a great instance and reward of his obedience, i. 73. *a.* an argument of his modesty, i. 75. *b.* he is the first that is called a prophet, i. 79. *b.* the first that offered a child for a sacrifice, i. 84. *b.* his faith and obedience, in offering his son, particularly explained, i. 85. *a.* his death, i. 93. *a.*

Absalom, he kills Amnon for forcing his sister Tamar, ii. 342. *a.* flies, but is recalled by David, by the policy of Joab, ii. 345. *a.* an account of his hair, ii. 346. *a.* his policy to make himself popular, ii. 347. *a.* he raises men, and forms a conspiracy, ii. 348. *b.* engages, is defeated and slain, with the circumstances of his death and burial, ii. 357. *a.* &c.

Abyssenes, their custom at meals, i. 136. *a.*

Accursed, an account of the accursed thing stolen by Achan, ii. 70. *b.*

Achar, his trial and punishment for stealing the accursed thing, ii. 73. *a.* &c. called the *troubler of Israel*, ii. 539. *b.*

Adam, why restrained from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, i. 13. *a.* the reason of the name, i. 13. *b.* joined to Eve in marriage by God, i. 14. *b.* in what manner tempted to eat the forbidden fruit, i. 17. *a.* not cursed after the fall, and why, i. 18. *a.* not created in Paradise, i. 20. *b.* his employment was chiefly husbandry, i. 21. *b.* the number of his sons and daughters, i. 25. *a.*

Adam, the common name to both sexes, i. 27. *b.*

Adiabene, another name for the country of Assyria, i. 50. *b.*

Adjuration, the judges of the Jews had power to use adjurations, i. 356. *a.*

Adoni-besek, a barbarous king, his punishment, ii. 130. *b.*

Adonijah, the son of David, attempts to make himself king, ii. 381. *b.* his party forsake him, he flies to the altar for refuge, and is forgiven by Solomon, ii. 385. *a.* &c. he asks for Abishag the Shunammite to be his wife, ii. 387. *b.* for which he is slain, ii. 388. *a.*

Adonis, the fable of Adonis supposed to be taken from the story of Moses, i. 163. *b.*

Adoram, the collector of Rehoboam's tribute, stoned, ii. 429. *b.*

Adrammelech, a pagan deity, ii. 510. *a.*

Adrumetum, why so called, i. 96. *b.*

Adullam, a city, an account of it, i. 122. *a.*

Adulterer, the punishment of an adulterer and adulteress, i. 443. *b.*

Adultery, forbidden by the law of Moses, i. 250. *a.* punished among the Jews by strangling, i. 443. *b.* the punishment of it by the laws of Solon and Draco, i. 677. *a.*

Æolia, from whence it had its name, i. 43. *a.*

Æthiopia, one in Asia, another in Africa, i. 12. *b.* not peopled as is commonly supposed by the posterity of Cush, i. 44. *b.*

Æthiopians, from whom descended, i. 47. *b.*

Afflict, the meaning of the expression *to afflict the soul*, i. 417. *b.*

Africa, inhabited by the posterity of Ham, i. 50. *a.* from whence its name is derived, i. 96. *b.*

Agag, the name of all the kings of the Amalekites, i. 606. *b.* one of them cut to pieces by Samuel, ii. 269. *a.*

Agate, an agate, one of the stones set in the breast-plate, i. 293. *b.*

Age, old age to be honoured, i. 440. *a.*

Aged men most proper to receive Divine revelations, i. 185. *b.*

Ahab, his wicked reign, ii. 442. *b.* he sends messengers into all countries to seek Elijah, ii. 446. *a.* &c. submits to Ben-hadad,

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king of Syria, ii. 453. *a.* terrifies the Syrians, and they fly, ii. 454. *a.* makes a peace with Ben-hadad, for which he is threatened by a prophet, ii. 455. *b.* &c. he takes possession of Naboth's vineyard, ii. 458. *b.* repents, ii. 459. *a.* is slain, and the dogs lick his blood, ii. 462. *a.* what is meant by the *house of Ahab*, ii. 629. *a.* an account of his wickedness, ii. 629. *b.*

Ahasuerus, king of Persia, different opinions concerning him, ii. 716. *b.* he makes a feast for his nobles, ii. 717. *a.* signs a decree against the Jews, ii. 724. *a.* he makes it ineffectual, ii. 731. *b.*

Ahaz, king of Judah, his character, ii. 504. *b.* calls in the king of Assyria to help him, against the Syrians, ii. 505. *a.* he makes and offers upon a new altar, ii. 505. *b.* his death, ii. 506. *b.*

Ahaziah, a king of Israel, ii. 466. *b.* his wicked reign, ii. 463. *a.* consults Baal-zebub about his health, *ibid.* his death, ii. 464. *b.*

Ahaziah, a king of Judah, ii. 485. *a.* is slain, ii. 488. *a.*

Ahijah, the prophet, foretells that Jeroboam should seduce ten tribes from the house of David, ii. 426. *a.* and afterwards predicts the destruction of his family, ii. 435. *b.* he is supposed to have written some part of the life of Solomon, ii. 608. *b.*

Ahimelech, the high-priest, slain for his kindness to David, ii. 287. *a.*

Ahithophel conspires with Absalom against David, ii. 352. *b.* his counsel and his character, ii. 353. *a.* proposes to pursue after David, *ibid.* his counsel is refused, and he hangs himself, ii. 355. *b.*

Aholiab, a curious artificer, i. 314. *a.*

Ai, a city taken by Joshua, ii. 76. *b.*

Air, when created, i. 3. *b.* a custom in the east to lie in the open air, i. 76. *a.*

Alexander, why called by Daniel the *king of Javan*, i. 42. *b.*

Almighty, the first mention of the word in Scripture, i. 70. *a.*

Almug-trees, what they were, ii. 420. *b.*

Altar, the first account of building an altar, i. 37. *b.*

Altars, sometimes built for memorial, i. 237. *a.* altars to God were made of earth, i. 251. *b.* altars of stone, in what manner they were made, i. 252. *a.* the fashion of the Egyptian altars, i. 253. *a.* some account of the altar built by Solomon, *ibid.* the altar in some sense a place of refuge, i. 255. *b.* the altar belonging to the tabernacle, and its utensils described, i. 286. *b.* the form of purifying the altar, i. 305. *b.* the altar of incense described, i. 307. *a.* the altar upon Mount Ebal described, with its use, i. 769. *b.* the golden altar in the temple, ii. 401. *b.* altars erected by Solomon, during the solemnity of the dedication of the temple, ii. 414. *a.* a new altar made by king Ahaz, ii. 505. *b.* altars of brass made by Solomon, ii. 599. *b.* an altar built upon Mount Zion, after the captivity, ii. 668. *a.*

Amalek, the ground of their enmity against the Israelites, i. 236. *a.* the reason why they were utterly destroyed, i. 237. *a.* overcome by Saul, ii. 266. *b.*

Amalekite, the story of the Amalekite that brought the news to David of Saul's death, ii. 307. *a.* &c.

Amalekites, from whom descended, i. 117. *b.* devoted to destruction, i. 118. *a.* the reason of their utter extirmination, i. 764. *a.*

Amanitæ, a people, from whom descended, i. 91. *b.*

Amasa, the general of Absalom's forces courted by David, ii. 361. *a.* is slain by Joab, ii. 365. *a.*

Amaziah, king of Judah, his character, ii. 499. *a.* &c. is taken prisoner, ii. 500. *b.* is slain, ii. 501. *a.*

Amen, the different significations of the word, i. 771. *a.* the antiquity of saying *Amen* at the conclusion of prayers, ii. 571. *a.*

Amenophis, said to be the third of the Egyptian kings after the eighteenth dynasty, i. 159. *b.*

America, in what manner peopled, i. 53. *b.*

Amersis, said to be the fifth Egyptian king after the eighteenth dynasty, i. 159. *b.*

Amethyst, one of the stones in the breast-plate, i. 293. *b.*

Ammonite, an Ammonite never to enter into the congregation of the Lord, i. 749. *b.* the gods of the Ammonites, ii. 173. *a.*

Amnon, the son of David, his vile usage of his sister Tamar, and his death, ii. 339. *b.* &c.

Amon, a king of Judah, his character and death, ii. 522. *b.* &c.

Amorites, a people, from whom descended, i. 49. *a.* a particular account of them, i. 68. *a.* the general name of the seven nations of Canaan, i. 146. *b.* the five kings of the Amorites destroyed, ii. 84. *b.* &c.

Amos, said to be the first of the Egyptian kings after the eighteenth dynasty, i. 159. *b.*

Amraphel, king of Shinar, an account of him, i. 62. *b.*

Anah, the first inventor of the procreation of mules, a particular account of him, i. 118. *b.*

Anak, the children of Anak were men of great bulk and valour, i. 544. *b.* a particular account of them, i. 687. *b.*

Anakims, a gigantic people, from whom descended, i. 49. *a.*

Anammelech, a pagan deity, ii. 510. *a.*

Angels, why not mentioned in the history of the creation, i. 5. *b.* always made a part of the Schechinah, i. 15. *b.* called Elohim frequently in Scripture, i. 16. *b.* can turn themselves into all shapes, i. 21. *a.* the ark of Noah supposed to be steered by angels, i. 32. *a.* angels are supposed to conduct all sorts of creatures into the ark, i. 33. *b.* an account of the first appearance of an angel, i. 69. *a.* particular observations upon the appearance of angels, i. 73. *a.* the manner how the angels conducted Lot and his family out of Sodom, i. 77. *a.* employed sometimes in punishing mankind, i. 77. *b.* God speaks by the ministry of angels, i. 84. *b.* is supposed to be especially present where the angels keep their station, i. 101. *a.* an account of the host of angels that appeared to Jacob, i. 110. *a.* an angel wrestled with him, and why, i. 111. *a.* angels supposed to change their names, i. 111. *b.* the praying to angels no way supported by the practice of Jacob, i. 145. *b.* an account of the destroying angel in Egypt, i. 208. *b.* and of the angel that was to conduct the Israelites into Canaan, i. 269. *b.* an angel spoken to Balaam, i. 596. *b.* angels are sometimes called saints, ii. 42. *a.* an account of the angel that appeared at Bochim to the Israelites, ii. 134. *a.* &c. the story of the angel that appeared to Manoah, ii. 184. *b.* the hand of the angel stayed that was going to destroy Jerusalem, ii. 379. *b.*

Anoint, the form of anointing the high-priest, i. 301. *a.*

Anointed, the anointed of war, an officer among the Jews, i. 312. *a.*

Anointing, what is meant by the *anointing of the Lord*, i. 379. *a.* the form of anointing the kings of Israel, ii. 251. *a.* &c. the reason of anointing with holy oil, ii. 384. *b.*

Antipathy between mankind and the serpent-kind, discovered in the sensitive and natural faculties of both, i. 18. *b.*

Apes brought to king Solomon by his navy, ii. 421. *b.*

Apis, or pied bull among the Egyptians, how procured, i. 105. *b.*

Apis, an Egyptian god described, i. 317. *a.* brought in solemn pomp to Memphis, i. 320. *b.*

Arabes, Scenitæ, a people, an account of them, i. 93. *b.*

Arabia, famous for the onyx and sardonyx, i. 12. *a.* by whom peopled, i. 44. *b.*

Arabia Felix, by whom inhabited, i. 51. *b.* the country of Arabia, why called the *region of death*, i. 52. *a.*

Arabians, their priests offered sacrifices naked, i. 289. *b.*

Ararat, the mountains of Ararat, supposed by some to be the Gordiæan mountains, i. 32. *b.* by others to be the highest part of the mountain of Taurus, i. 36. *a.*

Araunah, an altar erected in his thrashing-floor purchased by David, ii. 380. *b.*

Arba, a city, why so called, i. 117. *b.*

Archelaus, an account of his dream, i. 128. *b.*

Arithmetic, taught by Abraham, i. 61. *a.*

Ark, the ark of Noah, a particular description of it, 32. *a.* &c. it was not a hundred years in building, i. 33. *a.* approved to be sufficiently large to contain all that is said to be stowed in it, *ibid.* the door of the ark how fastened, i. 34. *b.* the ark supposed not to be moved far from the place where it was built, i. 35. *b.* relics of it to be seen upon the Gordiæan mountains, i. 36. *a.* it rested upon the mountains of Ararat, *ibid.*

Ark, an account of the ark of bulrushes wherein Moses was laid, i. 164. *a.*

Ark of the covenant, its several names and the shape and dimensions of it, i. 277. *b.* &c. is said to be God's footstool, i. 280. *a.* the Divine residence over the ark, i. 338. *b.* the manner of carrying it when the tabernacle moved, i. 502. *a.* it was carried into the field when they went to fight, i. 632. *a.* an ark said to be made by Moses, i. 689. *b.* the ark of the covenant carried in the front of the army, ii. 59. *a.* is taken by the Philistines, ii. 237. *b.* is brought into the house of Dagon, ii. 238. *b.* sent away by the Philistines, and brought to Kirjath-jearim, ii. 243. *b.* the ark of God sometimes signifies a little coffer wherein the ephod was kept, ii. 263. *b.* the ark of God removed from the house of Abinadab, ii. 321. *b.* brought into the temple by Solomon, ii. 408. *a.* an account of what was in the ark, ii. 409. *a.*

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Arkites, a people from whom descended, i. 49. *a.*
Arm, what is meant by a stretched-out arm, i. 673. *b.*
Arnon, a river, an account of its course, i. 589. *b.*
Artaxerxes, called also Ahasuerus, ii. 670. *a.* a letter written to him to prevent the rebuilding of Jerusalem, ii. 670. *b.* he writes a letter to Ezra, ii. 677. *b.*
Arts, first cultivated in the east, i. 54. *b.*
Arvadites, a people from whom descended, i. 49. *b.*
Ashes of the altar received on the east part of the tabernacle, i. 354. *a.* poured out by the priests in their common habit, i. 362. *a.* the ashes of the red heifer how managed, i. 578. *a.*
Ashima, a pagan deity, ii. 510. *a.*
Ashkenaz, the countries peopled by his posterity, i. 42. *b.*
Ashtaroth, a city, why so called, i. 63. *a.*
Ashtaroth, the name of several pagan goddesses, ii. 136. *a.*
Ashtoreth, the deity of the Zidonians, ii. 423. *b.*
Asa, a king of Judah, his descent and character, ii. 438. *b.* he calls in the king of Syria to assist him, ii. 439. *b.* his death, *ibid.* he makes a covenant, destroyed his mother's idols, &c. ii. 615. *b.* in his sickness he sought not to the Lord, but to his physicians, ii. 618. *a.* the magnificence of his funeral, *ibid.*
Asahel, killed by Abner, ii. 311. *b.*
Asher, an account of the tribe, i. 152. *b.* the numbering of the Israelites descended from him, i. 617. *a.* the blessing of Moses upon that tribe, ii. 48. *a.* the lot of that tribe in the land of Canaan, ii. 111. *a.*
Ashura, a fast among the Mahometans, i. 417. *a.*
Asphaltites, a lake, an account of it, i. 77. *b.*
Asphaltos, a kind of pitch described, i. 54. *b.*
Ass, to feed asses an employment for the sons of princes, i. 119. *a.* the noblest persons formerly rode upon asses, i. 176. *b.* the firstling of an ass to be redeemed, or to be slain, i. 215. *a.* the original of the notion that the Jews worshipped an ass's head, i. 215. *b.* an ass going astray to be brought back, or lying under his burden to be relieved, i. 265. *b.* great persons anciently rode upon asses, i. 597. *b.* Balaam reproved by his ass, i. 598. *a.* &c. the price of an ass's head in the siege of Samaria, ii. 479. *b.*
Assembly, what is meant by a solemn assembly, i. 462. *a.*
Assur, afflicted by Alexander the Great according to the prediction of Abraham, i. 610. *a.*
Assyria, the ancient extent of that kingdom, i. 11. *b.* called the land of Nimrod, i. 46. *b.* by whom peopled and named, i. 50. *b.*
Astrology, taught by Abraham, i. 61. *a.*
Atad, what is meant by the *threshing-floor of Atad*, i. 156. *b.*
Atargatis, a goddess among the heathens, i. 671. *a.*
Athaliah murders the seed-royal, and usurps the throne, ii. 492. *a.* she is slain, ii. 494. *b.*
Attribute, a particular account of the Divine attributes, i. 327. *b.* &c. some of them farther explained, i. 549. *b.*
Avenger, the duty of the aveuger of blood in the case of murder, i. 649. *b.* the case between the avenger of blood and the manslayer stated, i. 650. *a.*
Avims, a people, why so called, i. 664. *a.*
Aunt, the law of marrying an aunt among Jews and heathens, i. 426. *b.*
Aurelian, an instance of his valour, ii. 191. *b.*
Axe, the miracle of Elisha upon the axe-head, ii. 477. *b.*
Azariah, the son of Oded, his advice to king Asa, ii. 615. *a.*
Azariah, a king of Judah, ii. 501. *a.* his character, ii. 502. *a.* he dies, *ibid.*

BAAL, a god worshipped by the Moabites, i. 600. *a.* the first king of Babel after Nimrod, was the first that was deified after his death, ii. 35. *a.* the manner of worship paid to Baal by his priests, ii. 447. *b.* his priests and temple destroyed by Jehu, ii. 491. *a.* &c.
Baal-berith, a heathen deity, ii. 165. *b.*
Baalim, the general name for all the demons of the heathen, ii. 186. *a.*
Baal-Peor, the manner of worshipping that idol, i. 253. *a.* a god of the Moabites worshipped by the Israelites, i. 611. a.
Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, an account of that deity, ii. 463. *a.*
Baalzephon, the name of a place and the signification of the word, i. 218. *a.*
Baasha, a king of Israel, an account of him, ii. 439. *a.* his conspiracy, ii. 440. *a.* his death, ii. 440. *b.*
Babel, by whom built, i. 46. *b.* the occasion of the name, i. 56. *a.*
Babylon, the walls of it with what made, i. 54. *b.* famous for divers-coloured garments, ii. 151. *b.*
Bacchus, the reason of the name, supposed to be the same with Nimrod, i. 46. *b.* rites observed at the feasts of Bacchus, i. 205. *b.* the Jews charged with celebrating two feasts in honour of Bacchus, i. 463. *a.*
Back, the back parts of God discovered to Moses, i. 326. *b.*
Badgers' skins belonging to the tabernacle, i. 284. *b.*
Bætilia, or consecrated stones, from whence came the custom, i. 101. *b.*
Baker, the history of Pharaoh's baker, i. 126. *b.*
Balak, a king of Moab, his correspondence with Balaam, i. 594. *b.* &c.
Balaam, a famous soothsayer, an account of his correspondence with Balak, i. 594. *b.* he was a prophet, he blessed and cursed by prayer to God, i. 595. *a.* performed the office of a priest, i. 600. *b.* he is slain, i. 632. *b.*
Balm, originally brought out of Arabia Felix, i. 121. *a.*
Baptism, from what pattern it was originally derived, i. 244. *a.*
Barak defeats Sisera and his army, ii. 145. *a.*
Barley, drink made of barley in Egypt, i. 136. *a.*
Barrenness, a great affliction among the Jews, i. 103. *b.*
Barzillai the Gileadite, his fidelity, and his present to king David, ii. 356. *a.* he meets the king after his victory over Absalom, ii. 363. *a.*
Basket, the first-fruits to be offered in a basket, i. 764. *b.*
Bastard, the law of Moses concerning bastards, i. 749. *a.* &c.
Bat, an unclean bird, i. 385. *b.*
Bathing, places upon the Nile for the royal family of Egypt, i. 164. *b.*
Bath-sheba sent for by David and complies, ii. 333. *a.* her speech to David upon the conspiracy of Adonijah, ii. 382. *b.*
Battlements ordered upon the roofs of their houses, i. 744. *b.*
Bdellium, the derivation of the word, and the meaning of it, i. 12. *a.*
Beard, the corners of the beard not to be marred, i. 437. *b.*
Beasts of the earth, what the expression signifies, i. 6. *b.* beasts and birds how brought to Adam to be named, i. 13. *b.* beasts where bestowed in the ark, i. 32. *b.* of unclean beasts two of every sort preserved in the ark, i. 33. *a.* the distinction of clean and unclean beasts upon what founded, i. 33. *b.* clean and unclean beasts before the law, i. 66. *b.* the damage occasioned by beasts eating another man's grass or corn, i. 260. *a.* the law concerning beasts delivered to another to keep, i. 261. *a.* the lying with a beast punished with death, i. 262. *b.* the reasons for the distinctions of beasts into clean and unclean, i. 381. *a.* the beast a man has lain with to be put to death, i. 444. *b.* the age of beasts to be offered for sacrifices among Jews and heathens, i. 455. *b.* countries and people sometimes destroyed by wild beasts, i. 480. *a.* the case of a beast clean or unclean that is vowed to a Divine use, i. 485. *b.* said to have spoken among the heathens, i. 598. *b.* that died of themselves how to be disposed of, i. 707. *a.* charity to beasts gone astray, or fallen down under their burdens, i. 743. *a.* &c.
Bedstead, the bedstead of Og king of Bashan, i. 666. *a.*
Beer-sheba, the reason of the name, i. 82. *b.* its situation, i. 139. *a.* the reason of the saying *from Dan to Beer-sheba*, ii. 109. *a.*
Bees, a swarm of bees in the carcass of a lion, ii. 187. *a.*
Beeves, the chief of all burnt-offerings, i. 343. *a.*
Bekah, a weight among the Hebrews, i. 337. *a.*
Bell, the bells upon the robe of the high-priest described, i. 297. *b.*
Belly, creatures that go upon the belly not to be eaten, i. 388. *b.*
Belus, the same with Nimrod, i. 46. *b.* the temple of Belus with what made, i. 55. *a.* where situated, *ibid.*
Benaiah made general in the room of Joab, ii. 389. *b.*
Ben-ammi, the signification of the word, i. 79. *a.*
Ben-hadad, king of Syria, invades the kingdom of Israel, ii. 439. *b.* besieges Samaria, ii. 452. *b.* is routed, ii. 454. *a.* is killed in his bed, ii. 484. *a.*
Biles, the plague of biles among the Egyptians, i. 195. *b.*
Blemish, the blemishes that made a sacrifice unfit for the altar, i. 204. *a.* sacrifices to be offered without blemish, i. 343. *a.* the priest to be without blemish, i. 450. *a.* the twelve blemishes that made a beast unfit for sacrifice, i. 454. *a.*
Bird, birds where bestowed in the ark, i. 32. *b.* the sacrifice of birds the most difficult work in the sanctuary, i. 346. *a.* in taking a bird's nest, the dam not to be taken with the young, i. 744. *a.*

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Bitter, the meaning of the word when used by the Hebrews, i. 161. *b.* the cure of the bitter waters in the wilderness, i. 227. *a.*
Blasphemy, the punishment of it by stoning, i. 467. *a.*
Benjamin, the reason of his name, and an account of his posterity, i. 116. *b.* the warlike temper of the tribe of Benjamin, i. 154. *a.* the numbering of the Israelites descended from him, i. 617. *a.* the lot of the tribe of Benjamin in the land of Canaan, ii. 107. *a.* the barbarity of some of the tribe of Benjamin to a Levite's wife, ii. 205. *b.* they were excellent slingers, ii. 208. *a.* and overcome the Israelites in two engagements, ii. 208. *b.* &c. but were routed in the third, ii. 210. *b.* the remainder seize upon the daughters of Shiloh for wives, ii. 213. *a.* &c.
Ben-oni, the name of Benjamin, with the reason, i. 116. *b.*
Beryl, one of the stones in the breast-plate, i. 293. *b.*
Beth-el, the reason of the name, i. 101. *a.* called the *mountain of Israel*, ii. 89. *a.* one of Jeroboam's calves set up there, ii. 431. *a.*
Beth-lehem, water fetched for David out of the well of Beth-lehem, ii. 375. *b.*
Beth-shemesh, inhabitants of the place destroyed for looking into the ark of God, ii. 242. *b.*
Bezaleel, a curious artificer, i. 313. *b.*
Blessing, why the first blessing was bestowed upon fishes and fowls, i. 6. *b.* a solemn blessing given when the spouse was carried to her husband, i. 90. *b.* the blessing of great men upon their children understood to be the settling of their inheritance, i. 97. *b.* an account of the several blessings bestowed upon Jacob, 116. *b.* the solemnity of pronouncing a blessing among the Jews, i. 375. *a.* the form and manner of a public blessing, i. 516. *b.* the particular blessing promised to the Israelites upon their obedience, ii. 1. *a.* the blessing Moses gave the Israelites before his death, ii. 41. *a.* blessing of the people ordained by a Divine command, ii. 647. *a.*
Blind, a stumbling-block not to be set before the blind, i. 432. *a.* a blind man to be denied the priesthood, i. 450. *a.*
Blindness, an account of the blindness that fell upon the Sodomites, i. 76. *b.*
Blood of beasts not to be eaten, how to be understood, i. 38. *b.* the shedding of man's blood how punished, i. 39. *a.* covenants anciently made sacred by shedding of blood, i. 71. *a.* the waters of the Nile turned into blood for what reason, i. 188. *a.* the blood of paschal lambs sprinkled upon the door-posts of the Hebrew houses, i. 205. *a.* the blood of sacrifices poured into a trench at the bottom of the altar, i. 302. *a.* the blood of the sacrifice received by the priest, i. 344. *a.* blood not to be eaten, and the reason of it, i. 351. *b.* that was spilt to be washed out of the garment of the sacrificer, i. 364. *b.* the punishment for eating blood, i. 368. *b.* the manner of sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice upon the day of expiation, i. 412. *b.* blood in what sense forbidden to be eaten, i. 422. *a.* of the sacrifices understood as an atonement for sin, i. 422. *b.* the blood of beasts or birds killed for any use to be covered with dust, i. 423. *a.* nothing to be eaten with the blood, i. 435. *b.* the meaning of the expression, *his blood shall be upon him*, i. 256. *a.* and 443. *b.* and of this *between blood and blood*, i. 717. *a.*
Boaz, his kindness to Ruth the Moabitess, ii. 218. *b.* engages to perform the part of a near kinsman to her, ii. 220. *b.* redeems her land and marries her, ii. 223. *a.*
Body, the care to be taken of the dead bodies of good men, i. 155. *b.* the ceremonies appointed by the law of Moses upon the finding of a dead body, i. 736. *b.* &c. the body of a person hanged not to remain upon the tree all night, i. 742. *b.*
Bondage, the delivery of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage gave God a title to their obedience, i. 246. *b.*
Bondmen, Israelites not to be sold as bondmen, i. 475. *b.*
Bone, not a bone of the paschal lamb to be broken, i. 412. *b.*
Bonnet, worn by Aaron in the form of a tiara, worn by kings, i. 243. *a.*
Book of the covenant, an account of it, i. 273. *b.* law laid out in the side of the ark, ii. 29. *b.*
Booths, the reason of the Israelites dwelling in booths at the feast of tabernacles, i. 268. *b.* this matter farther explained, i. 464. *a.* the festival of dwelling in booths celebrated by Nehemiah, ii. 702. *a.*
Borrow, in what sense the Hebrew women borrowed of the Egyptians jewels, &c. i. 173. *a.* a particular account of that matter, i. 202. *a.*
Boteh of Egypt, an account of it, i. 185. *b.*
Boughs of trees used at the feast of tabernacles, i. 463. *b.*
Bounds of the country possessed by the Israelites laid out, i. 271. *a.*
Bowing, a token of civil respect among the eastern nations, i. 73. *b.* a testimony of honour, i. 112. *a.* Jacob's bowing himself upon the bed's-head explained, i. 144. *a.* bowing, a degree of honour not to be paid to an image, i. 247. *a.*
Bowl, bowls belonging to the table of shew-bread, i. 281. *a.*
Boy, a strange story of a boy in Aquitain, i. 140. *a.*
Brachmans, an account of their law, i. 315. *b.*
Bread and wine include all sort of provision, i. 65. *a.* the paschal lamb to be eaten with unleavened bread, i. 205. *a.* an account of the festival of unleavened bread, i. 207. *a.* the last day of unleavened bread to be kept holy, i. 223. *a.* bread rained from heaven, i. 228. *b.* what is meant by the *bread of God*, i. 447. *b.*
Breast-plate, a garment of the high-priest's described, i. 292. *b.* why it is called the breast-plate of judgment, i. 295. *a.* to be worn by the high-priest upon his heart, i. 395. *b.*
Breeches, for what reason they were worn by the priests, i. 253. *b.* particular account of them, i. 299. *b.* &c.
Brick, the walls of Babylon made with it, i. 54. *b.* the Hebrews employed in making brick, i. 162. *a.* an account of the quality of bricks, i. 179. *b.*
Brick-kiln, the meaning of passing through the brick-kilns, ii. 339. *b.*
Bride, the bride anciently brought to her husband veiled, i. 102. *b.*
Bridegroom, who is meant by the *friend of the bridegroom*, ii. 189. *a.*
Brightness, an unusual brightness understood by the heathen to be a token of the appearance of some of their gods, ii. 41. *b.*
Brimstone and fire rained upon Sodom, i. 77. *b.*
Britons said to be the posterity of Gomer, i. 42. *a.*
Broken-footed, a man broken-footed or broken-handed denied the priesthood, i. 450. *b.*
Brother, a man marrying his brother's wife, the first child was accounted his brother's, all the rest his own, i. 122. *b.* a particular account of the law relating to a brother's wife, *ibid.* the ceremonies used at such a marriage, i. 123. *b.* what is sometimes meant by the word *brother* in the law of Moses, i. 715. *b.* the duty of a husband's brother explained, i. 761. *a.*
Bullock appointed for a sin-offering, the manner of killing him, i. 352. *b.* a young bullock was made an emblem of kingly power, ii. 46. *a.*
Burial, every family had originally separate places of burial, i. 87. *a.* not anciently in cities or temples, i. 87. *b.* the ancient places of burial, i. 378. *a.*
Burning, the punishment of adultery in ancient times, i. 124. *b.* the places appointed for the burning of holy things, i. 354. *a.* the manner of burning among the Israelites, i. 444. *a.*
Burnt-offering, whole burnt-offerings supposed to have been the first sacrifices, i. 22. *a.* were wholly to be consumed upon the altar, i. 239. *b.* a particular account of them among the Jews and heathens, i. 342. *b.* &c. burnt-offerings accepted from the gentiles, i. 455. *a.* before the law of Moses served for all purposes in Divine worship, i. 600. *b.* appointed upon the first day of every month, i. 625. *a.*
Bush, why the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, i. 169. *a.*
Butler, the history of Pharaoh's butler, i. 126. *b.*
Butter, an ancient food among the eastern nations, i. 74. *a.*
Buying, laws to be observed concerning buying and selling, i. 471. *b.* &c.

Cab, a small measure among the Jews, ii. 479. *b.*
Cabalists, their notion concerning God, i. 679. *a.*
Cadmonites, a people from whom descended, i. 68. *b.*
Cain, the nature of his sacrifice, i. 21. *b.* why his sacrifice was rejected, i. 22. *b.* for what reason he slew his brother, i. 23. *b.* the nature of his curse and punishment, i. 24. *a.* his miserable life was prolonged as a terror to murderers, i. 24. *b.* he turned idolater, *ibid.* no reason to believe that his wife was his sister, i. 25. *a.* the design of his building a city, i. 25. *b.* a very short account of the genealogy of his descendants, *ibid.*
Cainan, an account of him, i. 28. *b.*
Cakes, how baked in the eastern countries, i. 74. *a.*
Calamus, a spice, an account of it, i. 310. *b.*

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Caleb, appeased a mutiny among the people, i. 546. *b.* a proof of his sincerity and resolution, i. 550. *b.* his exploits against the sons of Anak, ii. 96. *a.* he is called the Kenezite, ii. 96. *b.* his address to Joshua, *ibid.* his proclamation at the head of his army, ii. 100. *a.*
Calf, a noble entertainment in the eastern countries, i. 74. *a.* a particular description of the golden calf, i. 317. *a.* is burnt and ground to powder, i. 321. *a.* the two golden calves set up by Jeroboam, ii. 431. *a.*
Cambyses, an account of his marrying his sister, i. 425. *b.*
Camel, camels of great use in the eastern countries, i. 89. *a.* their milk very delicious, i. 110. *b.* camel an unclean beast, i. 382. *a.* their hair called the wool of camels, i. 396. *a.*
Camelion, an unclean creature, i. 387. *a.*
Camp, the many sorts of camps among the Israelites, i. 416. *b.* the manner of forming the camps of the Israelites, i. 494. *b.* &c. there were three camps among the Israelites, i. 506. *a.* their camp was to be holy and free from uncleanness, i. 751. *a.*
Canaan, the son of Ham, first discovered the nakedness of Noah, i. 40. *a.* for which he is cursed by Noah, i. 40. *b.* his posterity destroyed or made slaves by the posterity of Shem, *ibid.* the father of the Canaanites, i. 44. *b.*
Canaan, a country, the bounds of it described, i. 50. *a.* originally belonging to the children of Shem, i. 62. *b.* and consequently to the seed of Abraham, i. 67. *b.* the land of Canaan demanded by the Egyptians, i. 210. *a.* the land of Canaan searched by the Hebrew spies, i. 544. *a.* the bounds of the land of Canaan, i. 644. *b.* described, and divided by lot, ii. 106. *b.*
Canaanites devoted by God to destruction, i. 49. *b.* *the Canaanite was then in the land*, the meaning of the expression, and the reason of it, i. 59. *b.* the meaning of the word Canaanite, i. 68. *b.* it was not unlawful for an Israelite to marry a Canaanite, i. 122. *a.* the places where they dwelt, i. 546. *b.* Canaanites said to fly into Africa before the face of Joshua, ii. 63. *a.* put under tribute, ii. 133. *a.*
Candlestick, the description of the candlestick that belonged to the tabernacle, i. 282. *a.* the ten candlesticks made by Solomon for the use of the temple, ii. 407. *b.*
Cappadocia, by whom peopled, i. 43. *a.*
Captain, the captains of the people tried public causes in the wilderness, i. 717. *b.* an account of the captain of the Lord's host that appeared unto Joshua, ii. 66. *b.* a list of David's captains, and the course of their attendance, ii. 586. *b.*
Captive, the case of a fair captive taken in war, i. 738. *b.*
Carbuncle, one of the stones set in the breast-plate, i. 293. *a.*
Carcass, the carcasses of unclean creatures not to be touched, i. 386. *b.*
Carmel, the signification of the word, ii. 517. *a.*
Casiphia, the name of a place, its situation, ii. 680. *a.*
Cassia, a spice, an account of it, i. 310. *b.*
Castration, four ways of castration, i. 454. *b.*
Cattle, what the word means, i. 6. *b.* the riches of the ancients consisted in cattle, i. 96. *b.* the contract between Jacob and Laban about their cattle explained, i. 104. *b.* the feeding of cattle a very ancient employment, i. 142. *b.* an account of the plague upon the cattle in Egypt, i. 194. *b.* cattle were to enjoy the benefit of the sabbatical rest, i. 249. *a.* the reason of offering cattle, i. 342. *a.* cattle were not to gender with a diverse kind, i. 434. *a.*
Cause, the manner of trying causes instituted by Moses, i. 241. *a.*
Causeway, a causeway made to go up to Solomon's altar, i. 253. *a.*
Cedar, a most fragrant wood, i. 606. *b.*
Censer, an account of the censers belonging to Korah and his company, i. 565. *b.*
Chains belonging to the ephod described, i. 294. *a.*
Chaldeans, a particular set of diviners, i. 58. *a.* from whom descended, i. 86. *b.*
Chaldees, a people from whom descended, i. 50. *b.*
Cham, none of his posterity ever subdued the offspring of Shem or Japheth, i. 41. *b.*
Chamber, the chambers of the temple described, ii. 400. *b.*
Chaos, a description of it, i. 2. *a.* how long it continued, *ibid.*
Chariots, the strength of Egypt consisted in chariots, i. 219. *a.* chariots of iron described, ii. 105. *a.* Elijah carried away in a chariot of fire, ii. 466. *a.* chariots of the sun, what, ii. 527. *b.*
Charity to the poor enjoined, i. 474. *b.*
Charmer, what is meant by a charmer in the law of Moses, i. 724. *b.*
Charran, the name of a city and river, where situated, and why so called, i. 58. *a.*
Chaulothæi, a people seated in Arabia Felix, from whom descended, i. 45. *a.*
Chebros, said to be the second of the Egyptian kings after the eighteenth dynasty, i. 159. *b.*
Chederlaomer king of Elam, an account of him, i. 62. *b.* but a petty prince, i. 63. *a.*
Chemosh, a god worshipped by the Moabites, i. 592. *b.*
Cherethites, the same with the Philistines, ii. 303. *a.*
Cherub, God is said to ride upon a cherub, ii. 371. *a.*
Cherubims, an account of them, i. 20. *b.* of those that belonged to the ark of the covenant, i. 279. *a.* in what manner God is said to sit between the cherubims, i. 280. *a.* the cherubims within the oracle in the temple described, ii. 402. *a.*
Child, every child born heir to his father's sins, i. 484. *a.*
Child-bearing, of the utmost danger to women, i. 19. *b.* the purification after it, i. 389. *b.*
Children of men, the meaning of the phrase in Scripture, i. 55. *b.* to be circumcised upon the eighth day, with the reason, i. 71. *b.* of slaves to be circumcised by their masters, i. 72. *a.* an instance of their affection to their parents, i. 91. *a.* brought into the temple by their parents at twelve years old, i. 209. *a.* what is meant sometimes by the *children of Israel*, i. 211. *a.* children suffer for their fathers' sins, i. 247. *b.* the manner of offering them to Moloch, i. 428. *a.* &c. offered in sacrifices by the heathen to their gods, i. 441. *b.* the Jews obliged to instruct their children in the principle of the unity of the Godhead, i. 679. *b.* the punishment of rebellious children among the Jews, i. 741. *a.*
China and Nova Guinea, supposed to have been formerly one continent, i. 53. *b.*
Chittim, what is meant by the coasts of Chittim, i. 609. *b.*
Chronicles, the name of two books of Scripture, by whom written, ii. 535. *a.*
Chuzestan, a country, why so called, i. 12. *a.*
Cimbri, said to be derived from Gomer, i. 42. *a.*
Cinnamon, a spice, an account of it, i. 310. *b.*
Circumcision, a token of the covenant made with Abraham, i. 70. *b.* a Divine sacrament, and a full account of its original, i. 71. *a.* to be executed upon the eighth day, and the reason, i. 71. *b.* most painful on the third day after the operation, i. 114. *b.* deferred by some people till the thirteenth year, i. 177. *b.* not forced upon servants, i. 212. *a.* a reason for deferring it till the eighth day, i. 390. *a.* the circumcision omitted by the Israelites in the wilderness, and renewed by Joshua, ii. 64. *b.*
City, an ancient custom for men to call the cities which they built by the names of their sons, i. 25. *b.* the number of the Levitical cities, i. 647. *b.* three cities of refuge on this side Jordan, i. 674. *a.* the trial and punishment of a city tempted to idolatry, i. 703. *b.* &c. the treatment shewed to the inhabitants by Jews and heathens, at the sacking of a city, i. 734. *b.* the cities built by king Solomon, ii. 416. *b.*
Clothes, the first clothes of mankind were made of the leaves of trees, i. 20. *a.* rending the clothes the highest degree of mourning, i. 121. *b.* washing the clothes generally signified the washing of the whole body, i. 244. *a.*
Cloud, the Israelites led by a cloud in the wilderness, i. 217. *a.* the reason why the poets feigned that their deities always appeared in a cloud, i. 217. *b.* the several uses of this cloud, i. 221. *a.* the Israelites wholly governed by its directions, i. 341. *a.* a particular account of it upon the day of expiation, i. 406. *b.* the cloud descended and filled the temple, ii. 409. *a.* a cloud rising out of the sea as big as a man's hand, ii. 449. *b.*
Cloven-footed, the meaning of the word, i. 382. *a.*
Coat, an idle conceit of the Jews concerning Adam's first coat, i. 20. *a.* an account of Joseph's coat of many colours, i. 120. *a.* the coat of fine linen worn by the high-priest described, i. 298. *b.*
Coats of arms, the occasion of them, i. 46. *b.*
Coffin, Joseph's body put into a coffin or chest, i. 158. *b.*
Colchi, a people, from whom descended, i. 48. *b.*
Commander, the proper qualifications of a commander, i. 175. *b.*
Commandment, upon what day the ten commandments were given from Mount Sinai, i. 246. *b.* the first commandment the great foundation of the law, *ibid.*
Conception, the sorrow of it to women, i. 19. *b.*
Concubine, originally a name of no ill repute, but a wife of a

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lower order, i. 86. *b.* the ceremonies in marrying a concubine, i. 92. *b.*
Coney, an unclean beast, i. 382. *b.*
Confession of sin always made over sin-offerings, i. 302. *a.* no sacrifice of any force without confession, i. 357. *a.* the form of confession over the head of the scape-goat, i. 413. *a.*
Confusion of languages, when it happened, i. 51. *b.* a particular account of it, i. 56. *a.*
Congregation, what is meant by the *whole congregation*, i. 354. *a.* the Ammonite and Moabite not to come into the congregation of God for ever, ii. 712. *b.*
Conscience, the power of it, i. 133. *b.*
Consecration, the form of consecrating the Hebrew priests, i. 302. *a.* &c. and of priests among the heathens, i. 303. *b.* consecration of the Jewish priests continued seven days, i. 304. *b.* a full account of the consecration of the tabernacle, i. 339. *b.* a full account of the consecration of Aaron and of his sons, and the time of their consecration, i. 370. *a.* &c.
Consulter, a consulter with familiar spirits, i. 725. *a.*
Convocation, *holy convocations*, what they were, i. 357. *a.*
Cormorant, an unclean bird, i. 385. *a.*
Corn, the common way of thrashing corn, ii. 153. *b.*
Corruption, in the Scripture language, sometimes signifies idolatry, i. 32. *a.*
Covenant, the design of the covenant made with Noah, i. 33. *a.* the ancient form of making covenants, i. 66. *b.* the form among the eastern nations, i. 71. *a.* covenants might be made between Jews and gentiles, i. 82. *b.* made by eating and drinking together, i. 97. *b.* the covenant made by God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, i. 170. *a.* the Israelites were to make no covenants with the people of the seven nations, i. 271. *b.*
Cover, the covers belonging to the table of shew-bread, i. 281. *a.*
Covet, the meaning of the commandment, *Thou shalt not covet*, &c. i. 250. *b.*
Country of Sodom, an account of it, i. 75. *a.*
Court, the court of the tabernacle described, i. 288. *a.*
Court, the supreme court in the chief city of the kingdom, i. 717. *b.* the court of the priests hallowed by king Solomon, ii. 414. *a.* the same court tried ecclesiastical and civil causes, ii. 622. *b.*
Courtier, a description of a vain courtier, i. 128. *a.*
Courtship, the manner of it in ancient times, i. 89. *a.*
Creation of the world explained, i. 2. *a.*
Creature, no creature supposed to have bred in the ark, i. 37. *b.* creatures not fit to be offered in sacrifice till the eighth day, i. 264. *b.*
Creeping things, what is meant by them, i. 6. *b.* where they were bestowed in Noah's ark, i. 32. *b.* the law forbidding them to be eaten, i. 387. *a.*
Crocodile, Moses's rod supposed to be turned into a crocodile, i. 173. *b.*
Crook-backed, a man crook-backed denied the priesthood, i. 450. *b.*
Crowns, anciently placed only upon the heads of the gods, i. 278. *a.* the plate upon the mitre of the high-priest called a crown, i. 297. *b.*
Cubit, an account of the geometrical and the common cubit, i. 32. *b.* the Jewish and Egyptian cubit, i. 278. *a.*
Cuckoo, an unclean bird, i. 384. *b.*
Cucumbers, commonly eaten by the Egyptians, i. 532. *a.*
Cud, what is meant by chewing the cud, i. 382. *a.*
Cup, divination by cups, i. 136. *b.*
Curse, the form of delivering the curses upon Mount Ebal, i. 769. *b.* the particular curses denounced against the Israelites for their disobedience, i. 771. *a.* &c.
Cursed, to be cursed, what it signifies, i. 18. *a.* what is meant by a cursed thing, i. 684. *b.*
Cursing, the punishment of cursing father or mother, i. 256. *b.* the law of the Jews and other nations concerning the cursing the chief magistrate, or his son, i. 264. *a.* the punishment of cursing God, i. 467. *a.* cursing and imprecations common among the heathens, i. 595. *a.*
Curtain, the curtains of the tabernacle described, i. 283. *a.*
Cut, to be cut off from his people, the meaning of the expression, i. 72. *a.* understood to be destroyed by God himself, i. 420. *a.*
Cuttings in the flesh for the dead forbidden, i. 437. *b.* used by the heathen in pangs of devotion, i. 705. *b.*
Cypress, the Romans set a cypress-tree before the door of a dead man's house, i. 395. *a.*
Cyrus, king of Persia, his name mentioned by Isaiah two hundred years before he was born, ii. 662. *b.* his proclamation for the building of the temple in Jerusalem, ii. 663. *a.* the number of the vessels he returned to the Jews, ii. 663. *b.* his decree for building the temple, ii. 673. *b.*

Dagon, an idol worshipped by the Philistines, i. 761. *a.* the form of this idol, ii. 195. *a.* falls down and is broken before the ark of God, ii. 239. *a.*
Daily sacrifice, morning and evening, prescribed, i. 306. *a.*
Dam, the dam and the young not to be killed for sacrifice in one day, i. 455. *b.*
Dan, one of Jeroboam's calves set up there, ii. 431. *a.*
Dan, the meaning of the name, and an account of his posterity, i. 152. *a.* the numbering of the families descended from him, i. 617. *a.* the lot of that tribe in the land of Canaan, ii. 113. *a.*
Dance, the solemn manner of the ancient dancing among the Israelites, i. 226. *a.*
Darius, king of Persia, confirms the decree of Cyrus about building the temple, ii. 670. *a.* settles a revenue to defray the expense of the fabric, and of the sacrifices, ii. 674. *b.*
Darkness, an account of the plague of darkness, i. 201. *a.* God resides in the thick darkness, i. 250. *b.*
Daughter, men had more daughters than sons before the flood, i. 30. *b.* daughter often signifies the same as niece, i. 117. *b.* the Hebrews sold their daughters for servants, and the law concerning it, i. 254. *b.* a man not to prostitute his daughter to be a whore, i. 438. *a.* a priest's daughter burnt for fornication, i. 444. *b.* the punishment confirmed by the law of Moses, i. 448. *a.* a priest's daughter in what capacity to eat of the holy things, i. 453. *a.* the case of Jephthah's daughter considered, ii. 179. *b.* she is lamented four days in a year, ii. 181. *a.* what is meant by the *daughter of Zion*, and the *daughter of Jerusalem*, ii. 516. *b.*
David, anointed by Samuel, ii. 270. *b.* removes the evil spirit from Saul by playing upon the harp, ii. 271. *b.* offers himself to Saul to engage Goliath, fights with him, and kills him, ii. 274. *a.* &c. is sent against the Philistines by Saul, ii. 278. *a.* he overcomes them, and marries the king's daughter, ii. 278. *b.* he eats the hallowed bread, ii. 284. *a.* he flies to the king of Gath, and pretends himself mad, ii. 284. *b.* he hides himself from the pursuit of Saul, ii. 289. *b.* he cuts off the skirt of Saul's garment, ii. 290. *a.* takes away the spear and cruse from Saul's bolster, ii. 263. *a.* his policy in imposing upon Achish king of Gath, ii. 298. *a.* he departs from Gath, ii. 302. *b.* he receives the news of Saul's death, ii. 307. *a.* an account of his sons, ii. 312. *b.* he acquits himself of the death of Abner, ii. 316. *b.* takes the strong hold of Zion, ii. 319. *a.* an account of his concubines, and his children, ii. 320. *a.* he brings the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, ii. 321. *a.* and removes it to Jerusalem with great solemnity, ii. 322. *b.* dances before the ark, and is scorned by his wife, ii. 323. *a.* proposes to build a house for the ark of God, with the answer given him against that design, ii. 324. *a.* an account of his victories and conquests, ii. 326. *b.* he is affronted by the king of Ammon in the person of his ambassadors, ii. 331. *a.* fights him, and overcomes him and his allies, ii. 332. *a.* falls in love with Bath-sheba, ii. 333. *a.* his behaviour upon the reproof of Nathan for the death of Uriah, ii. 337. *a.* upon the sickness and death of the child he had by Bath-sheba, ii. 337. *b.* he takes Rabbah, and punishes the inhabitants, ii. 339. *a.* is reconciled to Absalom, ii. 347. *a.* prepares to defend himself against the conspiracy of Absalom, ii. 349. *a.* re-engages with the rebels, but is tenderly concerned for the safety of his son, ii. 357. *a.* his lamentation for his son, ii. 359. *b.* his gratitude to Barzillai, ii. 363. *a.* his song after the victory over his enemies, ii. 370. *a.* &c. his last words that he is said to have spoken by inspiration, ii. 373. *b.* he is tempted to number the people, ii. 377. *a.* he repents of what he had done, ii. 378. *a.* he is punished by the death of seventy thousand of his men, ii. 379. *a.* his charge to Solomon before his death, ii. 385. *b.* &c. his death, burial, and the time of his reign, ii. 387. *a.* the number of men out of different tribes that came over to David, ii. 562. *a.* he was clothed in white when he brought up the ark, ii. 569. *a.* the preparations he made for building the temple, ii. 579. *a.* an account of the officers over his treasure, his tillage, vineyards, &c. ii. 588. *a.* reasons why he was not allowed to build the temple, ii. 589. *b.* he provides gold for the utensils of the temple, ii. 591. *a.* and silver, *ibid.*

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Day and night first set out, i. 3. *b.* the cool of the day, what is meant by it, i. 17. *a.* the day of the world in which Adam was cast out of Paradise, i. 21. *a.* the word *day* often signifies *years*, i. 83. *a.* the birth-days of princes celebrated with great festivities, i. 127. *b.* the first day of the week computed by the Samaritans, i. 459. *a.* fortunate days discovered by casting of lots, ii. 723. *b.*
Dead, the Israelites were forbidden to be defiled for the dead, i. 446. *b.* Uncleanness by touching the dead purified by the water of separation, i. 579. *a.*
Deaf, the deaf not to be cursed, i. 432. *a.*
Death, a sort of mercy to mankind, i. 20. *b.* the word *death* mentioned absolutely signifies strangling, i. 255. *a.*
Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, a particular account of her, i. 116. *a.*
Deborah, a prophetess, the meaning of her name, ii. 143. *a.* her office, *ibid.* her song after her victory over Sisera, ii. 146. *a.* she calls upon Barak to go in triumph, ii. 148. *a.*
Debts remitted to the poor, ii. 706. *b.*
Dedan, a city in Idumea, from whom named, i. 92. *a.*
Dedication of the altar, i. 518. *a.* the dedication of the temple by Solomon, ii. 408. *a.* &c. of the second temple, ii. 675. *b.* of the wall of the city of Jerusalem, ii. 711. *a.*
Deep, what is meant by the *great deep*, i. 34. *a.*
Defrauding forbidden, i. 431. *b.*
Deliverance, offerings made by women after their deliverance, i. 390. *b.*
Deluge, the causes of it assigned, i. 34. *a.* the possibility of it accounted for by Seneca, i. 34. *b.* a description of it by Philo, i. 35. *b.* the world no more to be destroyed by a deluge, i. 38. *a.*
Demon, a wicked demon at every one's elbow, i. 15. *a.* a demon in the shape of a serpent the beginner of evil, i. 21. *a.* a ceremony in the worshipping of demons, i. 422. *b.*
Desert, inaccessible deserts in Egypt, i. 166. *a.*
Devil, why he assumed the form of a serpent to tempt Eve, i. 15. *b.* to seduce her he counterfeited a glorious seraphim, *ibid.* the nature of his curse after the fall, i. 18. *a.* his tyranny abolished by the woman's seed, i. 18. *b.* the meaning of sacrificing unto devils, i. 421. *a.* more particularly explained, ii. 35. *a.*
Devote, the several ways of devoting, i. 487. *b.*
Devour, what is meant by being devoured by fire, i. 377. *a.*
Deuteronomy, one of the books of Scripture, why so called, i. 655. *a.*
Dew of heaven, understood as a Divine gift, i. 99. *a.*
Dial, the dial of Ahaz explained, ii. 519. *b.*
Diamond, one of the stones set in the breast-plate, i. 293. *b.*
Die, the meaning of the expression, *Thou shalt surely die*, i. 13. *b.*
Dinah, the signification of the name, i. 104. *a.* an account of her ravishment, i. 115. *a.*
Dionysius, the original of the name, i. 237. *a.*
Disease, an account of the diseases of Egypt, i. 195. *a.*
Dish, the dishes belonging to the ark of the covenant described, i. 280. *b.*
Dispersion, an account of the dispersion after the confusion of languages, i. 56. *a.* in what manner it was ordered, i. 57. *a.*
Divination, anciently used at meals, i. 136. *b.* used upon the water by the Egyptians, i. 187. *b.* the various kinds of divination, i. 436. *a.* farther explained, i. 734. *a.*
Divine, the Divine Majesty appeared to Adam in Paradise, i. 13. *a.*
Divorce, the case of divorce fully explained, i. 755. *b.*
Doeg, the chief herdsman of Saul, ii. 284. *b.* he informs against David, ii. 286. *a.* kills a great number of the priests, ii. 287. *a.*
Dog, sacred to Hecate, i. 381. *b.* the price of a dog not to be brought into the house of the Lord, i. 753. *a.*
Dominion, the first grant of dominion given to man, i. 7. *b.*
Door, sacrifices to be offered at the door of the tabernacle, i. 343. *b.* the doors of the temple described, ii. 402. *b.*
Dove, a dove sent out of the ark to make discoveries, i. 37. *a.* the reason of offering doves and turtles, i. 345. *b.* the price of doves' dung in Samaria, ii. 479. *b.*
Dragon, what is meant by the poison of dragons, ii. 37. *b.*
Drawing nigh to God, the meaning of the expression, i. 75. *a.*
Dream, God speaking to a person in a dream, a lower degree of Divine manifestation, i. 79. *b.* dreams as fully believed by the prophets as matters of sense, i. 85. *a.* frequent among the ancient patriarchs, i. 120. *a.* a particular account of Joseph's dreams, *ibid.* dreams sometimes very significant, i. 126. *b.* a particular interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, i. 129. *a.* the way of revelation by dreams, i. 541. *a.* God sometimes sends dreams into the minds of heathens, ii. 159. *b.*
Dreamer, the punishment of a dreamer of dreams tempting the people to idolatry, i. 702. *b.*
Drink, strong drink not to be drunk by the priests, i. 379. *a.*
Drinking, the rule of drinking in the Persian court, ii. 718. *a.*
Drink-offerings among the Jews and heathens, i. 554. *a.* of the most noble and generous wine, i. 624. *b.*
Drunkenness, the meaning of adding drunkenness to thirst, ii. 19. *b.*
Dungeon, an account of the dungeon where Joseph was, i. 126. *a.*
Dust, the original of man's body, i. 9. *b.* the food of the serpent, i. 18. *a.* a particular account of the plague of dust among the Egyptians, i. 195. *a.* dust upon the head an expression of grief among Jews and heathens, ii. 71. *b.*
Dwarf, a dwarf denied the priesthood, i. 450. *b.*
Dwelling, an account of the furniture proper for God's dwelling-house, i. 281. *b.* &c.

EAGLE, the properties ascribed to that bird, i. 242. *b.* sacred to Jupiter, i. 381. *b.* an unclean bird, i. 384. *a.* their tenderness to their young, ii. 33. *a.*
Ear, the ceremony of boring the ear through with an awl, i. 254. *b.* more fully explained, i. 710. *b.*
Ear-rings worn in the nature of amulets, i. 115. *b.* an account of the ear-rings that made the golden calf, i. 316. *b.*
Ears of corn might be plucked by travellers through the field, i. 755. *a.*
Earth, in what manner created, i. 4. *a.* the earth brought forth without any pains before the flood, i. 19. *b.* the diameter of it, i. 35. *a.* divided by the posterity of Japheth in a regular manner, i. 44. *a.* the order of its division, *ibid.* three parts of the earth at first possessed by the sons of Noah, i. 53. *b.* why God is said to be in the midst of the earth, i. 192. *b.* the earth opened and swallowed up Korah and his accomplices, i. 615. *b.*
Earthquakes how produced, i. 4. *b.*
Ease, the ceremonies observed in the easing of nature, i. 751. *b.*
East, eastern countries inhabited by Adam, i. 20. *b.* mankind were propagated from the east, i. 54. *b.* the eastern kings raised part of their revenue from cattle, i. 142. *b.*
East wind pernicious to the fruits of the earth, i. 128. *a.*
Ebal, the altar upon Mount Ebal described, i. 769. *b.*
Eber, the father of the Hebrew nation, i. 50. *a.*
Eber, afflicted by the Romans according to the prediction of Balaam, i. 610. *a.*
Edar, the tower of Edar, an account of it, i. 117. *a.*
Eden, the garden of Eden, why so called, and the place of its situation, i. 10. *a.*
Edom, a catalogue of the kings of Edom, i. 119. *a.* the monarchy of the Edomites elective, *ibid.* the king of Edom refused to give the Israelites a passage through his land, i. 584. *b.*
Edomite, an Edomite not to be abhorred by the Israelites, i. 750. *b.*
Eel, an eel worshipped by the Egyptians, i. 135. *b.*
Egypt, why called the land of Ham, i. 41. *b.* by whom peopled, i. 44. *b.* the higher and the lower, *ibid.* called the south country, i. 79. *a.* enriched by the overflowing of the Nile, i. 128. *a.* why the lower Egypt was called Delta, i. 138. *b.* in what manner the country of Egypt was divided, i. 141. *a.* the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt frequently inculcated, i. 674. *a.* the Israelites not to return into Egypt, i. 721. *a.* Egypt famous for horses in the days of Solomon, ii. 422. *b.*
Egyptian kingdom, the beginning of it, i. 57. *a.* the superstition of the Egyptians in eating, i. 135. *b.* noted for their grateful disposition, i. 160. *b.* they anciently offered living creatures to their gods, i. 193. *b.* they are spoiled by the Hebrews, i. 210. *a.* they pursue the Israelites into the Red Sea, i. 222. *a.* are overwhelmed in the midst of it, i. 222. *b.* their bodies devoured by beasts and birds of prey, i. 223. *a.* the Egyptian priests ministered in shoes, i. 290. *b.* and wore an image made of sapphire stone when they sat in judgment, i. 299. *b.* ceremonies of mourning among the Egyptians, i. 447. *a.* they were famous for worshipping of animals, i. 670. *b.* an Egyptian not to be abhorred by the Israelites, i. 750. *b.*
Ehud, one of the judges of Israel, ii. 139. *b.* stabs the king of Moab, ii. 140. *b.*
Ei, a word inscribed in the front of the temple of Delphos, i. 171. *b.*
Elah, a king of Israel, his death, ii. 441. *a.*
Elamites, from whom descended, an account of them, i. 50. *b.*
Elder, a name of dignity, i. 156. *a.* the various acceptations of the

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word *elders*, i. 172. *a.* elders are sometimes called *priests*, i. 245. *b.* an account of the seventy elders of Israel, i. 272. *a.* what is particularly meant by *thy elders*, i. 737. *a.* the solemn profession of the elders upon finding a dead body, i. 738. *a.* *elders* and *judges* how they differ, ii. 685. *b.*
Eleazar the son of Aaron, from whom descended a great family of priests, i. 378. *a.* is invested into the office of high-priest, by being clothed in the priestly robes, i. 585. *b.* his death and burial, ii. 128. *b.*
Eliakim a king of Judah, his name changed to Jehoiakim, ii. 530. *a.* serves the king of Babylon, ii. 530. *b.* his death, ii. 531. *a.*
Eliezer, Abraham's steward, an account of him, i. 66. *a.*
Eli, a high-priest and a judge, ii. 226. *b.* the wickedness of his sons, ii. 231. *a.* he reproves them gently, ii. 232. *a.* the priesthood to be removed from his family, ii. 233. *a.* brake his neck and died, ii. 238. *a.*
Elijah the Tishbite called the *prince of the prophets*, ii. 443. *b.* is fed by ravens, ii. 444. *a.* raises the widow's son to life, ii. 445. *a.* his controversy with the priests of Baal, ii. 447. *a.* he kills them, ii. 449. *a.* requests that he might die, ii. 450. *a.* the Lord passes by him, and calls to him from the Schechinah, ii. 450. *b.* &c. casts his mantle upon Elisha, ii. 452. *a.* foretells the destruction of Ahab's family, ii. 458. *b.* &c. he calls down fire upon the captains sent to take him, ii. 464. *a.* carried into heaven by a whirlwind, ii. 466. *a.*
Elim, the name of a place, with the meaning of the word, i. 227. *b.*
Elis, a country, why so called, i. 43. *a.*
Elisha, he follows Elijah, ii. 452. *b.* divides the waters of Jordan, ii. 466. *b.* cures the water of Jericho, ii. 467. *a.* cursed the children that mocked him, *ibid.* miraculously provides water for three armies, ii. 469. *b.* the story between him and the Shunammite, ii. 470. *b.* &c. he cures Naaman of his leprosy, ii. 475. *b.* smites the Syrians with blindness, ii. 478. *b.* raises the siege of Samaria, ii. 482. *a.* foretells that Hazael should be king of Syria, ii. 483. *b.* anoints Jehu to be king over Israel, ii. 486. *a.* he dies, is buried, a miracle wrought by touching his bones, ii. 498. *b.*
Elkanah, the father of Samuel, a most excellent husband, ii. 226. *a.*
Elohim, a name of God denoting judgment, i. 32. *a.* the most ancient name of God in Scripture, from whence derived, i. 246. *b.*
Elon, a judge of Israel, ii. 183. *a.*
Eloth, a sea-port in the possession of the Israelites, ii. 418. *a.*
Embalming the dead, the method and the expense of it among the Egyptians, i. 155. *a.*
Emerald, one of the stones set in the breast-plate, i. 293. *a.*
Emerods, the men of Ashdod smitten with emerods, ii. 239. *b.* images of them made with gold, ii. 241. *a.*
Emims, a people, an account of them, i. 63. *b.*
Enchantment forbidden, and the various kinds of it, i. 436. *a.* used variously by different nations, i. 605. *b.*
Endor, the whole transaction between Saul and the woman of Endor, ii. 299. *a.* &c.
Enemies might be devoted to death, i. 487. *b.*
Enoch, an account of his posterity, i. 27. *b.* supposed to be the same with Atlas of the Greeks, i. 29. *a.* the meaning of his walking with God, and of his translation, i. 29. *b.*
Enos, the reason of the name, i. 27. *a.*
Ensign, the ensigns in the camp of the Israelites, i. 494. *b.*
Ephah, a Jewish measure, an account of it, i. 234. *a.*
Ephod, the materials of it described, i. 291. *a.* an account of the stones set upon the shoulders of the ephod, i. 291. *b.* the ephod made by Gideon explained, ii. 164. *b.* the ephod of Micah, ii. 198. *a.* stolen away, ii. 201. *a.* Samuel ministered in an ephod, ii. 231. *b.* sometimes signifies an honorary garment worn by those who were no priests, ii. 322. *b.*
Ephraim, the numbering of the Israelites descended from him, i. 616. *b.*
Esau born and described, with the reason of his name, i. 95. *a.* why called Edom, i. 95. *b.* his meeting and reconciliation with his brother, i. 110. *a.* he kissed Jacob, and the reason of it, i. 112. *a.* continues in friendship with his brother, i. 117. *b.*
Essenes, a sect amongst the Jews charged with worshipping the sun, i. 671. *b.*
Estates that were sold to be returned on the year of jubilee, i. 470. *a.*
Esther, the name of one of the books of Scripture, by whom written, ii. 716. *a.*
Esther, very beautiful, and is put in the custody of the keeper of the women, ii. 720. *b.* is admitted to king Ahasuerus, ii. 721. *b.* told of the decree for the destruction of the Jews, ii. 725. *a.* resolves to apply to the king, ii. 726. *b.* she invites the king and Haman to a banquet, ii. 727. *a.* begs her life of the king, and the life of her people, ii. 729. *b.*
Ethiopians, their manner of life, i. 142. *a.*
Eve, the original of her soul, i. 10. *a.* not formed out of the ground, and why, i. 14. *a.* why she hearkened to the voice of the serpent, i. 15. *a.* she received her sentence before Adam, i. 19. *a.* the occasion of her name, i. 20. *b.* an account of the birth of her children, i. 25. *a.*
Evening and morning, the meaning of the words in the Hebrew language, i. 3. *b.* what is intended by the expression *in the evening*, i. 205. *a.* an account of the first evening sacrifice, i. 375. *b.*
Ever, *for ever*, the meaning of the expression, i. 61. *b.*
Everlasting, a word sometimes of a limited signification, i. 70. *b.*
Eunuch, eunuchs commonly attended upon the eastern queens, i. 122. *a.* an eunuch not to enter into the assembly of the elders, i. 748. *b.*
Euphrates, its rise, i. 11. *a.* an account of it, i. 12. *b.* frequently in Scripture called *the river*, i. 108. *a.* and the *great river*, i. 657. *a.*
Euxine Sea, why so called, i. 43. *a.*
Excommunication, the nature of it among Jews and Christians, ii. 679. *a.*
Execution upon offenders often done by great persons, ii. 163. *b.*
Exodus, one of the books of Scripture, why so called, i. 159. *a.*
Expiation, the business performed upon the great day of expiation, i. 308. *a.* ceremonies observed upon that day, i. 406. *b.* &c.
Eye, the eyes of Adam and Eve, in what manner opened, i. 17. *a.* the closing of the eyes the first ceremony performed to a dead person, i. 139. *b.* the meaning of the law, *eye for eye*, i. 257. *b.* a blemish in the eye hindered a man from being a priest, i. 450. *b.*
Ezra, the name of one of the books of Scripture, the author of it, ii. 662. *a.*
Ezra, his descent and character, ii. 676. *b.* a copy of the letter sent him by the king of Persia, ii. 677. *b.* he is invested with great power, and an unlimited commission, ii. 678. *a.* his confession and prayer, ii. 683. *a.* engages into a covenant that the people should put away their strange wives and children, ii. 684. *a.* he reads the law to the people, ii. 700. *a.* and explains it, ii. 701. *a.*

Fable, the fable of the trees choosing a king, ii. 167. *a.*
Face, the meaning of the expression, *covering the face of the earth*, i. 200. *a.* in what manner God speaks face to face, i. 324. *b.* the face of God not to be seen, i. 326. *a.* the skin of Moses's face shone, i. 332. *a.* falling upon the face a posture of prayer, i. 548. *a.*
Fall, the fall of our first parents did not happen upon the day they were made, i. 15. *a.*
False dealing forbidden, i. 431. *b.*
Familiar spirits, the ceremonies used in consulting them, and the manner of their delivering answers, i. 439. *a.*
Fasting, a necessary qualification for receiving Divine visions, i. 276. *a.*
Fat, the fat made use of in sacrifices among Jews and heathens, i. 302. *a.* the fat or suet of sacrifices to be burnt, i. 351. *a.* the punishment for eating the fat of burnt sacrifices, i. 368. *b.* to be burnt in all sin-offerings, i. 416. *a.*
Father, satisfaction anciently made to fathers for the abuse of their daughters, i. 114. *a.*
Fatherless, the fatherless not to be afflicted, i. 263. *a.*
Fear, what is sometimes meant by the *fear of the Lord*, i. 223. *a.* the *fear* of parents the same with *honour* in the fifth commandment, i. 430. *a.*
Feasts, what sort of people were to attend the Jewish feasts, i. 212. *a.* an account of the three great festivals among the Jews, i. 267. *b.* the feast of in-gathering, i. 268. *a.* rules for observing the three solemn feasts, *ibid.* rites observed at the sacrifical feasts among the gentiles, i. 319. *a.* the institution of feasts among the Jews, i. 456. *b.* the ceremonies belonging to the feast of unleavened bread, i. 457. *a.*
Feet, the washing of the feet performed by servants, i. 73. *b.* the meaning of the expression *from between his feet*, i. 149. *b.* flying creeping things with four feet not to be eaten nor touched, i. 386. *b.*

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Female, in what case a female was allowed for sacrifices, i. 355. *b.*
Ferret, an unclean creature, i. 387. *a.*
Field, altars erected by the heathens in the open fields, i. 420. *a.* the corners of the field not to be reaped, i. 431. *a.* the case of a field set apart by a vow to a Divine use, i. 486. *a.*
Fifth, the fifth part of the increase belonged by law to the Egyptian kings, i. 143. *b.*
Fig-leaves sewed together by Adam and Eve to make aprons, i. 17. *a.* a lump of figs applied to Hezekiah's bile, ii. 519. *b.*
Fin, fish with fins and scales permitted to be eaten, i. 383. *b.*
Finger, what is meant by the *finger of God*, i. 192. *a.*
Fire worshipped by the Assyrians, i. 46. *a.* an account of fire which did not burn, i. 169. *a.* the law when a fire breaks into another man's corn, i. 260. *b.* fire not to be kindled on the sabbath, i. 332. *b.* the fire upon the altar looked after by the priest, i. 344. *b.* and carefully supplied, i. 362. *a.* an account of a perpetual fire among the Jews and heathens, i. 362. *b.* the descent of fire from heaven upon the altar, i. 375. *b.* continued after by a constant supply of fuel, i. 376. *a.* the notion among the heathen that their sacrifices were consumed by celestial fire, *ibid.* what is meant by *strange fire*, i. 376. *b.* fire worshipped by the people of the east, i. 481. *b.* the Israelites consumed by the fire of the Lord, i. 531. *a.* the original of the custom of sacrificing children by fire, i. 724. *a.* fire descended and consumed the sacrifices offered by Solomon, ii. 604. *a.*
Firmament, the region of the air, why so called, i. 3. *b.* the lower and the higher, i. 4. *a.*
First-born, the privileges anciently belonging to the first-born. i. 147. *a.* Israel called God's first-born, and why, i. 177. *a.* the first-born of the Egyptians slain, i. 206. *b.* the first-born of man and beast sanctified, i. 213. *b.* the method of redeeming the first-born, i. 215. *b.* the Divine right to the first-born among the Israelites explained, i. 498. *a.* the manner of exchanging the first-born for the Levites, i. 500. *b.* the price of redeeming the first-born, i. 572. *a.*
Firstlings of beasts not to be set apart by a vow to Divine use, i. 487. *a.* not to be redemed if they were of a clean creature, i. 572. *b.*
First-fruits, a particular account of them, and the manner of their being offered by Jews and heathens, i. 349. *a.* &c. this ceremony more fully explained, i. 457. *b.* &c.
Fish, created out of the waters, i. 6. *b.* abstained from by the heathen, but permitted to the Jews under certain destructions, i. 383. *b.* a fish worshipped by the Syrians, i. 671. *a.*
Fish-gate in Jerusalem, ii. 691. *a.*
Flaying, the manner of flaying the sacrifices in the tabernacle and in the temple, i. 344. *b.*
Fleece, the miracle of Gideon's fleece, ii. 157. *a.*
Flesh, supposed not to be eaten before the flood, i. 8. *a.* man and woman said to be one flesh, and why, i. 14. *b.* the eating of flesh permitted after the flood, i. 38. *a.* the flesh of beasts torn not to be eaten, i. 264. *b.* the Israelites lust after flesh, i. 531. *b.*
Flies, an account of the plague of flies in Egypt, i. 192. *b.* some stories of them in other countries, i. 193. *a.*
Flock, flocks usually watered at noon, i. 102. *a.* what is meant by offerings of the flock, i. 342. *b.*
Flood, some account of Noah's flood to be found in the histories of all nations, i. 33. *a.* proved to be universal, and possible as it were from natural causes, i. 35. *a.*
Floor, the floor of the temple described, ii. 402. *b.*
Flour, the use of fine flour in sacrifices among Jews and heathens, i. 346. *b.* an ephah of flour accepted for a sin-offering, i. 358. *b.* a room for baking flour in the temple, i. 363. *b.*
Food first assigned to mankind, i. 8. *a.* assigned to beasts and fowl, i. 8. *b.* food suitable to every creature provided in the ark, i. 33. *b.* the different grants of food to mankind, i. 38. *a.*
Foot, the meaning of *covering the feet*, ii. 140. *b.* the neglecting of the feet a sign of sorrow, ii. 362. *a.*
Foreigners, who were accounted foreigners among the Jews, i. 212. *a.*
Foreskin of the flesh, an account of it, and the reason of circumcising that part, i. 71. *a.*
Forty, a number much observed in the administrations of Divine providence, i. 169. *a.*
Fountain, what is meant by the *fountains of the great deep*, i. 34. *a.*
Fowls, why created out of the waters, i. 6. *a.* the distinction of clean and unclean, i. 384. *a.*
Foxes let loose into the fields with firebrands between their tails, ii. 189. *b.*
France, by whom peopled, i. 43. *b.*
Frankincense used in sacrifices, i. 346. *b.* omitted in sin-offerings, i. 358. *a.* pure frankincense, i. 312. *b.*
Free-will-offerings, an account of them, i. 454. *a.*
Friendship, examples of strict friendship, ii. 276. *b.*
Fringes to be made upon the borders of their garments, with the reason, i. 558. *b.* this law more particularly explained, i. 745. *b.*
Frog, the plague of frogs in Egypt, an account of them, i. 189. *b.* the raining of them, i. 190. *a.*
Frontlets between the eyes, an account of them, i. 216. *a.*
Fruit, in what manner Eve was tempted by the forbidden fruit, i. 16. *b.* the fruits of the earth not so nutritive after the flood, i. 38. *b.* the law concerning first-fruits, i. 264. *a.* the different sorts of them, i. 269. *a.* the manner of offering the first-fruits among Jews and heathens, i. 349. *a.* &c. the fruit of trees planted not to be eaten till the fifth year, i. 435. *b.*
Fruitfulness of the Hebrew women in Egypt, i. 160. *a.*
Furnace, the meaning of the word frequently in Scripture, i. 68. *a.*

Gad, the reason of his name, and an account of his posterity, i. 152. *b.* the numbering of the families descended from him, i. 616. *a.* the blessing of Moses upon the tribe of Gad, ii. 47. *a.*
Gad the seer, his message to David after he had numbered the people, ii. 378. *b.*
Galatia, by whom peopled, i. 43. *a.*
Galbanum, a sweet spice, i. 312. *b.*
Garden of Eden, its situation, i. 11. *a.* the garden of Jupiter among the heathens the same with the garden of Eden, i. 21. *a.*
Garment, the garments of Aaron made him appear great like a prince, i. 243. *a.* the priestly garments described, i. 289. *b.* some were white, and others were golden, i. 290. *a.* the materials of which the priestly garments were made, i. 291. *a.* the garments of the priests were never washed nor repaired, i. 299. *b.* the priests never ministered nor appeared in the holy place without their garments, i. 300. *a.* they were kept in a vestry in the temple, *ibid.* white garments used by the priests, i. 338. *a.* the putting on of the holy garments sufficient for the consecration of a high-priest after the captivity of Babylon, i. 370. *b.* the law concerning the leprosy in a garment, i. 395. *b.* &c. the high-priest's garments upon the day of expiation, i. 407. *b.* two sorts of white garments worn by him upon that day, i. 415. *a.* a garment of linen and woollen not to be worn, i. 434. *b.* a woman not to wear a man's garment, nor on the contrary, i. i. 743. *b.* the form of the garments of the Israelites, i. 745. *b.* a Babylonish garment described, ii. 73. *b.*
Gate of heaven, the expression explained, i. 101. *a.* courts among the Jews held in the gates of their cities, i. 322. *a.* an account of the gate of burning in the sanctuary, i. 362. *b.* the gate among the Hebrews the same with the forum among the Romans, a public place to hear causes, i. 714. *b.*
Gedaliah, made governor of the land after the Babylonian captivity, is slain, ii. 534. *b.*
Gehazi, Elisha's servant, his story, ii. 476. *b.*
Genealogy, the genealogy of the sons of Noah of great use to confirm the doctrine of the creation, i. 41. *b.* the genealogies of the families of the Israelites, ii. 539. *a.* &c.
Generation, children punished for their fathers' sins to the third and fourth generation, i. 247. *b.*
Genesis, why the first book of Moses so called, i. 1. *a.*
Gentiles, the gentiles counted by the Jews no better than dogs, i. 265. *a.* not suffered to live among the Israelites, i. 271. *b.*
Gerar, the metropolis of Palestine, i. 79. *a.*
Gergasites, a people, from whom descended, i. 49. *a.* an account of their flying into Africa, i. 270. *b.*
Gerizim, a mountain upon which Samaria was built, i. 769. *b.*
Gershom, the son of Moses, the reason of his name, i. 168. *a.*
Gershonites, their business about the tabernacle, i. 498. *b.* they were to serve for burdens, i. 504. *a.* the lot of their families in the land of Canaan, ii. 115. *b.*
Ghost, a common opinion that the ghost of the murdered person haunts the murderer, i. 24. *a.* giving up the ghost, supposed by some to signify an easy death, i. 154. *b.*

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Giant, the character of the giants before the flood, i. 31. *a.* giants in the land of Canaan, i. 547. *a.* an account of the giants slain by the officers of David, ii. 369. *a.*
Gibeah, the inhabitants of Gibeah cruelly abuse a Levite's wife, ii. 205. *b.* the authors of the villany demanded to be given up, ii. 207. *b.*
Gibeonites, an account of them, their name changed by David into Nethinims, i. 40. *b.* their stratagem in deceiving Joshua, ii. 78. *b.* made hewers of wood and drawers of water, ii. 80. *b.*
Gideon receives a message from an angel, ii. 153. *a.* his faith is strengthened by a miracle, ii. 154. *b.* he destroys the altar and the grove dedicated to Baal, ii. 155. *b.* is called Jerubbaal, ii. 156. *b.* his stratagem to overcome the Midianites, ii. 160. *a.* defeats them and destroys their kings, ii. 161. *b.* refuses to be a king, ii. 164. *a.* makes an ephod, ii. 164. *b.* his death, ii. 165. *b.*
Gier-eagle, an unclean bird, i. 385. *a.*
Gift, a gift not to be taken to pervert judgment, i. 266. *b.*
Gihon, a fountain on the west side of Jerusalem, ii. 383. *b.*
Gilead, a mountain, its situation, ii. 158. *a.*
Gilgal, a place of great note, ii. 63. *a.* the reason of the name, ii. 65. *b.*
Girdle of the ephod described, i. 294. *b.* to be made of needle-work, i. 298. *b.*
Girgashites, a people of Canaan, ii. 125. *a.*
Glass, looking-glasses anciently of polished brass, i. 336. *a.*
Gleanings of the harvest not to be gathered, i. 431. *a.*
Glory of the Lord, what is meant by it, i. 12. *b.* a farther account of it, i. 217. *b.* the garments of the high-priest were for glory and beauty, i. 290. *a.* Moses desires to see the glory of God, i. 325. *b.* the glory of God filled the tabernacle, i. 340. *b.*
Goats, goats forbidden to be kept near corn-fields, i. 260. *b.* goats' hair spun by the Hebrew women, i. 334. *a.* the goats for a sin-offering upon the day of expiation, i. 408. *b.* the demons said to appear in the form of goats, i. 421. *a.* goats said to lie carnally with women, i. 428. *b.*
God, the history of the creation why introduced with the name of God, i. 1. *b.* God was the king of the people of Israel, i. 171. *a.* what is meant by the *gods of Egypt*, i. 206. *b.* the names of strange gods not to be mentioned, i. 267. *b.* the meaning of *seeing God*, i. 273. *b.* and of the expression, *make us gods to go before us*, i. 316. *a.* God vindicated from the charge of severity in his punishments, i. 377. *a.*
Godhead, the first intimation of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, i. 7. *a.*
Gold of Arabia, an account of it, i. 12. *a.* the several kinds of gold, i. 291. *a.*
Golden age, the time and reason of it, i. 51. *b.* the golden garments of the high-priest, i. 415. *b.*
Goliath, a description of his person and armour, his challenge and death, ii. 272. *a.* &c.
Gomer the son of Japheth, an account of his posterity, i. 42. *a.*
Gonorrhœa, the nature of the disease, and the uncleanness belonging to it, i. 403. *b.*
Goodness, in what sense the goodness of God passed before Moses, i. 326. *a.*
Goods, the law concerning goods left in a neighbour's hand to keep, i. 260. *b.*
Gopher-wood, supposed to be the same with the cypress-tree, i. 32. *a.*
Goshen, a country, its situation, i. 138. *b.* a particular account of it, i. 142. *a.* &c. a city of that name in the tribe of Judah, ii. 86. *b.*
Government, the benefit of it, ii. 214. *a.*
Governor, how long the Jews were ruled by governors, i. 149. *a.*
Grape, grapes in a vineyard might be eaten by travellers on the highway, i. 755. *a.* but they were not to carry any off, i. 755. *b.* the grapes in a vineyard not to be gleaned, i. 760. *a.* an account of bunches of grapes of an extraordinary bigness, i. 545. *a.*
Grasshopper, a sort of locust, i. 386. *a.* grass how originally produced, i. 4. *b.*
Grate, the grate belonging to the altar in the tabernacle described, i. 287. *a.*
Grave, understood sometimes for the state of the dead, i. 121. *b.*
Greece, first peopled by Javan and his posterity, i. 42. *b.*
Greeks, the Greeks descended from Japheth, i. 41. *a.* hated by the Egyptians, i. 135. *b.*
Grove, the custom of planting groves for religious uses derived from Abraham, i. 83. *a.* the groves of idolaters to be cut down, i. 329. *a.* used by the heathens for the most idolatrous purposes, i. 715. *b.* furnished with idolatrous images, ii. 138. *a.* the image of the grove burnt by Josiah, ii. 526. *a.*
Ground, the ground cursed for the sake of Adam, i. 19. *b.* the curse in some measure taken off by the posterity of Noah, i. 30. *a.*
Guilt makes men fearful, i. 17. *b.*
Guilty, God will by no means clear the guilty, i. 328. *a.*

HADAD, an Edomite, flies into Egypt, is received and married there, returns and disturbs the government of Solomon, ii. 424. *b.* &c.
Hadassah, the Jewish name of Esther, ii. 736. *a.*
Hagar, an account of her, i. 68. *a.* &c.
Haggai, the prophet, reproves the people for not going on with the building of the temple, ii. 672. *b.*
Hagerenes a people, where seated, i. 45. *a.*
Hail, the plague of hail among the Egyptians, i. 197. *a.* the time of the year when it happened, i. 198. *a.*
Hair, the neglect of hair, a sign of mourning, i. 129. *a.* the custom of mourners was to let their hair grow, i. 378. *a.* the forms observed by the priests and high-priests relating to their hair, *ibid.* the hair of a Nazarite was to grow, i. 513. *b.* after the fulfilling of his vow to be cut off and burnt with holy fire, i. 515. *a.* the cutting of the hair a religious ceremony among the heathens, i. 705. *b.* the weight of Absalom's hair, ii. 346. *a.* hair a great ornament in the eastern countries, ii. 715. *a.*
Ham the son of Noah made sport with his father's nakedness, i. 40. *a.* the same with the heathen Jupiter, i. 41. *b.* his race concerned in the building of Babel, i. 55. *b.*
Haman promoted by king Ahasuerus, ii. 722. *b.* complains of the Jews to the king, ii. 723. *b.* makes a gallows for Mordecai, by the advice of his wife, ii. 727. *b.* falls into disgrace, and is hanged, ii. 730. *b.* his house is given unto Esther, ii. 731. *a.* his sons are hanged, ii. 734. *b.*
Hamath, the bounds of Judea to the north, ii. 414. *b.*
Hamathites, a people, from whom descended, i. 49. *b.*
Hananeel, the tower of Hananeel, ii. 690. *b.*
Hanani the seer, his speech to king Asa, ii. 617. *b.*
Hananiah governor of Jerusalem, ii. 699. *a.*
Hand, the laying on of hands upon the head always used in giving of blessings, i. 145. *b.*
Hand, the spreading of the hands an ancient posture of supplication, i. 198. *a.* the meaning of the expression, *with a high hand*, i. 319. *a.* what is frequently signified by the right hand, i. 225. *a.* holding up the hands a posture of prayer, i. 236. *b.* the hand laid upon the head of all sacrifices, i. 302. *a.* the hands and feet of the priests washed before they sacrificed, i. 309. *b.* laying on with hands always accompanied with prayer, i. 344. *a.* the ancient manner of lifting up the hands to bless, i. 375. *a.* the laying of hands upon the head of the scape-goat, i. 412. *b.* what is meant by a *mighty hand*, i. 673. *b.* the laying of hands upon the head, a token of great grief, ii. 341. *b.*
Hang, circumstances observed about a body that was hanged, i. 742. *a.* a person hanged said to be accursed of God, i. 742. *b.*
Hanging by the neck used anciently in Egypt, i. 127. *b.*
Hangings belonging to the tabernacle described, i. 286. *a.* belonging to the court of the tabernacle, i. 288. *a.* hangings for the grove, their nature, ii. 526. *b.*
Hannah, the mother of Samuel, uneasy for being childless, and makes a vow for the obtaining of a man-child, ii. 226. *b.* &c. her prayer is heard, her hymn upon the occasion, ii. 228. *a.* &c. she weaves a little coat for her son, ii. 231. *b.*
Hannibal, the Carthaginian, suffered as a son of Canaan, i. 41. *b.*
Hanoch, from him proceeded the Hanochites, i. 139. *b.*
Hanun the king of Ammon, the indignity he offered to David's ambassadors, ii. 331. *a.*
Hardening of Pharaoh's heart, what is intended by it, i. 185. *a.*
Hare, an unclean beast, i. 382. *b.*
Harlot, harlots usually sat in the highways, i. 123. *b.* exposed themselves for hire, *ibid.* sacred to Isis, i. 753. *b.*
Harnessed, the meaning of the word, i. 216. *b.*
Harp, the inventor of it, i. 26. *a.*
Harvest, a seasonable time to make acknowledgments to God, i. 21. *b.* wheat-harvest began at Pentecost, and barley-harvest at

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the Passover, i. 103. *b.* &c. an account of the feast of harvest, i. 268. *a.* a feast after harvest observed by the heathen, i. 713. *b.*
Havilah, a country so called, where situated, i. 12. *a.*
Hawk sacred to Apollo, i. 381. *b.* the night-hawk an unclean bird, i. 384. *b.* the whole species of them unclean, *ibid.*
Hazael kills the king of Syria, and reigned in his stead, ii. 484. *a.* his victories over the Israelites, ii. 492. *a.* he dies, ii. 499. *a.*
Head of a river, how understood, i. 11. *b.* *bruising of the serpent's head*, what it means, i. 18. *b.* what is intended by uncovering the head, i. 378. *a.* the head of no animals eaten by the Egyptians, i. 413. *b.* the corners of the head not to be rounded, i. 437. *a.* the hoary head to be honoured, i. 439. *b.* the head of a Nazarite to be shaved after his separation, i. 515. *a.* who are meant by *the heads of the people*, i. 611. *b.* law of Moses concerning a bald head, i. 395. *a.*
Heads of thousands in Israel, i. 492. *a.*
Heart, the meaning of the expression, *I will harden his heart*, i. 176. *b.* a particular account of the Lord's hardening Pharaoh's heart, i. 195. *b.* the meaning of an *uncircumcised heart*, i. 483. *b.* and of the expression *with all the heart*, i. 679. *a.* what is meant by circumcising the heart, ii. 23. *a.*
Heave-offering, an account of it, i. 304. *a.* heave-offering of the first of the dough, i. 555. *a.*
Heaven and earth, what the words mean in the history of the creation, i. 6. *b.* *up to heaven*, the meaning of that phrase in Scripture, i. 55. *a.* the worship of the host of heaven the most ancient idolatry, i. 671. *a.* what is meant by the days of heaven, i. 695. *a.* God is said to ride upon the heavens, ii. 48. *b.* what is understood by the foundations of heaven, ii. 370. *b.*
Heber, the ancient language preserved in his family, i. 56. *a.*
Hebrew nation, why so called, and from whom descended, i. 50. *a.* language supposed to be the first, i. 53. *a.* what is meant by the land of the Hebrews, i. 127. *a.*
Hebron, a city, when it was built, and received its name, i. 62. *a.* why called Kirjath-arba, i. 86. *b.* the time of its being built, i. 545. *a.*
Heel, *thou shalt bruise his heel*, the meaning of the expression, i. 18. *b.*
Heifer, the history of the burning of the red heifer with all its circumstances, i. 576. *a.* and of the heifer appointed upon the finding of a dead body, i. 737. *a.*
Heir of the family, distinguished by different apparel, i. 98. *a.*
Heron, an unclean bird, i. 385. *a.*
Heliogabalus, the reason of his eating camel's flesh, i. 382. *a.*
Herb, the paschal lamb to be eaten with bitter herbs, i. 205. *b.*
Hercules, the fable of Hercules raised from the story of Samson, ii. 186. *b.*
Herd, sacrifices of the herd, i. 342. *b.*
Hezekiah, a king of Judah, his character, ii. 511. *a.* his victories, ii. 512. *b.* pays tribute to the king of Assyria, ii. 513. *a.* is terrified by the threats of the Assyrian captain, ii. 515. *a.* his prayer for deliverance, ii. 516. *b.* receives the news of his death, ii. 519. *a.* his life is prolonged, ii. 519. *b.* discovers all his treasures to the messengers of the king of Babylon, ii. 520. *b.* his death, ii. 521. *a.* his speech to the Levites, ii. 641. *b.* he makes a covenant to serve God, and cleanses the temple, ii. 642. *a.* &c. orders the celebration of the Passover, ii. 645. *b.* he appoints the courses of the priests and Levites, ii. 647. *b.* he repairs the walls and towers of Jerusalem, ii. 649. *b.* his pride, repentance, honour, storehouses, cities, &c. ii. 651. *b.* receives ambassadors from Babylon concerning the sun's going back, *ibid.*
Hiddikel, the same with the river Tigris, i. 12. *b.* a full account of it, *ibid.*
Hiel, the rebuilder of Jericho, ii. 443. *a.*
High-priest, the law concerning him if he were guilty of murder, i. 255. *b.* the sacrifice he was to offer for sins of ignorance, i. 352. *a.* the ceremonies of preparation when he was to enter into the most holy place, i. 407. *a.* the garments he was to wear, i. 407. *b.* ceremonies observed by him within the veil, i. 410 *a.* injunctions laid upon him concerning mourning for the dead, and his taking a wife, i. 448. *b.* &c. the prerogatives of the high-priest, i. 574. *b.* the case of the high-priest having killed a man, or a man killed the high-priest, i. 651. *a.* the manner of rending his garments, ii. 682. *b.*
Hilkiah the priest, finds the book of the law, ii. 523. *b.*
Hin, a measure among the Hebrews, i. 306. *a.*
Hinnom, the valley of the son of Hinnom, ii. 99. *a.* farther account of it, ii. 527. *a.*
Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers and a present to king David, ii. 319. *b.* his agreement with king Solomon for stone and timber for the building of the temple, ii. 397. *b.* &c. his descent and character, ii. 404. *b.* the service he did king Solomon in the building of the temple, and the reward he had, ii. 415. *b.*
Hire, the law concerning things hired, i. 261. *b.* the payment of a servant's hire, i. 759. *a.*
Hirelings among the Jews, i. 212. *b.*
Hittites, a people, from whom descended, i. 49. *a.*
Hivites, a people, from whom descended, *ibid.*
Hobah, a valley, its situation, i. 64. *a.*
Hole, two holes at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering to receive the blood, i. 353. *a.*
Holy places are made holy by the Divine presence, i. 170. *a.* why the Jews are called a holy people, i. 264. *b.* the difference between the most holy things and the lesser holy things, i. 345. *a.* a fuller account of them, i. 347. *b.* the place where the holy things were eaten by the priests, i. 363. *a.* by whom the holy things were eaten, i. 452. *b.*
Honey, aerial honey described, i. 533. *a.*
Honey plentiful in Egypt, i. 134. *b.* not to be used in sacrifices, i. 348. *b.*
Hoof, the meaning of the expression, *there shall not a hoof be left behind*, i. 201. *b.* the meaning of *parting the hoof*, i. 382. *a.*
Honour due to parents explained, i. 249. *b.*
Hophni and Phinehas the sons of Eli, slain by the Philistines, ii. 238. *a.*
Hor, a mountain, its situation, i. 585. *a.*
Horeb, why called *the mountain of God*, i. 168. *b.* a part of the mountain of Sinai, i. 235. *b.*
Hori, from whom descended the Horites, a people, an account of them, i. 118. *b.*
Horn, the horns of the altar described, i. 286. *b.* the blood put upon the horns of the altar, i. 302. *a.*
Horns, a common sign of kingly power, i. 317. *b.* ridiculously painted upon the head of Moses, i. 331. *a.* a horn the emblem of force and strength, ii. 46. *a.*
Hornets sent before the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites, i. 270. *b.*
Horses, horses anciently the possession only of great persons, i. 110. *a.* the king of the Hebrews not to keep up a body of horse for war, i. 720. *b.* the horses of the sun, what, ii. 527. *b.*
Horus, an account of the Egyptian Horus, i. 205. *b.*
Hosannas sung upon the feast of tabernacles, i. 463. *b.*
Hoshea, a king of Israel, ii. 506. *b.* bound in prison by the king of Assyria, ii. 507. *a.*
Host of heaven, what, i. 8. *b.* the Israelites called the hosts of the Lord, i. 211. *b.*
Hough, the horses of the Canaanites houghed by Joshua, ii. 88. *b.*
House, *the men of his house*, a phrase in Scripture, the meaning of it, i. 72. *b.* the law concerning house-breaking among the Hebrews and other nations, i. 259. *b.* the case of a house set apart by a vow to a Divine use, i. 485. *b.* what is meant by the dedication of a house, i. 733. *a.* the law concerning the forms of the houses of the Israelites, i. 744. *b.* what is meant by a *house of God*, ii. 198. *a.*
Huldah, her prophecy, ii. 524. *a.* &c.
Hundred, the produce of a hundred-fold not wonderful, i. 96. *b.*
Hunting, the rudiment of warfare, i. 46. *a.*
Hur, an account of him, i. 236. *b.*
Husband to rule over the wife, i. 19. *b.* his power over the wife under the obligation of a vow, i. 630. *b.*
Husbandry improved by Noah, i. 30. *a.* the study of the old Romans, i. 40. *a.*
Hushai the Archite, his fidelity to David, ii. 350. *b.* pretends to revolt to Absalom, his advice to him, ii. 352. *b.* &c. defeats the counsel of Ahithophel, ii. 353. *b.* betrays the designs of Absalom to David, ii. 355. *a.*
Hydrus, a kind of serpent, its qualities, i. 587. *a.*
Hymn, the composing and singing of hymns is sometimes in Scripture called prophesying, i. 225. *b.* &c.
Hyssop, a bunch of hyssop used at the Passover, i. 208. *a.*

JABBOCK, a river, its course, i. 111. *a.*
Jabez, his prayer, ii. 544. *a.*
Jabin, a king of Canaan, oppressed the Israelites, ii. 142. *b.* destroyed by them, ii. 146. *a.*

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Jacob, the reason of the name, i. 19. *a.* an account of his birth, i. 95. *a.* guilty of telling many untruths, i. 98. *b.* and for that reason was frequently cheated himself, *ibid.* endued with a spirit of prophecy, i. 99. *a.* the blessing of Abraham confirmed to Jacob, i. 100. *a.* God appeared to him in a dream, *ibid.* his expostulation with Laban particularly explained, i. 108. *b.* what he means by swearing by the *fear of his father*, i. 109. *b.* he wrestles with an angel, i. 111. *a. comes to Shalem*, the meaning of that expression, i. 113. *a.* his long mourning for his son Joseph, i. 121. *b.* sends his sons into Egypt, i. 132. *a.* the reason of his desire of being buried with his fathers, i. 144. *a.* the manner of his blessing the sons of Joseph, i. 145. *a.* endued with a spirit of prophecy, i. 147. *a.* honoured with a royal funeral, i. 155. *b.* &c. an odd tradition concerning his coffin, i. 156. *b.* all his sons supposed to be buried in the land of Canaan, i. 158. *b.* in what sense he is said to be a Syrian, i. 765. *b.*
Jael kills Sisera in her tent by a Divine impulse, ii. 145. *b.* the manner in which she killed him, ii. 150. *b.*
Jair, one of the judges of Israel, ii. 173. *a.*
Jahaziel, a prophet, ii. 625. *a.*
Jambres, an Egyptian magician, an account of him, i. 186. *a.*
Jannes, an Egyptian magician, an account of him, i. 186. *a.*
Janus, from whence the fable concerning him is derived, i. 236. *a.*
Japetus of the Greeks, the same with Japheth, i. 41. *b.*
Japheth, what parts of the world were inhabited by his posterity, i. 41. *a.* the name given to his wife by the Greeks, *ibid.* all his offspring are Christians at this day except Magog, *ibid.* he was the eldest of Noah's sons, i. 41. *b.* seven nations descended from him, i. 44. *a.*
Jared, the reason of his name, i. 29. *a.*
Jasher, an account of the book of Jasher, ii. 83. *b.*
Jasper, a jasper, one of the stones set in the breast-plate, i. 294. *a.*
Ibzan, a judge of Israel, ii. 183. *a.*
Ichabod, the son of Phinehas, the reason of his name, ii. 238. *a.*
Icthyophagi, a tradition among them, i. 221. *a.*
Iddo the seer, wrote some part of the life of Solomon, ii. 608. *a.*
Idolatry, the supposed original of it, i. 5. *b.* punished to the fourth generation, i. 247. *b.* worshipping of images understood to be idolatry, i. 248. *a.* idolatry to be wholly rooted out, i. 270. *a.* the care of the Jews in not falling into idolatry, i. 330. *a.* called by the name of *whoring*, i. 421. *b.* the punishment of tempters to idolatry, i. 702. *a.* &c. idolatry properly compared to gall and wormwood, ii. 19. *a.*
Idols forbidden to be made, i. 477. *a.*
Idumea, under the government of dukes, i. 225. *b.*
Jealous, God is said to be jealous, i. 247. *b.* his name is Jealous, i. 329. *b.*
Jealousy, the trial of the suspected wife by the water of jealousy, i. 507. *a.* &c.
Jebusites, a people, from whom descended, i. 49. *a.* were not driven out of the land of Canaan by the Israelites, ii. 132. *a.* the fort of Zion taken from them by David, ii. 319. *a.*
Jehoahaz, a king of Israel, oppressed by the Syrians, ii. 497. *a.*
Jehoahaz, a king of Judah, put into chains by the king of Egypt, ii. 530. *a.*
Jehoash, a king of Israel, ii. 498. *a.* takes Jerusalem, and plunders the temple, ii. 500. *b.*
Jehoiachin, a king of Judah, ii. 531. *a.* is taken by the king of Babylon, ii. 531. *b.* delivered out of prison, ii. 535. *a.*
Jehoiada the priest preserves Joash from the slaughter of Athaliah, ii. 492. *b.* and crowns him king, ii. 493. *b.* he marries two wives, ii. 631. *b.*
Jehoiakim, a king of Judah. See Eliakim.
Jehoram, a king of Judah, ii. 484. *a.* his character, ii. 484. *b.* his death, ii. 485. *a.* is threatened by Elijah the prophet, ii. 628. *a.*
Jehoram, a king of Israel, ii. 464. *b.* his character, ii. 467. *b.* is wounded by the Syrians, ii. 485. *b.* is slain, ii. 487. *b.*
Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, goes up with Ahab against Ramoth-Gilead, ii. 461. *b.* makes ships to trade to Ophir, ii. 462. *b.* dies, and is buried, *ibid.* his care in having the people instructed, ii. 619. *a.* receives tribute from the Philistines, ii. 619. *b.* his charge to his judges, ii. 622. *a.* his prayer, ii. 624. *a.* his victory over the Moabites and Ammonites, ii. 626. *a.*
Jehovah Elohim, the perfect name of God, i. 9. *b.* Jehovah denotes the clemency of God, i. 32. *a.* a particular explanation of the word, i. 172. *a.* called the *ineffable name* by the Jews, and why, i. 181. *a.* confessed by the heathens, *ibid.* the prohibiting of idolatry by Moses, supposed to have regard to the Egyptian superstition, i. 672. *a.*
Jehu, a prophet, ii. 440. *b.* his speech to Jehoshaphat, ii. 621. *b.* he wrote the acts of that king, ii. 626. *b.*
Jehu anointed king over Israel, ii. 486. *a.* is proclaimed, ii. 486. *b.* kills the kings of Israel and Judah, and Jezebel the wife of Ahab, ii. 487. *b.* &c. destroys the priests and temple of Baal, ii. 491. *a.* his character, ii. 491. *b.* his death, ii. 492. *a.*
Jemamites, a people of Arabia, from whom descended, i. 45. *a.*
Jephthah, his descent and flight out of his own country, ii. 175. *b.* returns, and is made general of the army, ii. 176. *a.* he makes a rash vow, ii. 179. *a.* overcomes the Ammonites, *ibid.* the case of his daughter fully considered, ii. 180. *b.* he smites the Ephraimites, ii. 182. *a.* his death and burial, ii. 182. *b.*
Jeremiah's lamentation for king Josiah, ii. 659. *b.*
Jericho, a city surrounded and taken by Joshua, ii. 67. *a.* &c. a curse laid upon the rebuilder of it and his family, ii. 70. *b.* called the city of Palm-trees, ii. 139. *a.* rebuilt, ii. 443. *a.*
Jeroboam the son of Nebat rebels against Solomon, with the occasion of it, ii. 425. *b.* &c. for which he attempts to kill him, ii. 427. *a.* he flies into Egypt, *ibid.* returns and applies to Rehoboam for the redress of grievances, ii. 427. *b.* is made king over the ten tribes, ii. 429. *b.* he makes two golden calves, and high places, and appoints priests to seduce the people from the established worship, ii. 431. *a.* &c. he invades the priesthood, and offers sacrifices, ii. 431. *b.* his hand is withered and restored, ii. 432. *b.* his wife goes to consult Ahijah the prophet, ii. 435. *a.* another of that name king of Israel, ii. 501. *a.* his death, ii. 502. *a.*
Jerusalem, the sufferings of the Jews at the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, ii. 10. *b.* the city taken by Sheshak king of Egypt, ii. 437. *a.* the walls broken down by Jehoash king of Israel, ii. 500. *b.* besieged by the Syrians, ii. 505. *a.* besieged by the Assyrians, ii. 513. *a.* besieged and taken by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, ii. 531. *b.*
Jeshurun, why Israel is called Jeshurun, ii. 34. *a.*
Jesse presents his sons before Samuel, ii. 269. *b.*
Jethro, a worshipper of the true God, i. 167. *a.* he comes to visit Moses, and particularly at what time, i. 238. *a.*
Jews, remarkable example of madness and rage among the Jews, ii. 5. *b.* particular calamities that fell upon the Jews for their disobedience, according to the prediction of Moses, ii. 7. *a.* &c. their sufferings under the Romans, ii. 9. *b.* &c. particularly under Titus, ii. 10. *b.* and other emperors and princes for many ages, ii. 11. *b.* &c. in England, Spain, Germany, Portugal, &c. ii. 14. *b.* why they were punished with so much severity, ii. 20. *b.* a promise of their being recalled from captivity, ii. 21. *b.* their great increase after their return from Babylon, ii. 22. *b.* their wonderful deliverance in the time of Ahasuerus, ii. 731. *b.*
Jewel for the forehead, what, i. 89. *b.*
Jezebel, the wife of Ahab king of Israel, ii. 442. *b.* her wicked advice in the case of Naboth, ii. 457. *a.* is thrown out of a window, killed, and eaten by dogs, ii. 488. *b.*
Ignorance, atonement for sins of ignorance in holy things, i. 352. *a.* &c. sins of ignorance expiated by sacrifices, i. 555. *b.* &c.
Illyricum, the manner of delivery among the women of Illyricum, i. 162. *b.*
Image, man how created after the first image, i. 7. *b.* what is meant by *a graven image*, i. 247. *a.* no images at first set up in the heathen temples, i. 248. *a.* are sometimes called gods, i. 251. *b.* the gods supposed to be present where their images were worshipped, i. 252. *a.* no images to be made nor reared up, i. 477. *a.* &c.
Images of idols anciently made of oak, i. 62. *a.*
Imagination, the strength of imagination in cattle, i. 105. *a.*
Incense, the altar of incense described, i. 307. *a.* a particular account of burning the incense, i. 307. *b.* to whose business it belonged, i. 376. *b.* the form of burning the incense upon the day of expiation, i. 410. *b.*
Incest abhorred by all nations, i. 424. *b.*
Incestuous marriages forbidden, *ibid.*
Indians hated the business of shepherds, i. 141. *a.* they redeemed their sons with a ram, i. 215. *b.*
Infants, the form of mourning for them and burying them, ii. 338. *a.*
In-gathering, the feast of in-gathering, i. 462. *b.*
Inheritances, not to remove from tribe to tribe, i. 653. *b.*
Interpretation of dreams belongs to God, i. 126. *b.* &c.

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Joash saved from the slaughter of Athaliah, ii. 492. *b.* is proclaimed king, ii. 493. *b.* buys his peace of Hazael king of Syria, and is slain by a conspiracy, ii. 496. *b.* &c.
Joash, a king of Israel, recovers the cities taken by the Syrians, ii. 499. *a.*
Joab kills Abner, and the guilt of the murder is charged upon him by David, ii. 315. *a.* he thrusts Absalom through the heart, ii. 358. *a.* threatens David to carry away his army, ii. 360. *b.* he takes the part of Adonijah, ii. 381. *b.* David's charge to his son Solomon concerning him, ii. 386. *a.* he flies for refuge to the horns of the altar, ii. 388. *b.* is slain, ii. 389. *b.*
Job, the book of Job supposed to have been written by Moses, i. 168. *b.*
Jochebed, the mother of Moses, said to be one of the Hebrew midwives in Egypt, i. 162. *a.* a particular account of her, i. 183. *b.*
Jonadab, the son of Rechab, his character, ii. 390. *a.*
Jonathan, the son of Saul, attacks a garrison of the Philistines, ii. 362. *a.* &c. is in danger of his life by eating a little honey, ii. 365. *b.* his great love to David, ii. 276. *b.* he makes a covenant with him, ii. 281. *b.* his stratagem to acquaint him with Saul's designs, ii. 283. *a.* is slain by the Philistines, ii. 305. *b.*
Ionian Sea, why so called, i. 42. *b.*
Jordan, the plain of Jordan described, i. 61. *b.* the waters of Jordan divided for the passage of the Israelites, ii. 60. *b.*
Joseph, his birth, and the reason of his name, i. 104. *b.* taken care of by Bilhah after the death of his mother, i. 119. *b.* the reasons of his brothers hating him, i. 120. *a.* his brethren conspire against him, i. 120. *b.* an account of his escape from Potiphar's wife, i. 125. *b.* his imprisonment, i. 126. *a.* his skill in the interpretation of dreams, i. 127. *a.* his advice received by the court of Pharaoh, and upon what account, i. 130. *a.* the story of his advancement, *ibid.* has a new name given him with the signification of it, i. 130. *b.* &c. his high authority, and the manner of receiving his brethren, i. 132. *a.* supposed to be represented by the figure of Apis, i. 135. *b.* esteemed by his father as his first-born, i. 144. *b.* the fear and submission of his brethren, i. 157. *a.* an account of his age, i. 158. *a.* and of his death, and the disposal of his body, i. 158. *b.* his bones carried out of Egypt by Moses, i. 216. *b.* the blessing of Moses upon the tribe of Joseph, ii. 45. *a.* Joseph said to be worshipped in Egypt in the form of an ox, under the name of Serapis, ii. 46. *a.* the lot of the children of Joseph in the land of Canaan, ii. 102. *a.* the bones of Joseph buried in Shechem, ii. 128. *a.*
Joshua, a constant attendant upon Moses, i. 324. *b.* called Jehoshua, for what reason, i. 543. *b.* made an associate in the government with Moses by particular ceremonies, i. 621. *b.* is said to have sent three messages to the seven nations of Canaan before he invaded them, i. 734. *b.* appointed by God to be governor of the Israelites, ii. 27. *b.* he takes upon him the government, ii. 52. *b.* he passes over Jordan, ii. 61. *a.* circumcised the Israelites, ii. 64. *b.* surrounds Jericho and takes it, ii. 69. *b.* he discovers the accursed thing, ii. 73. *a.* his stratagem in taking the city of Ai, ii. 76. *a.* he writes a copy of the law of Moses, ii. 77. *b.* he overcomes the five kings of the Amorites, ii. 82. *b.* his great conquests over the Canaanites, ii. 88. *a.* his charge to the Israelites before his death, ii. 122. *a.* he makes a covenant with the Israelites, ii. 126. *b.* his death, age, and burial, ii. 127. *a.*
Joshua, the name of one of the books of Scripture, the author of it, ii. 53. *a.*
Josiah, his name and actions foretold above three hundred years before he was born, ii. 432. *b.* a king of Judah, his character, ii. 523. *a.* he hears the book of the law read, ii. 524. *a.* makes a covenant, and purges the temple of idolatrous vessels, ii. 525. *a.* and the land of all idolatry, ii. 525. *b.* a farther account of his reformation, ii. 527. *a.* &c. is slain, ii. 529. *b.* removes the ark into its place, ii. 657. *a.* the number of his offerings upon the seven days of unleavened bread, ii. 657. *b.* he celebrates the Passover with great magnificence, ii. 658. *b.*
Jotham, the son of Gideon, saved in the slaughter of his brethren, ii. 166. *b.* his fable to the men of Shechem, ii. 167. *a.*
Jotham, a king of Judah, his character, &c. ii. 504. *b.*
Iris, called the mother of wonderment, i. 39. *b.*
Isaac, the place of his birth, i. 81. *a.* the promises made to Abraham's seed limited to his posterity, i. 81. *b.* his carrying the wood a figure of Christ's carrying his cross, *ibid.* his age when he was to be offered a sacrifice, i. 84. *a.* why he is called the Syrian, i. 94. *a.* &c. the reason of his prayer for his wife, i. 94. *b.*
Isaiah the prophet denounces destruction upon the Assyrian army, ii. 515. *b.* foretells the ruin of Sennacherib, ii. 516. *b.* &c. and of the death of king Hezekiah, ii. 519. *a.* and the ruin of his family, ii. 520. *b.* &c.
Iscah, the name of Sarah, i. 57. *b.*
Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, is made king over all the tribes on the other side Jordan, ii. 310. *a.* is slain by treachery, ii. 317. *b.*
Ishmael, his birth and character, i. 69. *b.* the reason of his expulsion out of Abraham's family, i. 81. *b.* his posterity confined to dry and barren places, *ibid.* he became a hunter and a warrior, *ibid.* an account of his wives, i. 82. *a.* uncertain where he was buried, i. 94. *a.*
Ishmaelites, what countries they inhabited, i. 94. *b.* they travelled in caravans with their merchandise, i. 121. *a.*
Isis, the garments of the priests of Isis, i. 338. *a.* images of Isis often found in the sepulchres of the Egyptians, i. 481. *b.* she was represented in the form of a beetle, ii. 19. *a.*
Isles, *isles of the gentiles*, the meaning of the expression, i. 43. *b.*
Israel, Jacob so called, and why, i. 111. *b.* a more honourable name than Jacob, i. 116. *a.*
Israelites, an account of their increase while they were in Egypt, i. 160. *a.* the reason why they could not offer sacrifice in Egypt, i. 179. *a.* they were of a cowardly disposition, i. 216. *b.* their reproachful language to Moses, i. 219. *b.* the manner of the Israelites travelling when they removed from one station to another, i. 529. *a.* propose to return into Egypt, i. 548. *a.* their miserable circumstances under the oppression of the Philistines, ii. 261. *b.* they revolt from the family of David, ii. 429. *b.* an account of their sins and idolatries, ii. 507. *a.* the number of the Israelites that returned from the captivity, ii. 664. *a.*
Issachar, the numbering of the families descended from him, i. 616. *a.* the blessing of Moses upon the tribe of Issachar, ii. 46. *b.* the lot of the children of Issachar in the land of Canaan, ii. 110. *b.*
Issue, the rites of purifying a man with a running issue, i. 404. *a.* and of a woman with an issue of blood in her flesh, i. 405. *a.* ceremonies used upon that occasion, i. 405. *b.*
Italy, from whom peopled, i. 43. *b.*
Ithamar the son of Aaron, from whom descended a great family of priests, i. 378. *a.*
Jubilee, the institution of the year of jubilee, and the ceremonies to be observed upon it, i. 469. *b.* &c. it was celebrated every fiftieth year, i. 470. *b.* reasons given for the liberty allowed on this year, i. 471. *a.*
Judah, his shame for his fornication with Tamar, i. 124. *b.* his passionate speech to Joseph, upon the account of his brother Benjamin, i. 137. *a.* the reason of his name, i. 148. *a.* an account of the valour of the tribe of Judah, i. 148. *b.* what is meant by the tribe of Judah, i. 149. *b.* the numbering of the families descended from him, i. 616. *a.* the blessing of Moses upon the tribe of Judah, ii. 43. *b.* the share of the tribe of Judah in the land of Canaan, ii. 98. *a.*
Judge, the character of a good judge, i. 75. *b.*
Judges called gods, and are not to be reviled, i. 264. *a.* the judges, what kind of officers they were, i. 714. *a.* the number of judges proportionable to the greatness of their cities, i. 714. *b.* a judge a supreme magistrate among the Israelites, like a dictator among the Romans, i. 718. *a.* judges, civil magistrates among the Hebrews, their power and authority, ii. 136. *b.*
Judges, a book of Scripture, why so called, and by whom written, ii. 129. *a.*
Judgment, the meaning of the word frequently in Scripture, i. 184. *a.* judgments signify political laws, i. 253. *b.* false judgment strictly forbidden, i. 286. *a.* judgments, ordinances, and statutes explained, i. 423. *b.* &c. unrighteousness in judgment forbidden, i. 432. *a.* judgment of the stranger and the fatherless not to be perverted, i. 759. *b.*
Judicatures appointed greater and lesser, i. 241. *a.* forms of proceeding in courts of judicature, i. 760. *a.* &c,
Julian the apostate, his malice against revealed religion, i. 55. *a.*
Ivory, Solomon's throne of ivory, ii. 421. *a.*

KARAITES, a sect among the Jews, i. 525. *a.*
Kedareni, a people, from whom descended, i. 93. *b.*
Kenites, a people, from whom descended, i. 68. *b.* an account of

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them, i. 609. *a.* their settlement in the land of Canaan, ii. 131. *b.*
Keturah, the wife of Abraham, an account of her, i. 91. *a.*
Kid, a sucking kid excellent nourishment for weak people, i. 98. *a.* the hair like to that of men, *ibid.* a kid not to be seethed in its mother's milk, i. 269. *a.* what is meant by the kid of the goats, i. 673. *b.*
Kill, the meaning of the commandment, *thou shalt not kill*, i. 250. *a.* the law concerning involuntary killing, i. 255. *a.* &c.
Kind, the meaning of the expression, *after his kind*, i. 386. *a.*
Kings, originally lords over a very small territory, i. 62. *b.* what is meant by the expression, *a new king*, i. 160. *b.* kings among the Jews anointed with holy oil, i. 312. *a.* what is meant by the *shout of a king*, i. 603. *b.* the character of a king over the Israelites given by Moses, i. 720. *a.* not to be elected by the people, *ibid.* he was to write a copy of the law, and to read in it all his days, i. 721. *b.* the king of Ai hanged by Joshua, ii. 77. *a.* the number of the kings conquered by Joshua, ii. 92. *a.* the Israelites demand a king, ii. 246. *a.* the prerogative of the kings of Israel, ii. 308. *a.* a king is subject to no law because he is supreme, ii. 337. *a.*
Kings, the name of two books of Scripture, by whom written, ii. 381. *a.*
Kinsman, what is meant by the *part of a near kinsman*, ii. 220. *b.*
Kishon, why called *the ancient river*, ii. 150. *a.*
Kiss, an ancient ceremony of kissing the dead, i. 155. *a.*
Kite, an unclean bird, the various kinds of them, i. 384. *a.*
Kittim, his posterity peopled Italy, i. 43. *b.*
Knee, the meaning of the expression, *bow the knee*, i. 130. *a.*
Kneph, a god of the Egyptians, described, i. 3. *a.*
Knife, sharp knives used in circumcision, ii. 64. *a.*
Know, *knowing good and evil*, what is meant by it, i. 16. *b.* *that we may know them*, the meaning of the expression, i. 76. *a.*
Knowledge, the promise of it very tempting, i. 16. *b.*
Kohathites, their business about the tabernacle, i. 499. *a.* their service the most honourable, i. 501. *b.* the lot of their families in the land of Canaan, ii. 115. *a.*
Korah, the insurrection of Korah, with the occasion of it, i. 559. *b.* the punishment of it upon his accomplices, i. 564. *a.*
Korahites, their office, ii. 559. *a.*

LABAN, his breach of contract with Jacob particularly explained, i. 106. *b.* his expostulation upon the account of his daughters, i. 108. *a.* supposed to be a worshipper of the true God, i. 109. *b.*
Ladies of honour in the Egyptian court, i. 164. *b.*
Ladder, Jacob's ladder particularly explained, i. 100. *a.*
Lamb, a particular account of the paschal lamb, i. 204. *a.* why it was to be roasted with fire, i. 205. *b.* it was killed in every man's house, i. 208. *a.* and to be eaten there, i. 212. *b.* not to be eaten by the uncircumcised, i. 213. *a.*
Lame, a lame man denied the priesthood, i. 450. *a.*
Lamech, the occasion of his having two wives, i. 25. *b.* the reason of his name, and the time of his death, *ibid.*
Lamenters, a sort of men hired to attend upon funerals, i. 157. *a.*
Lamp, a lamp always burning in the tabernacle, i. 289. *a.* the ordering of those lamps, i. 465. *a.* the western lamps in the temple never went out, ii. 234. *b.*
Land, *dry land*, what it means, i. 4. *b.* the land to be sowed only for six years, i. 267. *a.* the lands of the Israelites not to be sold for ever, i. 472. *b.* how a land is said to eat up its inhabitants, i. 547. *a.* the land of Canaan divided by inheritance, i. 646. *a.* &c. what is meant by *a land flowing with milk and honey*, i. 693. *a.* the land to be kept from defilement by dead bodies, i. 743. *a.* defiled with blood to be cleansed by the blood of him that shed it, i. 652. *b.*
Landmark, a landmark not to be removed, i. 731. *a.*
Language, an account of the first language, i. 53. *b.* a particular account of the confusion of languages at Babel, i. 56. *a.*
Lap, the meaning of shaking the lap, ii. 696. *a.*
Lapwing, an unclean bird, i. 385. *b.*
Larissa, a city upon the Tigris, a description of it, i. 47. *b.*
Laver of brass, a particular description of it, i. 309. *a.* the ten lavers of brass made by Solomon described, ii. 406. *b.*
Law, an account of the oral or unwritten law among the Jews, i. 274. *b.* the laws of Moses not to be added to, or to be diminished, i. 668. *b.* a copy of the law to be written by the Hebrew kings, i. 721. *b.* the law to be written upon great stones when the Israelites had passed over Jordan, i. 769. *a.* to be read publicly by the supreme governor on the feast of tabernacles, ii. 26. *b.* the book of the law laid up in the side of the ark, ii. 29. *b.* the law called fiery, ii. 42. *b.* all ritual laws dispensed with by necessity, ii. 284. *a.* the festival of the law explained, ii. 702. *b.*
Lawgiver, the meaning of the word in Jacob's prophecy, i. 149. *a.*
Leaven, all leaven to be put away at the eating of the Passover, i. 207. *b.* &c. the great care of the Jews upon this account, i. 214. *b.* the reason why no leaven was used in sacrifices, i. 348. *a.*
Legion, the commanders of the several legions under king David, ii. 586. *b.*
Lentiles proper to make broth, i. 95. *b.*
Leper, the leper to be brought to the priest to be examined, i. 392. *a.* particular ceremonies to be observed by the leper, i. 395. *a.* &c. the ceremonies of his purification, i. 397. *a.* &c. and of his cleansing by the blood of his sacrifice, i. 398. *b.* &c. ordered to be put without the camp, i. 506. *a.*
Leprosy, the law of Moses concerning it, i. 391. *b.* &c. the marks by which it is discovered, i. 392. *b.* the leprosy in a garment explained, i. 395. *b.* the signs of leprosy upon a house, i. 401. *a.* the ceremonies to be used upon that occasion, i. 402. *a.* &c. the manner of purifying the house, i. 403. *a.*
Levi, his character, and an account of his cruelty, i. 147. *b.* his posterity had no inheritance among the tribes, i. 148. *a.* lived longest of all the sons of Jacob, i. 183. *a.* the sons of Levi destroy a number of the Israelites for worshipping the golden calf, i. 322. *a.* the blessing of Moses upon the tribe of Levi, ii. 44. *a.* their business to teach the people, ii. 44. *b.*
Levite, the benefits of Levites enjoyed in the redemption of their houses, i. 474. *a.* their fields in the suburbs of their cities not to be sold, *ibid.* the business of the Levites to keep the charge of the tabernacle, i. 494. *a.* to minister to the priests, i. 497. *a.* to do the service of the tabernacle, *ibid.* they were exchanged for the first-born among the Israelites, i. 497. *b.* their age when they began to serve in the tabernacle, i. 501. *a.* they were considered under the notion of a sin-offering, i. 521. *a.* &c. they had a right to the tenth, i. 573. *b.* the numbering of their families, i. 618. *b.* the Levites were not to be defrauded of their tithes, i. 699. *b.* an account of the cities of the Levites, ii. 117. *a.* a Levite's wife barbarously treated by some of the tribe of Benjamin, ii. 205. *b.* he relates the whole story to an assembly of the people, ii. 207. *a.* the Levites were made singers by David, and could play upon musical instruments, ii. 567. *b.* the courses of the Levites, ii. 569. *a.* they are numbered by David, and disposed in several offices, ii. 577. *b.* Levites in cases of necessity did the office of priests, ii. 644. *b.*
Leviticus, one of the books of Moses, the reason of its name, i. 341. *a.*
Liar, the devil a liar from the beginning, i. 16. *b.*
Libanus, a mountain famous for cedar-trees, ii. 597. *a.*
Lice, a particular account of the plague of lice, i. 191. *b.*
Lie, the law concerning lying, and the restitution belonging to it, i. 360. *a.* lying forbidden, i. 431. *b.*
Life, long life a testimony of the Divine favour, i. 28. *b.* some foundation for the belief of a future life among the Israelites, i. 154. *b.* &c. the life of flesh is said to be in the blood, i. 422. *a.* long life always esteemed a blessing, i. 678. *b.*
Light, the manner of its creation, i. 3. *a.* the two great lights created, and the use of them, i. 5. *b.* the use of the first light, *ibid.*
Likeness, man how created after the Divine likeness, i. 7. *b.* what is meant by *the likeness of any thing* in the second commandment, i. 247. *a.* the likeness of any creature forbidden to be made and worshipped, i. 670. *a.*
Line, a line drawn round about the altars exactly in the middle, i. 365. *b.*
Linen, fine linen the clothing of kings and great persons, i. 130. *b.* what is meant by *fine linen*, i. 291. *a.*
Lintel of the Hebrew doors sprinkled with blood, i. 208. *b.*
Lion, the manner of their preying, i. 148. *b.* the places where they sleep, i. 607. *a.* the lions placed upon the steps of Solomon's throne, ii. 421. *a.* lions sent among the Samaritans, ii. 509. *a.*
Lip, what is meant by *uncircumcised lips*, i. 182. *b.*
Liturgies, the supposed original of them, i. 27. *b.*
Lizard, an unclean creature, i. 387. *a.*
Locust, an account of the plague of locusts, i. 199. *a.* the various kinds of them, what were to be eaten, i. 386. *a.* &c.

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Log, a log the smallest measure among the Jews, i. 398. *b.*
Loins, the meaning of the expression *came out of his loins*, i. 140. *a.* the passover to be eaten with the loins girt, i. 206. *a.*
Lord, the meaning of the expression, *let the Lord be so with you as I will let you go*, i. 199. *b.*
Lot, the manner of casting lots upon the goats on the day of expiation, i. 409. *a.* the land of Canaan divided by lot, i. 618. *a.* the various kinds of drawing or casting lots, i. 724. *a.* Saul, the king of Israel, chosen by lot, ii. 254. *b.* the courses of the priests settled by lot, ii. 580. *a.* &c.
Lot, the place where he dwelt, i. 61. *b.* a Jewish tradition concerning him, i. 76. *a.* an account of his offering the prostitution of his daughters to the Sodomites, i. 76. *b.* his wife changed into a pillar of salt, i. 78. *a.* Lot, not of so strong a faith as his uncle Abraham, *ibid.* a particular account of his daughters lying with him, and the reasons of it, i. 78. *b.*
Lub, Africa so called, from whence the name of Lybia, i. 44. *b.*
Lubims were the people of Lybia, ii. 610. *b.*
Lustralia of the heathens explained, i. 353. *b.*
Lustration, the waters used by the heathens in their lustrations, i. 309. *b.*
Luz, the name of a city, why so called, i. 101. *b.* united to Beth-el, ii. 102. *a.*
Lybiægyptii, a people, from whom descended, i. 48. *a.*
Lycurgus received his laws from Apollo, i. 275. *b.*
Lydia, a country, why so called, i. 50. *b.*

MACHPELAH, the cave of Machpelah particularly explained, i. 87. *a.*
Madiana, a country, why so called, i. 91. *b.*
Magic, a principle of ancient magic concerning animals, i. 191. *b.* works of magic performed by the influence of the stars, i. 262. *a.* the various kinds of it, i. 605. *b.*
Magicians of Egypt, an account of them, i. 128. *b.* used murmuring in their enchantments, i. 186. *b.* some notable feasts of magicians, *ibid.* those of Egypt turn water into blood, i. 189. *a.*
Magistrate, the punishment of offenders committed to the civil magistrate, i. 39. *a.*
Magog, the father of the Scythians, i. 42. *a.*
Mahalah, the daughter of Ishmael, her name changed, and why, i. 118. *a.*
Mahalaleel, the reason of the name, i. 29. *a.*
Mahometans abhor swine, i. 383. *b.*
Maid, the law concerning the lying with a betrothed maid, i. 261. *b.*
Majesty, the appearance of the Divine Majesty described, i. 273. *b.* &c.
Males, males in cattle bear the proportion of one to ten females, i. 110. *b.* the first-born of males sanctified, i. 215. *a.* the males to appear three times before the Lord, i. 268. *b.* males, the principal sacrifices among Jews and heathens, i. 343. *a.* only accepted for burnt-offerings, i. 373. *b.*
Mamre, the oaks of Mamre famous for many ages, i. 73. *a.*
Man, why the last of God's works, i. 7. *a.* created after the Divine image and likeness, i. 7. *b.* man and woman created the same day, i. 8. *a.* is said twice to be put into Paradise, and why, i. 12. *b.* not good for him to be alone, i. 13. *b.* the word *man* includes woman, i. 20. *a.* a *man of God* the same as a prophet, ii. 432. *a.*
Manasseh, the numbering of the Israelites descended from him, i. 616. *b.* the lot of the tribe of Manasseh in the land of Canaan, ii. 103. *a.*
Manasseh a king of Judah, his abominable wickedness and idolatry, ii. 521. *b.* &c. his death, ii. 522. *b.* is taken and carried to Babylon, repents, and is restored to his kingdom, ii. 653. *a.*
Mandrakes the fruit of a tree, i. 104. *a.*
Manna, its colour, i. 12. *a.* the raining and the gathering of manna, i. 228. *b.* the description of it, and the reason of the name, i. 230. *a.* &c. the reason of its being called bread, i. 231. *b.* an account of its taste, i. 233. *a.* a pot of it laid up before the ark of the testimony, i. 233. *b.* its colour and qualities described, i. 532. *b.* called scornfully light bread, i. 587. *a.* the miracle of the manna considered, i. 686. *b.*
Manoah, the father of Samson, his wife visited by an angel, ii. 184. *a.* she was to live as a Nazarite while she was breeding, *ibid.* his conversation with the angel, ii. 185. *a.*
Manslaughter, the order of the trial in a court of justice when a man is killed, i. 650. *a.*
Manslayer, cities of refuge appointed for the manslayer, i. 647. *b.* in what manner he was tried, protected, and maintained, till his delivery, i. 650. *b.* &c. but might be killed if found out of the city of his refuge, i. 651. *b.* not to be let out of the city till the death of the high-priest, i. 652. *b.* the case of the involuntary manslayer more fully explained, i. 730. *a.* the judges were to determine in behalf of the people, whether the manslayer was capable of the privilege of the city of refuge, i. 650. *b.*
Man-stealing punished with death, i. 757. *b.*
Mantle, Elijah's mantle, ii. 466. *a.*
Manumission, the law concerning the manumission of servants, i. 257. *b.* &c. the method of it among the Romans, i. 343. *b.*
Maonites, a people, an account of them, ii. 174. *b.*
Marah, an account of the waters of Marah, i. 227. *a.*
March, the manner of the Israelites' march when they travelled, i. 530. *a.*
Mark, an account of the mark set upon Cain, i. 24. *b.* the mark of circumcision why chosen by God as a sign of his covenant, i. 70. *b.* &c. the Israelites forbidden to print any mark upon them, i. 437. *b.* a practice very frequent among many nations, *ibid.*
Marriage, the first institution of it, i. 14. *b.* between brother and sister prohibited, i. 25. *a.* the marriage-contract not completed till the parties had lain together, i. 79. *b.* marriage-contracts confirmed before the governors of the place, i. 102. *b.* anciently celebrated by a seven days' feast, i. 103. *a.* the duties of marriage explained, i. 255. *a.* marriages not to be contracted with idolaters, i. 329. *b.* the prohibited decrees of marriage, i. 423. *b.* &c. marriage confined within their own tribes, i. 653. *b.* the marriage solemnity continued anciently for seven days, ii. 188. *a.* solemn benediction at the time of marriage, ii. 223. *b.*
Massabatæ, a people, where situated, i. 45. *b.*
Massah, the meaning of the word, i. 236. *a.*
Maxima, one of the vestal virgins, an account of her, i. 296. *a.*
Meah, the tower of Meah, ii. 690. *b.*
Meal, the superstition of the Egyptians at their meals, i. 135. *b.*
Measure, divers measures not to be used, i. 763. *a.* measure for things liquid, and size for things dry, kept by the Levites, ii. 579. *b.*
Meat-offerings, the different sorts and ingredients belonging to them, i. 346. *a.* the meat-offering for the high-priest, and the common priests, i. 363. *b.* was wholly burnt upon the altar, i. 364. *a.* meat-offerings were dependant upon other sacrifices, i. 553. *b.*
Media a country, from whence it received its name, i. 42. *a.*
Mehetabal, a woman, an account of her, i. 119. *b.*
Melchisedec, a king and priest, i. 22. *a.* a very particular account of him, i. 64. *a.* &c. a worshipper of the true God, i. 65. *a.*
Melons, commonly eaten by the Egyptians, i. 532. *a.*
Memorial, in what sense the feasts of trumpets is called a memorial, i. 460. *b.*
Menahem, a king of Israel, ii. 502. *b.* his character, ii. 503. *a.*
Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, David's kindness to him, ii. 330. *a.* meets the king after his victory over Absalom, ii. 362. *a.*
Mephramuthosis, said to be the sixth Egyptian king after the eighteenth dynasty, i. 159. *b.*
Mephres, said to be the fourth Egyptian king after the eighteenth dynasty, i. 159. *b.*
Merarites, their business about the tabernacle, i. 499. *b.* the lot of their families in the land of Canaan, ii. 115. *b.*
Mercury, why represented with a wand, i. 185. *b.*
Mercy, a great example of the Divine mercy, i. 75. *b.* the mercy-seat, or the covering of the ark described, i. 279. *a.* God spoke from the mercy-seat, i. 520. *a.*
Meribah, the meaning of the word, i. 236. *a.* an account of the waters of Meribah, i. 583. *b.*
Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon, sends letters to Hezekiah, ii. 520. *a.*
Meroz, what is meant by *cursing of Meroz*, ii. 150. *a.*
Mesha, king of Moab, paid a tribute of sheep to the king of Israel, rebels, ii. 468. *a.* is overcome, sacrifices his son, ii. 470. *a.*
Mesopotamia, the situation of the country, i. 94. *b.*
Mesori, the name of the first month among the ancient Egyptians, why so called, i. 44. *b.*
Mess, what was offered upon the altar was accounted as God's mess, i. 351. *a.* the sending of messes a testimony of favour in ancient times, i. 136. *a.*
Messiah, Eve supposed the Messiah would have been her first-born,

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i. 21. *b.* the benefits of the Messiah common to all nations, i. 59. *a.* the promise of the Messiah made to Isaac, i. 96. *a.* the Messiah offered upon the same day with the paschal lamb, i. 204. *b.* a prophecy of the Messiah, i. 726. *a.* the first place where the name is mentioned in Scripture, ii. 250. *a.*
Metals of all sorts that were taken from the enemy to be purified, i. 634. *a.*
Methuselah, the reason of his name, i. 29. *a.*
Metraton, an angel so called by the Jews, and why, i. 220. *b.*
Micah makes an ephod and a teraphim, ii. 198. *a.* he consecrates a Levite to be a priest, ii. 199. *a.*
Micaiah a prophet, ii. 460. *a.* his parabolical speech to Ahab, ii. 460. *b.* is made a close prisoner, ii. 461. *a.*
Mice, images of mice made with gold, ii. 241. *a.*
Michal, the wife of David, her stratagem to save the life of her husband, ii. 279. *b.* is parted from him, and given to another, ii. 295. *a.* restored to him again, ii. 313. *b.* &c.
Midian, the situation of the land of Midian, i. 166. *b.* &c.
Midianites traded with the Ishmaelites upon a joint stock, i. 121. *a.* from whom descended, i. 122. *a.* they are overcome and destroyed by the Israelites, i. 632. *a.* &c.
Midwives, an account of the Hebrew midwives in Egypt, i. 162. *a.* they are vindicated from the imputation of telling a lie, i. 162. *b.* the reward for their faith, and fearing God, i. 163. *a.*
Migdol, the name of a city, its situation, i. 218. *a.*
Might, the meaning of the words *might* and *strength*, i. 679. *b.*
Mighty, the person of the mighty not to be honoured, i. 432. *b.*
Milcom, the deity of the Ammonites, ii. 423. *b.*
Milk, the meaning of the expression, *flowing with milk and honey*, i. 170. *b.*
Millo, what is meant by the *house of Millo*, ii. 166. *b.* its situation, ii. 416. *b.*
Ministers, prime ministers admitted into the king's presence, i. 131. *b.*
Miriam, the sister of Moses, the reason of her name, i. 225. *b.* why particularly called the sister of Aaron, i. 226. *a.* punished for her pride, i. 542. *a.*
Miscarriage, the punishment for violently causing a woman to miscarry, i. 257. *a.*
Mist, a mist went up to moisten the ground before there was any rain, i. 9. *b.*
Mitre, the mitre of the high-priest described, i. 298. *a.* to be made of linen, i. 298. *b.*
Mispeh, an assembly in Mispeh, to consider the barbarity of a Levite's wife, ii. 206. *a.*
Moab, the signification of the word, i. 79. *a.* the Israelites commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, i. 610. *b.* the gods of Moab, ii. 173. *a.* Moab measured with a line by David, ii. 326. *b.*
Moabite, a Moabite never to enter into the congregation of the Lord, i. 749. *b.*
Mogul, the method of his advancing his favourites, i. 130. *b.*
Mole, an unclean creature, i. 387. *a.*
Moloch, the offering of children to Moloch, i. 215. *b.* an account of him, and of the ceremonies in offering children to him, i. 428. *a.* the punishment inflicted for concealing a worshipper of Moloch, i. 443. *a.* the deity of the Ammonites, ii. 423. *b.*
Molten, what is meant by *molten gods*, i. 330. *a.*
Money, not originally stamped, nor delivered by telling, i. 88. *a.* collected and applied for repairing the temple, ii. 495. *b.*
Month, the year computed by lunar months at the time of the deluge, i. 37. *b.*
Moon, one of the great lights and its use, i. 5. *b.* the feasts of the new moons, i. 528. *a.* the moon stayed at the command of Joshua, ii. 83. *a.* tires like the moon described, ii. 164. *a.*
Mordecai, his descent, ii. 720. *a.* discovers a conspiracy to king Ahasuerus, ii. 722. *b.* he refuses to bow before Haman, ii. 723. *a.* is surprised at the decree for the destruction of the Jews, ii. 724. *b.* arrayed in royal apparel by Haman at the command of the king, ii. 728. *b.* his advancement, ii. 732. *b.* his great honour and character, ii. 733. *b.*
Moriah, what country is meant by the land of Moriah, i. 83. *a.* Solomon's temple built upon the mountain of Moriah, i. 85. *b.* particular reasons for its sanctity, ii. 598. *a.*
Moschi, a people, from whom descended, i. 42. *b.*
Moses, the author of the Pentateuch, i. 1. *a.* the authority of his writings supported by the most ancient pagan writers, i. 28. *a.* excellently qualified to give an account of the deluge, and of all that followed, i. 37. *b.* exercised royal authority over the Israelites, i. 119. *a.* an account of his birth, i. 163. *b.* he is taken out of the Nile by Pharaoh's daughter, and made heir to her private estate, i. 174. *b.* &c. the reason of his name, i. 165. *b.* he slays an Egyptian by a Divine impulse, i. 166. *a.* a ridiculous fable of the Jews concerning him, i. 166. *b.* he keeps the sheep of his father-in-law, i. 168. *b.* became learned in the Egyptian wisdom, *ibid.* he was God's ambassador to the king of Egypt, and viceroy over Israel, i. 171. *a.* he is inspired with fortitude and magnanimity, *ibid.* the original of the fable that he was a leper, i. 173. *b.* had a power of working miracles, and why, i. 174. *a.* an instance of his modesty and humility, i. 175. *a.* he is in fear of present death, i. 177. *a.* an account of his genealogy, i. 183. *a.* he speaks honourably of himself, and why, i. 184. *a.* supposed to have Divine honours given him, i. 202. *b.* his memory preserved among distant nations, i. 213. *a.* the opinion of heathens concerning him, *ibid.* he was placed in the highest degree of familiarity with God, i. 272. *a.* the reason of his being in the cloud forty days and forty nights, i. 275. *b.* he broke the tables of stone, i. 320. *b.* &c. an account of his fasting in the mount, i. 331. *a.* a radiant splendour upon his countenance, *ibid.* he was called by God to enter into the tabernacle, i. 341. *a.* he acted as a priest, i. 371. *a.* a proof of his wisdom in distinguishing between clean and unclean beasts, i. 381. *a.* the excellent spirit that dwelt in him, i. 537. *b.* he married an Ethiopian woman, with an account of her, i. 539. *b.* he was the meekest of men, i. 540. *a.* his familiarity with God, i. 541. *a.* he and Aaron denied to enter into the land of Canaan, i. 582. *b.* a great instance of his integrity, humility, and self-denial, i. 623. *a.* the reason of his writing a journal of the Israelites' travels, i. 640. *b.* he is proved to be the author of the book of Deuteronomy, i. 666. *b.* prophesies of the coming of the Messiah, i. 727. *a.* the charge he gave to Joshua, ii. 29. *b.* the blessing he gave the Israelites before his death, ii. 41. *a.* &c. he is said to have been king in Jeshurun, ii. 43. *a.* &c. his death and burial, ii. 50. *b.* &c. his sepulchre unknown, and the reason, ii. 51. *b.* his character, ii. 52. *b.*
Mothers anciently gave names to their children, i. 27. *a.*
Mountain, mountains were anciently used for places of sacrifice, i. 60. *a.* and for Divine worship, i. 86. *b.* the heathen offered sacrifices upon the tops of mountains, i. 481. *a.*
Mountains of Ararat, where situated, i. 36. *a.*
Mourners not to appear publicly for some time, i. 155. *b.* &c.
Mourning, the ancient rites of mourning, i. 86. *b.* the time and posture relating to it, *ibid.* the ceremonies of mourning among the Egyptians, i. 155. *b.* a particular account of the rites of mourning, i. 157. *a.* one day of mourning at first allowed for the dead, i. 381. *a.* particular rites of mourning among the Jews and other nations, i. 446. *b.* the ceremonies used by the priests in mourning for their near relations, *ibid.* the days of mourning adjusted, ii. 52. *a.*
Mouse, an unclean creature, i. 387. *a.*
Mule, by whom at first invented, i. 118. *b.* kings and princes formerly rode upon mules, ii. 383. *a.*
Multitude, a multitude not to be followed to do evil, i. 265. *a.*
Mummies, the places where they are usually found, i. 159. *a.*
Murder, the punishment of it extended to beasts, i. 38. *b.* the punishment of murder reserved by God in his own hands till the time of Noah, i. 39. *a.* wilful murder punished with death, i. 255. *a.*
Murderer, the wilful murderer taken from the altar and executed, i. 255. *b.* to be drawn by force out of a city of refuge, i. 730. *b.* the murderer to be put to death, i. 649. *a.* &c. no satisfaction to be taken for his life, i. 652. *a.* &c.
Murmuring, the murmuring of the Israelites against Moses and Aaron, i. 228. *a.*
Myrrh, a spice, an account of it, i. 310. *a.*
Mysia, a country, by whom peopled, i. 42. *b.*

NAAMAN the Syrian applies to Elijah to cure his leprosy, ii. 474. *b.*
Nabal, his treatment of David, ii. 292. *a.* his death, ii. 294. *b.*
Nabatæa, a country, from whom named, i. 93. *a.*
Naboth the Jezreelite, his story and death, ii. 456. *b.* &c.

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Nadab and Abihu, an account of their wickedness and punishment, i. 376. *b.* &c.
Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, slain, ii. 440. *a.*
Nahor, a particular account of him, i. 57. *b.*
Naked, Adam and Eve *knew that they were naked*, how this expression is to be understood, i. 17. *a.*
Nakedness, what is meant by *uncovering the nakedness*, i. 424. *b.*
Name, *to call upon the name of the Lord*, what it means, i. 27. *a.* the meaning of the expression, *let us make us a name*, i. 55. *a.* to be called by one's name is as much as to be one's children, i. 145. *b.* &c. the name of God, *I am that I am*, explained, i. 171. *b.* the name given to the children by the Hebrew women upon their circumcision, i. 177. *b.* an account of the name of four letters, i. 181. *a.* the meaning of *taking God's name in vain*, i. 248. *a.* the name of God not to be taken in vain, i. 675. *b.*
Names given to all creatures by Adam, i. 14. *a.* are no way ominous, i. 28. *b.* sometimes given before children are born, i. 69. *b.* anciently given to families from cattle, i. 102. *a.* sometimes given to the children by the mothers, i. 103. *b.* the name of idols to be destroyed, i. 696. *b.*
Naomi, the mother of Ruth, her story, ii. 215. *a.* &c.
Naphtali, an account of the tribe, i. 152. *b.* the numbering of the families descended from him, i. 617. *b.* the blessing of Moses upon that tribe, and the extent of their possessions, ii. 47. *b.* the lot of that tribe in the land of Canaan, ii. 112. *a.*
Nathan, his respectful reprehension of David for the death of Uriah, ii. 335. *b.* he is made tutor to Solomon, ii. 338. *b.* his speech to David upon the conspiracy of Adonijah, ii. 383. *a.* he wrote the Acts of Solomon, ii. 608. *a.*
Nation, seven nations of Canaan devoted to destruction, i. 49. *b.* what is meant by the expression, *a multitude of nations*, i. 146. *a.* a proof of the greatness of the Jewish nation, i. 669. *b.* the reason of utterly destroying the seven nations of Canaan, i. 735. *a.*
Navy, Solomon's navy, ii. 421. *b.*
Nazarite, the law of the Nazarites concerning the growing of their hair, i. 378. *a.* the vow of a Nazarite particularly explained, i. 512. *b.* &c. a Nazarite not to be defiled by the dead, i. 513. *b.*
Nebo, the highest part of Mount Abarim, and the place of Moses's death, ii. 49. *b.*
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon overcomes the king of Egypt, ii. 530. *b.* takes and carries away the spoil of the city of Jerusalem, ii. 531. *b.*
Neck, a chain about the neck, a token of dignity, i. 130. *b.* the form of wringing off the necks of birds in sacrifices, i. 357. *b.*
Necromancer, the meaning of the word, i. 725. *a.*
Nehemiah, the name of one of the books of Scripture, its author, ii. 687. *a.*
Nehemiah, his descent, ii. 687. *a.* his prayer, ii. 687. *b.* he was cupbearer to the king of Persia, ii. 688. *a.* applies to the king for his return to Jerusalem and for materials to build the city, ii. 688. *b.* he surveys the walls of Jerusalem, ii. 689. *b.* orders the workmen in building, ii. 694. *a.* relieves the poor by taking off usury and mortgages, ii. 695. *b.* he curses the people that married strange wives, ii. 715. *a.*
Nehushtan, the name given to the brazen serpent by Hezekiah, ii. 512. *a.*
Neighbour, offices of love and kindness to be done to our neighbour, i. 432. *b.* he is to be rebuked and reproved, i. 433. *a.* to be loved as one's self, i. 433. *b.*
Neptune, the reason of his name, i. 48. *a.*
Nergal, a deity of the Persians, ii. 510. *a.*
Nest, the law in taking of a bird's nest, i. 744. *a.*
Nethinims, supposed to be the same as the Gibeonites, ii. 556. *b.* the reason of the name, ii. 680. *b.*
Nibhaz, a pagan deity, ii. 510. *a.*
Nigh, what is to be understood by *coming nigh to God*, i. 377. *b.*
Night, the night divided into four parts, i. 222. *a.*
Nile, a particular account of its increase, with the observations upon it, i. 129. *b.* the Hebrews employed in digging trenches to convey the water of the Nile, i. 162. *a.* the reason why the water of the Nile was turned into blood, i. 174. *a.* the fruitfulness of Egypt owing to the water of the Nile, i. 693. *b.* this river, the bounds of Judea to the south, ii. 414. *b.* the derivation of the word, *ibid.*
Nimrod, a particular account of him, i. 46. *a.* the same with Orion, i. 46. *b.*
Nineveh, so called from Ninus the son of Nimrod, i. 25. *b.* by whom built, i. 47. *b.*
Niobe, the fable concerning her, from whence derived, i. 78. *a.*
Nisan, the name of one of the Hebrew months, why so called, i. 203. *b.*
Nisroch, a deity of the Assyrians, ii. 518. *b.*
Noah, the signification of his name, i. 30. *a.* called a comforter, *ibid.* his character, i. 31. *b.* where he and his family were bestowed in the ark, i. 32. *b.* Noah and his sons supposed not to cohabit with their wives whilst they were in the ark, i. 37. *b.* made drunk with wine, i. 40. *a.* supposed to be the same with Saturn, i. 51. *b.*
Nob, a city of the priests destroyed, ii. 287. *a.*
Nobles of Israel, who they were, i. 274. *a.*
Nod, the land of Nod why so called, i. 25. *a.*
Nomades, a people, from whom descended and their customs, i. 48. *a.*
Nose, a man with a flat nose denied the priesthood, i. 450. *b.*
Number, broken numbers not taken notice of by writers when they name a round sum, i. 67. *b.*
Numbering, the numbering of the Israelites by Moses, i. 491. *a.* by David, with the circumstances belonging to it, ii. 377. *a.*
Numbers, one of the books of Moses, why so called, i. 490. *a.*
Nurse, nurses anciently kept in the families they belonged to so long as they lived, i. 90. *b.*

Oak, oaks very much reverenced by the ancients, i. 62. *a.* the ancient superstition of worshipping under oaks, i. 696. *a.*
Oaths, how anciently made, i. 90. *a.* the form of an oath in Persia, i. 133. *a.* the religion of an oath in ancient times, i. 156. *a.* accounted sacred among the heathen, i. 248. *b.* the many sorts of oaths, with an account of the oath of testimony, i. 356. *b.* the oath used in the trial of the suspected wife, i. 509. *a.*
Obadiah, his character, ii. 445. *b.*
Obed, the father of Jesse, born, and the meaning of his name, ii. 224. *a.*
Obed-Edom, the ark of God brought into his house, ii. 322. *b.*
Obedience, the blessings promised to the Israelites upon their obedience, i. 478. *a.* &c. long life promised as a reward for obedience to parents, i. 676. *b.*
Observer, what is meant by an observer of times, i. 724. *b.*
Ochre, why the Egyptians marked their cattle with red ochre, i. 207. *a.*
Oded, a prophet, his advice to the Israelites, ii. 639. *b.*
Offering, the difference between an offering and a sacrifice, i. 342. *a.* the offerings made at the feast of unleavened bread, i. 457. *a.* an account of the offering of jealousy, i. 508. *a.* the offering of a Nazarite, i. 514. *b.* offerings made at the dedication of the altar, i. 518. *a.* &c. made towards the building of the temple after the captivity, ii. 667. *b.*
Officer, the discipline used among the officers in the Egyptian court, i. 127. *a.* officers among the Israelites, their business, i. 714. *a.* their speech at the first mustering of the army, i. 733. *a.* officers belonging to courts of justice, ii. 55. *a.* a list of the valiant officers and their exploits that served David in his wars, ii. 374. *b.*
Og, king of Bashan, overcome by the Israelites, i. 595. *b.*
Oil, anciently used in consecrating things before the law of Moses, i. 101. *a.* oil-olive, the nature of it, i. 289. *a.* an account of the anointing oil, i. 301. *a.* the ingredients of the holy anointing oil with the use of it, i. 310. *b.* no holy oil in the second temple, i. 311. *b.* oil used in sacrifices, i. 346. *b.* oil omitted in sin-offerings, i. 358. *a.*
Olive, an olive-leaf brought by the dove to Noah out of Assyria, i. 37. *a.*
Omer, a measure among the Jews, i. 230. *b.*
Omri, a king of Israel, his character, ii. 442. *a.* and death, ii. 442. *b.*
On, a city, its situation, i. 131. *a.*
Onan, the nature and aggravation of his sin, i. 122. *b.*
Onions, commonly eaten by the Egyptians, i. 532. *b.*
Onycha, a spice, an account of it, i. 312. *a.*
Onyx-stones, the names of the children of Israel graven upon two of them, i. 291. *b.*

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Ophir, the name of different places, where situated, i. 53. *a*. Solomon's trade to Ophir, a place in India, ii. 418. *b*.
Oracle, the setting up of the oracle in the temple, ii. 401. *b*.
Ordinance, the meaning of the word, i. 227. *a*.
Organ, the first inventor of it, i. 26. *a*.
Orion the constellation, why the dog and the hare joined with it, i. 46. *b*.
Oronooko, a river, its overflowings in America, i. 35. *b*.
Orpheus had read the books of Moses, i. 3. *a*.
Osiris, the feast of Osiris, from whence it was derived, i. 209. *a*. an Egyptian god, the same with Apis, i. 317. *b*. represented by a black ox, ii. 526. *a*.
Osprey, an unclean bird, i. 384. *a*.
Ossifrage, an unclean bird, i. 384. *a*.
Othniel, an account of his bravery, ii. 100. *a*. his victory over Chushan-rishathaim, and death, ii. 138. *b*. &c.
Outlawry among the Jews, ii. 679. *a*.
Owl, sacred to Minerva, i. 381. *b*. an unclean bird, i. 384. *b*. the little owl and the great owl unclean, i. 385. *a*.
Ox, red oxen only sacrificed in Egypt, i. 193. *b*. the law concerning an ox goring with his horns, i. 258. *a*. &c. the pushing a man or a maid-servant, i. 259. *a*. the law concerning one ox hurting another, *ibid.* the ox that treads out the corn not to be muzzled, i. 761. *a*. six hundred men slain by an ox-goad, ii. 142. *a*. the oxen that supported the molten sea, described, ii. 405. *b*.

PADAN-ARAM, where situated, i. 94. *b*.
Palm-trees delight in watery places, i. 227. *b*. branches of palm-trees used upon the feast of tabernacles, i. 463. *b*.
Palmyra, a city built by Solomon, ii. 417. *a*.
Papyrus, an account of the Egyptian Papyrus, i. 164. *a*.
Parables, two sorts of prophetic parables, i. 100. *a*. the meaning of *taking up a parable*, i. 601. *b*.
Paradise, the entrance of it from the east, i. 20. *b*.
Paran, the wilderness of Paran, where situated, i. 82. *a*. how God is said to shine forth from Mount Paran, ii. 41. *b*.
Parents obliged to have their children circumcised, i. 71. *b*. disobedience to parents how punished, i. 250. *a*. the law among the Jews and heathens to enforce obedience to parents, i. 676. *b*.
Parricide, the punishment of it by the Jews and other nations, i. 256. *a*.
Parvaim, what is meant by the gold of Parvaim, ii. 599. *a*.
Pasitigris, a river, an account of it, i. 11. *b*.
Passing between the pieces of dissected beasts the ancient way of making covenants, i. 68. *a*.
Passover, the institution of the Passover, with the reasons of it, i. 203. *b*. the particular rites observed at the eating of it, i. 206. *a*. the reason of the name, i. 207. *a*. the time of its being eaten, i. 207. *b*. the children instructed at this feast, i. 209. *a*. it was frequently called a *sacrifice*, *ibid.* called likewise *my sacrifice*, and *my feast*, i. 268. *b*. called the *Korban of the Lord*, i. 524. *a*. persons under defilement, or upon a journey, obliged to keep the Passover, i. 524. *b*. the word *passover* sometimes includes all the paschal sacrifices, i. 611. *b*. &c. a Passover kept in the days of Josiah, ii. 528. *b*. and in the days of Hezekiah, ii. 645. *a*. &c.
Pastoral, the pastoral kingdom in Egypt, an account of it, i. 141. *b*.
Patriarch, the employment of the Patriarchs was to feed cattle, i. 21. *b*. the reason of their long lives, i. 28. *a*.
Patros, a country, by whom inhabited, i. 48. *a*.
Peace, what is meant by *the covenant of peace*, i. 613. *b*.
Peace to be offered to a city before it be attacked, i. 732. *a*. &c.
Peace-offerings, a particular account of them, i. 239. *b*. the various kinds of them, i. 366. *a*. more fully explained, i. 343. *a*. different kinds, and the manner of offering them, i. 349. *b*. the difference between them and whole burnt-offerings, i. 351. *a*. the flesh of peace-offerings in what manner to be eaten, i. 367. *b*.
Peacock, a Persian bird, ii. 422. *a*.
Pecunia, the derivation of the word, i. 142. *b*.
Pekah, a king of Israel, ii. 503. *b*. is slain, ii. 504. *a*.
Pekahiah, a king of Israel, his character, ii. 503. *b*.
Peleg, the reason of his name, i. 51. *b*.
Pelican, an unclean bird, i. 385. *a*.
Pelothit, the supposed name of one of Lot's daughters, i. 76. *b*.
Peloponnesus, by whom peopled, i. 43. *a*.
Pelusium, supposed to be built by the Israelites, i. 161. *b*.
Pentapolis, or five cities, an account of them, i. 62. *b*.
People, the meaning of the expression *a special people*, i. 682. *b*. the meaning of *being gathered to his people*, ii. 41. *a*.
Peor, a famous high place in the country of Moab, i. 605. *a*.
Perjury, how punished, i. 248. *a*. &c.
Perizzites, a people, an account of them, i. 68. *b*. rough and uncivilized, ii. 105. *a*.
Perpetuity expressed in Scripture by the durableness of mountains, i. 154. *a*.
Persian religion derived from the books of Moses, i. 169. *b*.
Pestilence, a pestilence sent upon Israel because David had numbered the people, ii. 379. *a*.
Phœnicians, descended from the Canaanites, i. 44. *b*.
Phalga, a town upon the Euphrates, from whom named, i. 57. *a*.
Phallu, from him proceeded the Phalluites, i. 139. *b*.
Pharaoh, the ancient name of the Egyptian kings, the derivation of it, i. 60. *b*. the meaning of the expression, *by the life of Pharaoh*, i. 132. *b*. an account of that Pharaoh who was king of Egypt in the time of Moses, i. 170. *b*. supposed to have been a magician, i. 187. *a*. the reason of his walking by the river Nile, i. 187. *a*. his army is overthrown in the Red Sea, i. 222. *b*.
Pharaoh-Necholi, king of Egypt, put the land of Judah under tribute, ii. 530. *a*.
Pharez, his birth, and the reason of his name, i. 125. *a*.
Phasis, the river Tigris so called, i. 11. *b*.
Phicol, a name of dignity, i. 97. *a*.
Philistim, a people, their original, i. 48. *b*. they were not circumcised, i. 71. *b*.
Philistine, the gods of the Philistines, ii. 173. *b*. this people were famous archers, ii. 305. *b*.
Phinehas, his zeal by killing offenders with his own hands, i. 612. *b*. stabs a man and a woman by Divine instigation, *ibid.* rewarded with an everlasting priesthood, i. 613. *b*.
Phrygia, a country, from whence it received its name, i. 42. *a*.
Phut, one of the sons of Ham settled in Africa, i. 44. *b*.
Phylacteries, the original of them among the Jews, i. 214. *b*.
Physicians, great men anciently attended by physicians, i. 155. *a*.
Picture-drawer, the trade forbidden among the Jews, i. 247. *a*.
Pigeons, the reason of their being offered, and the manner of offering them, i. 345. *b*.
Pi-hahiroth, an account of the place, i. 218. *a*.
Pilgrimage, human life so called, i. 142. *b*.
Pillar of salt, relating to Lot's wife, particularly explained, i. 78. *a*. pillars for idolatrous uses only unlawful, i. 101. *b*. a pillar erected as a testimony of friendship, i. 109. *a*. a monument of Divine goodness, i. 116. *b*. a particular account of its consecration, *ibid.* pillars erected over the graves of the dead, i. 117. *a*. the pillar of a cloud that led the Israelites, i. 217. *a*. the form and appearance of it, i. 217. *b*. it was dark by day, and shining by night, i. 341. *a*. a pillar erected by Absalom to perpetuate his memory, ii. 358. *b*. the pillars of brass set up by Solomon described, ii. 404. *b*.
Pison, a river, an account of it, i. 11. *b*.
Pistachioes, a fruit, their quality, i. 134. *b*.
Pit, the punishment for any damage that follows the opening of a pit, i. 259. *a*.
Pitch, the same with bitumen, in great plenty about Babylon, i. 32. *b*.
Places, places set apart from the beginning for public sacrifices, i. 22. *a*. an account of the holy place, most holy in the tabernacle, i. 286. *a*. the times of entering the most holy place explained, i. 406. *b*. the Israelites sacrificed in high places till the temple was built, i. 696. *b*. &c.
Plagues, an account of the Egyptian plagues, i. 187. *b*. the first plague when inflicted, *ibid.* the plague of the Egyptian waters being turned into blood, i. 188. *a*. an examination of the plague of leprosy, i. 392. *a*. &c. the plague of leprosy in a house explained, i. 402. *a*.
Plants, how originally produced, i. 4. *b*.
Plate, the plate of gold upon the mitre of the high-priest described, i. 297. *b*. the inscription upon it, *ibid.*
Play, the meaning of the expression, *rising up to play*, i. 318. *b*.
Pledge, the law concerning raiment left for a pledge, i. 263. *b*. the form of delivering a pledge, i. 758. *b*. the meaning of the expression, *take their pledge*, ii. 273. *a*.
Plough, the Israelites not to plough with an ox and an ass together, i. 749. *a*.

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Plurality of persons in the Godhead proved, i. 20. *b.*
Poetry, an idle conceit that Lamech invented poetry, i. 26. *b.* a particular account of the Hebrew poetry, i. 223. *b.* the nature of Scripture poetry, and the poetry of the heathens, ii. 30. *b.*
Pollution contracted by the touch of carcasses, i. 387. *b.*
Polygamy contrary to the Divine institution, i. 14. *b.* but yet allowed, i. 427. *a.* not indulged to the high-priest, i. 449. *a.*
Pomegranates, the pomegranates upon the robe of the high-priest described, i. 297. *a.*
Poor, the law concerning the poor, i. 263. *b.* a poor man not to be favoured in his cause, i. 265. *b.* nor to be injured, i. 266. *a.* the produce of the seventh year to be given to the poor, i. 267. *a.* the poor to be relieved according to their wants, i. 709. *b.*
Porch, the dimensions of the porch of the temple, ii. 399. *b.*
Porter of the door of the tabernacle, an office, ii. 558. *a.* the porters of the temple, ii. 558. *b.* the division of the porters, ii. 583. *a.* settled by lot, ii. 584. *a.*
Portion, the wife not to bring a portion among the Hebrews, ii. 278. *a.*
Post, the Jews obliged to write their laws upon the posts of their houses and their gates, i. 680. *a.*
Pot, an account of the pot of manna, i. 233. *b.*
Presenting an offering explained, i. 408. *b.*
Prey, the difference between the prey and the spoil, i. 633. *a.* the division of the prey after the battle, i. 634. *a.*
Priest, the office of a priest at first performed by the master of the family, i. 22. *a.* women-priests consecrated to the service of Priapus, and men-priests to the service of Ashtaroth, i. 124. *a.* the privileges enjoyed by priests in ancient times, i. 143. *b.* the priest of Midian a worshipper of the true God, i. 167. *a.* the Israelites are said to be a kingdom of priests, i. 243. *a.* in what sense the priests were called kings, *ibid.* the priests not to officiate without the garments of the priesthood, i. 290. *b.* the heathen priests sacrificed with crowns upon their heads, i. 298. *b.* the form of consecrating the Hebrew priests, i. 301. *b.* their share in meat-offerings, i. 366. *a.* and in peace-offerings, i. 368. *a.* the reason of their being forbidden wine and strong drink in the time of their ministration, i. 379. *b.* the priests took upon them the sins of the people, i. 380. *a.* exceedingly skilful in discovering the leprosy, i. 391. *b.* they were not to make baldness upon their heads, &c. i. 447. *a.* restraints laid upon them in their marriages, i. 447. *b.* they were to be without blemish, i. 450. *a.* priests with blemishes not to come near the altar of burnt-offering, i. 451. *a.* exempt from common service among the Jews and heathens, i. 493. *b.* the near relation they had to the Divine Majesty, i. 496. *b.* the manner of their dividing the holy things, i. 506. *b.* they were punished for the profanation of the sanctuary, i. 569. *b.* how they were to eat their part of the oblations, i. 571. *a.* they had a more honourable provision made for them than the Levites, i. 575. *a.* had the sole privilege of blessing the people, i. 691. *a.* allowed to purchase estates, i. 723. *b.* the office of the priest called *the anointed of war*, i. 732. *b.* priests to keep themselves from the lawful use of women before they performed their office, ii. 284. *a.* the courses of the priests settled by David, ii. 580. *a.* their courses and portion settled by Hezekiah, ii. 648. *b.*
Priesthood, not confined to the first-born, i. 22. *a.* limited to the family of Aaron, *ibid.* an everlasting priesthood settled in that family, i. 339. *a.* the great imperfection of the legal priesthood, i. 418. *b.* the priesthood denied to persons that had any blemish, i. 450. *a.* the different families that succeeded to the priesthood, i. 613. *b.* the priesthood transferred by Jeroboam from the family of Aaron, ii. 431. *b.* the care of the Jews to keep the priesthood pure, ii. 666. *b.*
Prince, the prince had anciently the right of sacrificing, i. 22. *a.*
Prophaning the name of God forbidden, i. 431. *b.*
Profession, the solemn professions made at the offering of the first-fruits, i. 766. *b.* &c.
Punishment for lying with a woman-servant betrothed, i. 434. *b.* the punishments threatened to the Israelites upon their disobedience, i. 478. *b.* &c.
Prophecy begins in a vision, and ends in a deep sleep, i. 67. *a.* the several degrees of it, i. 536. *a.*
Prophet, the office of a prophet explained, i. 79. *b.* many ways whereby God communicated himself to the prophets, i. 115. *a.* colleges of prophets erected, i. 540. *b.* the custom of bringing a present to a prophet when he was to be consulted, i. 595. *b.* the punishment of a false prophet tempting the people to idolatry, i. 701. *b.* &c. the trial and punishment of a false prophet, i. 728. *a.* who are meant by *the sons of the prophets*, ii. 252. *b.* a prophet in an extraordinary case might offer sacrifice, ii. 269. *b.* the story of the prophet slain by a lion, ii. 433. *a.* &c.
Proselytes of the gate among the Egyptians, i. 210. *b.* the two kinds of proselytes among the Jews, i. 421. *b.* encouragements to strangers to become proselytes, i. 554. *b.*
Proseucha, a place of prayer, supposed to have been erected by Joshua in Shechem, ii. 123. *b.*
Protervia, a feast among the Romans, the rites observed at it, i. 206. *a.*
Psalms sung in the time of vintage, i. 463. *a.*
Pul, a king of Assyria, invades the land of Israel, ii. 503. *a.*
Pur, the casting of Pur explained, ii. 723. *b.*
Purification, the law of purification after child-bearing among Jews and heathens, i. 389. *b.* &c. the purification of the leper, i. 397. *a.* the strict care used in purifications on the day of expiation, i. 418. *a.* purifications used for pollutions by the dead, i. 579. *b.* after a battle, i. 634. *a.*
Purim, the feast of Purim, the reason of it, and the manner of its celebration, ii. 735. *b.*

QUAILS, an account of the quails that fell among the Israelites in the wilderness, i. 230. *a.* a more particular history of them, i. 538. *a.*

RABBAH, a city of the Ammonites taken by David with the nature of their punishment, ii. 339. *a.*
Rabbits, forbidden to be kept near corn-fields, i. 260. *b.*
Rab-shekah, his harangue before the walls of Jerusalem, ii. 513. *b.*
Rachel, the signification of her name, i. 102. *a.* Jacob's chief wife, i. 106. *a.* her design in stealing her father's images, i. 107. *b.* supposed to have kept her father's teraphim, i. 115. *b.*
Ragau, a town in Media, why so called, i. 57. *a.*
Rahab the harlot, her treatment of the spies sent by Joshua, ii. 56. *a.* &c. she and her family saved in the destruction of Jericho, ii. 70. *a.*
Raiment, white raiment used in the offices of religion, i. 115. *b.* the raiment of the Israelites in the wilderness waxed not old, i. 685. *b.*
Rain, the rain at the deluge continued a hundred and fifty days, i. 35. *b.* the season of the first and the latter rain, i. 694. *a.*
Rained, *the Lord rained from the Lord*, the meaning of the expression, i. 77. *a.*
Rainbow, supposed not to have appeared before the flood, i. 39. *b.* what particularly to be observed from the colours of it, *ibid.* a token that God would no more drown the earth, *ibid.*
Ram, the ram offered by Abraham a type of Christ, i. 85. *b.* an account of the ram of consecration, i. 299. *b.* how the blood was disposed, i. 303. *a.* rams' skins the covering of the tabernacle, i. 284. *a.* &c.
Ramah, a college of prophets there, ii. 299. *a.*
Rameses, a territory inhabited by the Israelites, i. 144. *a.* the name of a city built by the Israelites in Egypt, i. 161. *b.*
Raven, a raven sent out of the ark to make discoveries, i. 36. *b.* an unclean bird, i. 384. *b.*
Razor, no razor to come upon the head of a Nazarite, i. 613. *a.*
Rebekah courted to be wife to Isaac, i. 90. *a.* inquired of the Lord when she was with child, i. 94. *b.*
Rechabites, the country they came from, i. 242. *a.*
Recorder, the nature of the office under king David, ii. 328. *b.*
Red, a colour odious to the Egyptians, i. 576. *a.*
Redemption, the laws concerning the redemption of houses and lands, i. 473. *a.* the redemption of a Hebrew sold, i. 476. *b.* the right of redemption of lands by the delivery of a shoe, ii. 222. *b.*
Refuge, places of refuge appointed for the involuntary manslayer, i. 255. *a.* no satisfaction to be taken for a person fled to a city of refuge, i. 652. *b.* the roads and other circumstances belonging to them particularly explained, i. 729. *b.* cities of refuge appointed by Joshua, ii. 114. *b.*
Rehoboam consults the old and the young men about the management of his kingdom, ii. 428. *a.* a rebellion against him, upon which he flies to Jerusalem, ii. 429. *a.* &c. is dissuaded by a pro-

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phet from falling upon the revolters, ii. 430. *a.* his death, ii. 431. *b.* he humbles himself upon the invasion of the king of Egypt, ii. 611. *a.*
Rehoboth, a city, where situated, i. 119. *a.*
Release, a full account of the year of release, i. 253. *b.* it was a full acquittance for money lent, i. 708. *b.* but not to foreigners, i. 709. *a.*
Religion not to be imposed by force, i. 72. *a.*
Rending of the clothes, a rite of mourning, i. 378. *b.*
Repent, how God is said to repent, i. 31. *b.*
Rephaims, a people, an account of them, i. 63. *a.* where they settled, i. 68. *b.*
Rephidim, the name of a place, its situation, i. 234. *b.*
Report, a false report not to be raised, i. 265. *a.*
Reproach, what is meant by *the reproach of Egypt*, ii. 65. *b.*
Rest, for what reason the sabbatical rest was instituted, i. 676. *a.*
Restitution, the law of restitution for damage done by beasts, i. 260. *a.* concerning cattle left in another's hand to keep, i. 261. *a.* the laws of restitution concerning breach of trust, fraud, and robbery, i. 360. *b.*
Resurrection, a prophecy of the resurrection of the dead, ii. 38. *b.*
Reuben, his concern for his brother Joseph, i. 121. *b.* the loss of his authority and dignity, i. 147. *a.* nothing great performed by his posterity, *ibid.* the numbering of the families descended from him, i. 615. *a.* the blessing of Moses upon the tribe of Reuben, ii. 43. *b.* the share they possessed in the land of Canaan, ii. 94. *a.*
Revelations received by persons when they were awake, i. 606. *a.*
Revenge forbidden, i. 433. *b.*
Reverence, the meaning of the word, ii. 723. *a.*
Rezon rebels against king Solomon, ii. 425. *a.*
Rhodanus, a river, from whom it received its name, i. 43. *b.*
Rib, Eve formed from one of Adam's ribs, i. 14. *a.*
Riband, a riband to be worn by the Israelites upon the fringes of their garments, with the reason, i. 558. *b.*
Riddle, the ancient custom of proposing riddles at feasts, ii. 187. *b.*
Righteous, what is meant by *dying the death of the righteous*, i. 602. *a.*
Rimmon an idol of the Syrians, ii. 476. *a.*
Rings, used for the purposes of idolatry, i. 115. *b.* a ring a token of dignity, i. 130. *b.* the rings belonging to the ark described, i. 278. *a.*
River of Eden, an account of it, i. 11. *a.* of Egypt, its course, i. 68. *a.* what is frequently included by the word *river*, i. 189. *b.*
Rizpah, Saul's concubine, her piety towards her sons, ii. 368. *b.*
Robbing forbidden, i. 431. *b.*
Robe, an account of the robe, one of the garments of the high-priest, i. 296. *b.*
Rock, water brought out of the rock by Moses, i. 235. *b.* water produced by smiting the rock, i. 582. *b.*
Rod, an account of the rod of Moses, i. 173. *a.* the prophets carried a rod in their hand, i. 185. *b.* Moses's rod held up as a banner against his enemies, i. 236. *b.* the meaning of the expression, *to pass under the rod*, i. 488. *b.* the history of Aaron's rod, with the account of its blossoming, i. 567. *a.* &c. it was laid up before the testimony, i. 568. *a.*
Romans, the Romans descended from Japheth, i. 41. *a.*
Root, the meaning of the word in the song of Deborah, ii. 148. *b.*
Ruler of the temple, an officer, ii. 558. *a.*
Rulers of tribes, an ancient form of government among the Arabians, i. 94. *a.* the particular qualifications of rulers of the people, i. 240. *b.* four orders of rulers instituted, i. 241. *a.* rulers were the great officers and judges of the people, i. 355. *a.*
Rumps, the rumps of sheep of a great weight in the eastern countries, i. 351. *a.*
Ruth, the name of one of the books of Scripture, ii. 214. *a.*
Ruth, her country and marriage, ii. 215. *a.* goes a gleaning into the fields of Boaz, and is kindly received, ii. 217. *a.* lies all night in the thrashing-floor, at the feet of Boaz, ii. 220. *a.*

SABBATH not kept by the patriarchs as by the Jews, i. 9. *a.* some account of it before the law, i. 113. *a.* uncertain whether it was the seventh day from the creation, i. 229. *a.* a day of rest from all manner of labour, i. 232. *a.* 456. *b.* the Jews' mistake concerning it, i. 232. *b.* for what reasons the sabbath was sanctified, i. 249. *a.* and blessed, i. 249. *b.* it was a sign to the Israelites, i. 314. *b.* the punishment for working therein, i. 315. *a.* the observation of it, the great preservative of religion, i. 332. *b.* the sabbath the greatest of all solemnities appointed for assemblies, i. 456. *b.* many days called sabbaths, besides the seventh day, i. 460. *a.* the punishment for breaking the sabbath, i. 558. *a.* the offerings appointed to be made upon the sabbath, i. 624. *b.* what is meant by *the covert for the sabbath*, ii. 506. *b.* the Jews punished because the land did not enjoy her sabbaths, ii. 662. *a.* the Jews oblige themselves to buy nothing on the sabbath-day, ii. 706. *b.*
Sabbatical year, its institution, and the time of its beginning, i. 468. *a.* punishments inflicted upon the Israelites for not observing it, i. 482. *a.*
Sabeans, four different people called by that name, and from whom they were severally descended, i. 45. *a.* an account of the Sabeans that carried away Job's cattle, i. 92. *a.*
Sabæi, a people, where situated, i. 45. *b.*
Sackcloth, the putting on of sackcloth an instance of deep mourning, i. 121. *b.*
Sacrifices, an account of the original of sacrifices, i. 20. *a.* the first sacrifices consisted of the fruits of the ground, i. 21. *b.* originally of Divine institution, i. 22. *a.* the law concerning eucharistical sacrifices, i. 206. *a.* human sacrifices unacceptable to God, i. 215. *b.* sacrifices used in all the world, i. 252. *a.* to be offered only unto the Lord, i. 262. *b.* were offered by every man in his own family till the law of Moses, i. 273. *a.* an ancient custom of feasting upon the sacrifices, i. 318. *b.* the manner of cutting the sacrifices in pieces, i. 344. *b.* the place where they were to be slain, i. 345. *a.* sacrifices for sin were offered to God as a ransom for the sacrificer, i. 353. *b.* the daily sacrifice called a burnt-offering, and why, i. 353. *b.* no sacrifices appointed by the law of Moses for capital offences, i. 418. *a.* sacrifices always brought to the place of public worship by the Jews and heathens, i. 419. *b.* the sacrifices appointed at the feasts of trumpets, i. 627. *b.* sacrifices to be eaten before God, i. 697. *b.* in other places, where neither the ark nor the tabernacle was, ii. 250. *a.* the sacrifices offered by Solomon at the dedication of the temple, ii. 413. *b.* the sacrifice of Elijah miraculously consumed, ii. 449. *a.* sacrifices to be offered for the sins of the whole congregation, ii. 643. *b.*
Sagan, the high-priest's vicar, an account of him, ii. 284. *b.*
Salem, a city, not the same with Jerusalem, i. 64. *b.*
Salt, Salt Sea, an account of it, i. 63. *a.* more particularly described, i. 77. *b.* the salt of the covenant to be used in meat-offerings, i. 348. *b.* salt to be used with all sacrifices, i. 349. *a.*
Samaria is besieged by the Syrians, ii. 479. *b.* a grievous famine in Samaria, *ibid.* the siege is miraculously raised, ii. 481. *b.* is taken by the king of Assyria, ii. 507. *b.* and peopled by a colony of his own nation, ii. 509. *a.*
Samaritans, from whom they received their name, i. 49. *b.* an account of them, ii. 511. *a.*
Samson born, and the reason of his name, ii. 186. *a.* he falls in love with a woman of Timnath, ii. 186. *b.* kills a lion, ii. 187. *a.* what he meant by the expression, of *ploughing with his heifer*, ii. 188. *b.* he catches three hundred foxes, ii. 189. *b.* slays a thousand men, with the jawbone of an ass, ii. 191. *a.* falls in love with a harlot, ii. 192. *b.* is beset by the Philistines, ii. 193. *b.* is taken, bound, and his eyes are put out, ii. 194. *b.* &c. destroys a number of the Philistines, and perishes with them, ii. 196. *a.* his burial, and the time of his government, ii. 196. *b.* &c.
Samuel, the name of two books of Scripture, an account of them, ii. 225. *a.*
Samuel, his birth, ii. 228. *a.* he is brought to Eli the high-priest, ii. 228. *b.* he ministers at the tabernacle, ii. 231. *b.* is called by God, who denounces a sentence against Eli for the wickedness of his sons, ii. 234. *b.* he prays and offers sacrifices for the people, and is accepted, ii. 244. *b.* he goes a circuit through the country every year to do justice, ii. 245. *b.* he gives the people the character of a king that should reign over them, ii. 247. *a.* is commanded to anoint Saul king over Israel, ii. 250. *b.* his speech and appeal to the people in Gilgal, ii. 257. *a.* the shape of his mantle, ii. 268. *b.* his death and burial, ii. 291. *b.*
Sanballat the Horonite, an enemy to the Jews, ii. 689. *b.* conspires to hinder the building of the city, ii. 693. *b.* threatens to complain to the king, ii. 697. *a.*
Sanctify, the meaning of the word, i. 213. *b.* in what sense the priests were sanctified to minister before God, i. 377. *b.*

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Sanctifying the seventh day, what, i. 8. *b.*
Sanctuary, the offerings made for building the sanctuary, i. 276. *a.* it was designed as a house of residence for God, i. 277. *a.* the sanctuary of God to be reverenced, i. 438. *b.* and not to be defiled, i. 442. *b.*
Sanhedrin, the great Sanhedrin always followed the tabernacle to decide causes, i. 619. *b.* they had the power of trying and punishing a city tempted to idolatry, i. 704. *a.* consisted principally of priests and Levites, i. 717. *b.* the exercise of their power often interrupted by great changes in the nation, i. 718. *b.* the punishment of disobeying their decrees, i. 719. *b.*
Sapphire, one of the stones set in the breast-plate, i. 293. *b.*
Saracens, an account of their original, i. 72. *b.* the manner of their living, i. 82. *a.*
Sarah, a particular account of her behaviour in Egypt, i. 60. *a.* the changing of her name, and the reason of it, i. 72. *b.* her pedigree, and in what sense she was Abraham's sister, i. 80. *a.* the only woman whose entire age is set down in Scripture, i. 86. *b.*
Sardius, one of the stones set in the breast-plate, i. 293. *a.*
Sarmatæ, a people, why so called, i. 42. *a.*
Saturn, the same with Abraham, i. 84. *b.*
Saul, his descent, goes to Samuel to inquire after his father's asses, ii. 249. *a.* is anointed by Samuel king over Israel, ii. 251. *b.* the signs he received from Samuel to strengthen his faith, ii. 252. *a.* he prophesies, ii. 253. *b.* is chosen king by lot, ii. 254. *b.* raises an army and overcomes the Ammonites, ii. 256. *b.* &c. is anointed in Ramah, chosen in Mispeh, and acknowledged king in Gilgal, ii. 257. *a.* presumptuously offers a burnt-offering, ii. 260. *b.* his family cut off from enjoying the kingdom, ii. 261. *a.* destroys the Amalekites, but spares the king, ii. 267. *a.* is troubled with an evil spirit, ii. 270. *b.* throws a javelin at David, ii. 277. *a.* he prophesies, ii. 280. *b.* applies to a woman with a familiar spirit, ii. 299. *a.* &c. the manner of his death and burial, ii. 305. *b.* seven of his sons slain to give satisfaction to the Gibeonites, ii. 367. *b.* &c. his bones removed by David and buried in the sepulchre of his fathers, ii. 368. *b.* his head fastened in the temple of Dagon, and his body buried under an oak in Jabesh, ii. 560. *a.*
Savour, *a sweet savour*, the meaning of the expression, i. 345. *a.*
Scabbed, a man scabbed denied the priesthood, i. 451. *a.*
Scabby, the occasion of the story, that the Egyptians drove the Israelites out of Egypt because they were scabby, i. 195. *b.*
Scaffold, a brazen scaffold made by Solomon, ii. 602. *b.*
Scall upon the head, the law of Moses concerning it, i. 394. *b.*
Scape-goat, the ceremonies belonging to it explained, i. 409. *a.* &c. the ceremony of laying the high-priest's hands upon the head of the scape-goat, i. 412. *b.* &c. he was to bear upon him all the iniquities of the people, i. 414. *a.* and was an evident representation of Christ, *ibid.* he is let go into the wilderness, i. 414. *b.*
Scarlet-cloth, tied upon the horns of the scape-goat, i. 415. *a.*
Sceptre, a full account of the prophecy, *the sceptre shall not depart from Judah*, i. 148. *b.* the sceptre that was to rise out of Israel explained, i. 608. *b.* the meaning of *holding out the golden sceptre*, ii. 726. *a.*
Schechinah, a definition of it, i. 12. *b.* in what manner it appeared to our first parents after the fall, i. 17. *b.* the common manner of its appearance, i. 68. *a.* never appeared in a human figure, i. 111. *b.* went before the Israelites in the wilderness, i. 217. *a.* descended like flames of fire, i. 245. *a.*
Schoterim, a sort of officers in the Hebrew republic, i. 180. *a.*
Scribe, a teacher of the people, ii. 676. *b.*
Scurvy, a scurvy man denied the priesthood, i. 451. *a.*
Scythians, their dispute with the Egyptians about their antiquity, i. 36. *a.* descended from Magog, i. 42. *a.*
Sea, the Dead Sea, an account of it, i. 77. *b.* the reason of its name, *ibid.* the Red Sea, why so called, i. 200. *b.* the memory of the division of the Red Sea, preserved by the heathen, i. 221. *b.* the molten sea made by Solomon, ii. 405. *b.* the Red Sea the same as the sea of Edom, ii. 418. *a.* Ahaz removes the brazen sea from the oxen that were under it, ii. 506. *b.*
Seed of the woman, who is meant by it, i. 18. *b.* why the Messiah promised from the woman's seed, i. 19. *a.* the seed of Abraham particularly explained, i. 86. *a.* the blessed seed, or the Messiah hoped for by all pious people in ancient times, i. 104. *a.* a field not to be sown with mingled seed, i. 434. *a.* the involuntary emission of seed in what manner purified, i. 404. *b.* &c.
Seed, a vineyard not to be sown with divers seeds, i. 744. *b.* &c.
Seer, an account of his qualifications, i. 184. *b.* &c.
Seir, a mountainous country, by whom inhabited, i. 118. *a.* situated in the country of Edom, i. 609. *a.* how God is said to rise up from Seir, ii. 41. *b.*
Semiramis, an account of her, i. 46. *b.*
Sennacherib king of Assyria slain, ii. 518. *b.*
Separation, an account of the separation of women after childbearing, i. 389. *b.* &c. separation from the tabernacle explained, i. 406. *a.* the separation of a Nazarite explained, i. 512. *b.* the use of the water of separation, i. 578. *b.*
Separated, the children of Israel for many reasons separated from other people, i. 445. *b.*
Sepulchres understood to belong to religion, i. 87. *b.*
Seraphim, why the name of the highest angels, i. 15. *b.*
Serapis, an Egyptian god, an account of him, i. 317. *a.*
Serpents, an account of the nature of serpents, particularly of that which tempted Eve, i. 15. *a.* the serpent cursed after the fall, i. 18. *a.* the reason of it, *ibid.* the strength of the serpent lies in his head, i. 18. *b.* an account of the serpents raised by the magicians of Egypt, i. 186. *b.* fiery serpents sent among the Israelites, i. 587. *a.* the history of the brazen serpent, i. 588. *b.* the Indians worship a serpent upon a pole, i. 589. *a.* the brazen serpent made by Moses, destroyed by Hezekiah, ii. 511. *b.*
Servants, the law concerning the buying and manumission of servants, i. 253. *b.* the killing of a servant punished with death, i. 257. *a.* the distinction concerning servants of another nation, i. 257. *b.* liberty proclaimed to servants on the year of jubilee, i. 470. *a.* the law concerning an Israelite sold to be a servant, i. 475. *a.* the circumstances of dismissing a Hebrew servant that was sold, i. 710. *b.* the ear of a maid-servant not to be bored, i. 711. *a.* the case of the servant of another nation turned Jew, i. 752. *b.* a hired servant not to be oppressed, i. 759. *a.*
Serug, a particular account of him, i. 57. *b.*
Servitude, Israelites sold into servitude to return to their families on the year of jubilee, i. 470. *a.*
Seth, the reason of the name, i. 27. *a.* said to be the inventor of letters and writing, *ibid.* his posterity, except the family of Noah, destroyed by the flood, i. 31. *a.*
Seven, an indication of an indeterminate but a great number, i. 24. *b.* why seven couple of clean beasts were preserved in the ark, i. 34. *a.* a particular account of the number *seven*, i. 126. *b.* seven days the time of mourning among the Jews, i. 157. *a.* the number *seven* observed among the Jews and heathens, i. 353. *a.* particularly by the Moabites, i. 600. *a.* &c.
Seventh day, how sanctified and blessed, i. 9. *b.* the ceremonies to be observed on every seventh year, i. 468. *a.*
Seventy, the court of seventy elders appointed, and their business, i. 534. *a.* they prophesied, i. 536. *a.* the manner of their election, i. 536. *b.* the places where they sat, and a fuller account of them, i. 714. *b.*
Shadow brought ten degrees back in the dial of Ahaz, ii. 519. *b.*
Shallum, a king of Israel, slain, ii. 502. *b.*
Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, takes Samaria, and carries away the people captive, ii. 507. *a.* &c.
Shamgar, one of the judges of Israel, ii. 142. *a.* slew six hundred men with an ox-goad, *ibid.*
Sheaf, the sheaf of the first-fruits to be waved, i. 458. *a.* a sheaf left in the field not to be fetched home, i. 759. *b.*
Sheba, a country, where situated, i. 45. *b.* from whence the queen of Sheba came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, i. 53. *a.* the meaning of the name, i. 97. *b.* the particulars of the queen of Sheba's visit to king Solomon, ii. 419. *a.* she is supposed to come from Arabia Felix, *ibid.*
Sheba, a Benjamite, rebels against king David, ii. 364. *a.* is besieged in a town, his head is cut off and thrown over the wall, ii. 366. *b.*
Shechem, the name of a place, explained, ii. 123. *b.*
Shechem debauches Dinah, Jacob's daughter, i. 113. *b.*
Sheep, a noble employment anciently to keep them, i. 102. *b.*
Sheep-gate in Jerusalem, ii. 690. *b.*
Sheep-shearing, a festival time, i. 123. *a.*
Shekel, the ancient shekels were only of silver, i. 80. *b.* the value about half-a-crown, i. 87. *b.* the derivation of the word, i. 88. *a.* the half shekel paid to the building of the tabernacle, i. 303. *b.* an account of the shekel of the sanctuary, *ibid.* half shekel for repairing the temple, *ibid.* the proportion between shekels of silver and shekels of gold, ii. 380. *b.*

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Shem, not the eldest of Noah's sons though first named, i. 30. *a.* the dutiful affection of Shem and Japheth towards their father, i. 40. *b.* the Lord was the God of Shem after a peculiar manner, *ibid.* why he is first named among the sons of Noah, i. 41. *b.* 50. *a.* his age and death, i. 57. *a.*
Shepherd, in what sense shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians, i. 141. *a.* addicted to robbery, i. 141. *b.* shepherd a name of dignity and authority, i. 153. *b.*
Sheth, who are meant by *the children of Sheth* in the prophecy of Balaam, i. 608. *b.*
Shew-bread, the different names of it, and the occasion of it, i. 281. *b.* the manner of making and placing it, i. 465. *b.* called an *offering made by fire*, i. 466. *a.* by whom it was made, *ibid.*
Shibboleth, the meaning of the word and the design of it, ii. 182. *b.*
Shields of gold made by king Solomon, ii. 421. *a.* brazen shields made in the room of them, their use, ii. 437. *b.*
Shihor, the southern bounds of the land of Israel, ii. 566. *a.*
Shiloh, a full explanation of the word, i. 149. *b.*
Shimei, a Benjamite, curses David, ii. 351. *b.* he humbly begs his life, and confesses his crime, ii. 361. *b.* David's charge to Solomon concerning him, ii. 386. *b.* is confined not to pass over the brook of Kidron, ii. 390. *a.* is slain, ii. 390. *b.*
Shinar, a country, an account of it, i. 54. *b.* supposed to be the same with Babylon, i. 62. *b.*
Shishak king of Egypt, comes up against Jerusalem, ii. 437. *a.* takes it, and carries away the spoil, ii. 611. *a.*
Shittim-wood, what it was, i. 276. *b.*
Shoes, holy places not to be entered with the shoes on, i. 170. *a.* the passover to be eaten with the shoes on, i. 206. *a.* the priests officiated without shoes, i. 290. *b.* the ceremony of loosing the shoe, i. 762. *a.* shoes said to be of iron and brass, ii. 48. *a.* the putting off the shoes a token of reverence, ii. 67. *a.* the right of redeeming lands by the delivery of a shoe, ii. 222. *b.*
Shoulder, the right shoulder and the breast of sacrifices belonged to the priests, i. 369. *a.*
Shunammite, the story of Elisha and the Shunammite, ii. 471. *a.* &c.
Shur, the wilderness of Shur, where situated, i. 94. *a.*
Shushan, a palace of the Persian kings, ii. 687. *a.* a noble city in Persia, i. 717. *a.*
Sichem, a particular account of an altar built there by Abraham, i. 60. *a.*
Sidon, a city, why so called, and by whom built, i. 48. *b.*
Sidonians, famous for hewing timber, ii. 398. *a.*
Sihon king of the Amorites overcome by the Israelites, i. 591. *b.* the extent of his country, *ibid.*
Simeon, supposed to be the person that put Joseph into the pit, i. 133. *b.* his character, i. 147. *b.* schoolmasters among the Israelites were chiefly of that family, i. 148. *a.* the numbering of the families descended from him, i. 615. *b.* the lot of the tribe of Simeon in the land of Canaan, ii. 109. *a.*
Similitude, what is meant by *the similitude of the Lord*, i. 541. *b.* no similitude of God seen, i. 670. *a.*
Sin, sins to be expiated by sacrifices, i. 66. *b.* *the crying of sins*, what is meant by the expression, i. 75. *a.* sin, the atonement for sins of ignorance, i. 352. *a.* to *bear one's sin* the same with being stoned, i. 467. *b.* the punishment of presumptuous sins, i. 557. *a.* and of secret sins, ii. 21. *a.*
Sin-money, ii. 496. *b.*
Sin-offerings, an account of them, i. 343. *a.* they were expiatory sacrifices, i. 352. *b.* the place where they were killed, i. 355. *a.* the law concerning sin-offering of particular persons, i. 364. *a.* the distinction concerning sin-offerings, i. 380. *a.* a sin-offering made by women after child-bearing, i. 390. *b.* the sin-offering upon the day of expiation, i. 408. *a.*
Sinai, the reason of the name, i. 168. *b.* in that place Moses received the law, i. 624. *a.*
Sinew that fastens the hip-bone in its socket, never eaten by the Israelites, and why, i. 112. *a.*
Singers appointed in the temple, ii. 559. *a.* their orders set out, ii. 581. *b.* a portion allowed them by the king of Persia, ii. 709. *a.*
Singing called prophecy, ii. 581. *b.*
Sinites, a people, from whom descended, i. 49. *a.*
Sisera, a general under Jabin a king of Canaan, ii. 143. *a.* is defeated by Barak and slain, ii. 145. *a.* &c.
Sister, marriage with two sisters anciently indulged, i. 103. *a.* cousins frequently called sisters in Scripture, i. 163. *b.* the law of marrying a sister among Jews and heathens, i. 425. *b.* &c. two sisters not to be married to the same man, i. 427. *a.* the punishment of lying with a sister, i. 444. *b.* &c.
Sitting, the ancient posture at meals, i. 98. *b.*
Skin, the skins of beasts used for clothes, i. 20. *a.* of burnt-offerings were given to the priests, of sin-offerings were burnt, i. 302. *b.* the method of taking off the skins of sacrifices, i. 344. *b.* the skins of sacrifices belonged to the priests among Jews and heathens, i. 366. *a.*
Skirt, the meaning of *spreading the skirt*, ii. 220. *b.*
Slave, the children of slaves belong to their masters, i. 69. *a.* slaves condemned to turn a mill, i. 202. *b.* the custom in Arabia of boring the ears of slaves, i. 254. *b.* the law concerning slaves and their children, i. 478. *a.*
Sleep, Adam cast into a deep sleep, i. 14. *a.* a prophetical sleep fell upon Abraham, i. 67. *a.*
Smith, no smith found in the land of Israel, ii. 225. *b.*
Snail, an unclean creature, i. 387. *a.*
Snuffers and snuff-dishes belonging to the tabernacle, i. 282. *b.*
Sodom, a city, the wickedness of it, i. 61. *b.* the metropolis of the country of Pentapolis, i. 75. *a.*
Sodomite, no son of Israel to be a Sodomite, i. 752. *b.* Sodomites, their filthy idolatry, ii. 437. *a.* the house of the Sodomites broken down by Josiah, ii. 526. *a.*
Sodomy, the law concerning it, i. 428. *b.*
Sojourn, an account of the Israelites' sojourning in Egypt, i. 211. *a.*
Soldier, the case of a soldier and a fair captive taken in war, i. 738. *b.* &c.
Solomon, is born, ii. 338. *b.* is anointed king, ii. 384. *a.* he marries Pharaoh's daughter, ii. 390. *b.* God appears to him in a dream, ii. 391. *b.* his judgment between the two women and their children, ii. 392. *b.* an account of his principal officers, his daily provision, the extent of his kingdom, ii. 393. *b.* &c. his character for wisdom, ii. 396. *a.* &c. his preparations for building the temple, ii. 397. *b.* &c. a description of the houses he built, ii. 403. *b.* &c. he brings the ark into the temple, ii. 408. *a.* his blessing and prayer at the dedication of the temple, ii. 409. *b.* the cities he built, his tributes, sacrifices, and other proofs of his magnificence, ii. 416. *b.* &c. his navy and trade by sea, ii. 418. *a.* &c. is visited by the queen of Sheba, who made him rich presents, ii. 419. *a.* &c. his gold, riches, and customs, ii. 420. *b.* his chariots, horsemen, and horses, ii. 422. *a.* his love of strange women, the number of his wives and concubines, ii. 422. *b.* &c. is seduced into idolatry, ii. 423. *b.* for which he is threatened with the loss of his kingdom, ii. 424. *a.* the time of his reign and death, ii. 437. *a.* sends to Huram for workmen, ii. 596. *b.* the number of his workmen, ii. 598. *a.* his prayer upon the brazen scaffold, ii. 602. *b.* is supposed to have been a penitent before his death, ii. 609. *b.* Solomon's servants, who they were, ii. 665. *b.*
Son of God, supposed to appear to Adam and Eve, i. 17. *b.* and to Abraham, i. 73. *b.* Son of God sometimes called *the Angel of God*, i. 584. *a.*
Sons of God, the meaning of the expression, i. 30. *b.*
Son, many privileges belonged to the eldest son, i. 95. *b.* sons of the Hebrews ordered by Pharaoh to be slain, i. 163. *a.* the ceremonies in trying and punishing a rebellious son, i. 741. *a.* &c.
Song, the song of Moses after the drowning of the Egyptians, i. 223. *b.* an account of the song taught the Israelites by Moses, ii. 28. *b.* songs made by the heathens in honour of their great men, *ibid.* the song of Moses, ii. 30. *b.* said to contain seventy verses, and to be a compendium of the whole law, ii. 40. *a.* the song of Deborah and Barak, ii. 146. *a.* &c. the song composed by David upon the death of Saul and Jonathan, ii. 308. *b.* another after the victory over his enemies, ii. 370. *a.* &c.
Sorcerer, an account of the Egyptian sorcerers, i. 186. *a.*
Sovereignty, the founder of it, i. 46. *a.*
Soul of man, its origin and nature, i. 10. *a.* *that soul shall be cut off*, the meaning of the expression, i. 72. *a.* an opinion concerning the souls of good men, i. 146. *b.* a meaning fixed upon the word, i. 147. *b.* what is to be understood by *the lusting of the soul*, i. 700. *a.*
Spain, by whom peopled, i. 43. *a.*
Spaniards, why called by the name of Iberi, i. 43. *a.*
Speech, the meaning of the expression, *of a slow speech*, i. 174. *b.*

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Sphinx, the fable of sphinx supposed to have been raised from the story of Deborah, ii. 147. *a.*
Spices burnt at funerals among the Israelites, ii. 618. *a.* &c.
Spies, the meaning of the expression, *Ye are spies*, i. 132. *b.* spies sent to search the land of Canaan, i. 543. *a.* the account they brought of it, i. 545. *b.* the history of the two spies sent by Joshua, ii. 56. *a.*
Spirit of God, what the expression signifies, i. 2. *a.* the power of the Divine Spirit in the recording of past actions, i. 137. *b.*
Spirits of living creatures, whence they proceeded, i. 2. *b.* familiar spirits not to be regarded, i. 439. *a.*
Stork, an unclean bird, i. 385. *a.*
Spoil of war divided between those who guarded the carriages, and those who fought, i. 65. *b.* the manner of dividing the spoil, ii. 304. *b.*
Spoiled, the meaning of the expression *they spoiled the Egyptians*, i. 210. *a.*
Spoon, the spoons belonging to the table of shew-bread, i. 281. *a.*
Sprinkling the blood upon the altar, the design of it, i. 273. *a.* and upon the people, i. 273. *b.* the different ways of sprinkling the blood upon the altar, i. 344. *a.* the sprinkling of blood seven times explained, i. 353. *a.* the form of sprinkling the blood upon the day of expiation, i. 411. *a.* the sprinkling of the blood of the red heifer, i. 577. *a.*
Stacte, a spice, an account of it, i. 312. *a.*
Staff, the passover to be eaten leaning on their staves, i. 206. *b.* the staves belonging to the altar in the tabernacle described, i. 287. *b.*
Standard, the standards in the camp of the Israelites, i. 494. *a.* the order of pitching the standards of the several tribes, i. 494. *b.*
Stars created, and their office, i. 5. *b.* the knowledge of them first taught by Enoch, i. 29. *a.* the *star of Jacob* in the prophecy of Balaam explained, i. 608. *a.*
Stationary men appointed to attend the daily sacrifice, i. 623. *b.*
Statue, a maker of statues forbidden among the Jews, i. 247. *a.*
Statute, the meaning of the word, i. 227. *a.*
Stealing forbidden by the law of Moses, i. 250. *b.* the law concerning the stealing of oxen and sheep, i. 259. *b.* the general law concerning stealing, i. 431. *a.*
Step, no steps were to be made to God's altar, i. 253. *a.*
Sticks, the punishment of gathering sticks upon the sabbath-day, i. 557. *b.*
Stiff-necked, the meaning of the word, i. 319. *b.*
Stone, the stone erected by Jacob held in great veneration by the Jews, i. 101. *a.* a heap of stones erected as a testimony of friendship, i. 109. *a.* set in the confines of fields as boundaries, i. 109. *b.* a stone anciently used instead of a circumcising knife, i. 177. *a.* a man wounded in the stones not to enter into the assembly of the elders, i. 748. *b.* great stones to be erected when the Israelites passed over Jordan, i. 769. *a.* set up as a monument by Joshua, ii. 61. *b.* the erecting of a stone the ancient way of preserving the memory of things past, ii. 127. *a.*
Stoning, no punishment among the Egyptians, i. 193. *b.* the different ways of it among the Jews, i. 244. *b.* a more particular account of it, i. 442. *b.*
Stool, the Hebrew women set upon stools in order to their delivery, i. 162. *a.*
Strangling the punishment of murder, i. 255. *a.* a description of the punishment, i. 443. *b.*
Straw, of use to make bricks, i. 179. *b.*
Stripes, a criminal might be punished with forty stripes, with the manner of inflicting them, i. 760. *b.*
Suburbs appointed for the city of the Levites, i. 647. *a.*
Succession, the law of succession into estates settled, i. 620. *b.*
Succoth-benoth, a Babylonish deity, ii. 509. *b.*
Suck, the greatest persons anciently gave suck to their own children, i. 81. *a.*
Sukkiims, a people, the same with the *Troglodytes*, ii. 610. *b.*
Sun, one of the great lights, and its use, i. 5. *b.* called Baal by the eastern nations, *ibid.* the worship of the sun introduced by Cain, i. 25. *a.* the idolatry of worshipping the sun, moon, and stars, the most ancient, with the reason of it, i. 671. *a.* the punishment appointed for such idolatry, i. 716. *b.* the sun stands still at the command of Joshua, ii. 83. *a.*
Superfluous, a man with any thing superfluous denied the priesthood, i. 450. *b.*
Susiana, a country, the name from whence derived, i. 12. *a.*
Swan, an unclean bird, i. 385. *a.*
Swear, not lawful to swear by a creature, i. 88. *b.*
Swearing, by putting the hand under the thigh, i. 88. *b.* what is understood by *swearing lightly*, i. 248. *a.* the civil laws concerning swearing, i. 248. *b.* expiations in some cases of swearing, i. 356. *a.* law of restitution in cases of false swearing, i. 361. *a.* false swearing forbidden, i. 431. *b.*
Swine, the most ancient sacrifices among the heathen, i. 342. *b.* sacred to Venus, i. 381. *b.* forbidden to the Jews, though of great esteem among heathens, i. 382. *b.* their carcasses not to be touched, i. 383. *a.*
Sword, an account of the flaming sword placed at the passage into the garden of Eden, i. 21. *a.* a particular explanation of the words *sword* and *bow*, i. 146. *a.* &c.
Synagogue, reverence to be used in their synagogues, i. 438. *b.* &c. the manner of reading and expounding in the synagogues, ii. 701. *a.*
Syria, a character of the country, i. 110. *a.* the gods of Syria, ii. 173. *a.*
Syrians, from whom descended, i. 50. *b.* are overcome and routed by the Israelites under king Ahab, ii. 455. *a.* are smitten with blindness, ii. 478. *b.*

TABERNACLE, the model of the tabernacle shewn to Moses, i. 277. *b.* the boards, planks, and bars, belonging to the tabernacle, i. 284. *b.* &c. why called the tabernacle of the congregation, i. 306. *b.* the entrance of the tabernacle in the east, i. 350. *b.* the consecration of the tabernacle and its utensils, i. 370. *b.* the tabernacle was taken in pieces to be the more easily carried, i. 494. *a.* the way of moving the tabernacle and the utensils of it, i. 502. *a.* &c. why called the *tabernacle of witness*, i. 569. *b.* the tabernacle set upon Shiloh, ii. 105. *b.* called *the temple*, ii. 227. *a.* a tabernacle made by David, ii. 323. *a.*
Tabernacles, an account of the feast of tabernacles, i. 268. *a.* the institution of the feast of tabernacles, i. 462. *a.* &c. the sacrifices appointed upon the eight days of the feast of tabernacles, i. 628. *b.* a feast of tabernacles ordained by Jeroboam in the eighth month, ii. 431. *b.*
Tables, the tables of stone, or the testimony, placed in the ark, i. 278. *b.* the description of the table that belonged to the ark of the covenant, i. 280. *a.* where it was placed, i. 286. *b.* the tables of stone were written on both sides, i. 320. *a.* the difference between the first two tables and the second, i. 327. *a.* tables rightly dedicated supplied the place of altars, i. 466. *a.* the table of shew-bread made by Solomon, ii. 407. *b.*
Tabor, a mountain, its situation, ii. 143. *b.*
Tale-bearing forbidden, i. 432. *b.*
Talent, a weight among the Hebrews, i. 336. *b.*
Talisman, Arabian talismans, the use of them, i. 107. *b.* talismans made in imitation of the brazen serpent, i. 589. *a.*
Tamar, an account of her, i. 122. *b.* she was guilty of incest, and the reason of it, i. 124. *a.*
Tamar, the daughter of David, forced by her brother Amnon, ii. 339. *b.* &c.
Tarshish, the same with Spain, i. 43. *a.*
Tartak, a pagan deity, ii. 510. *a.*
Task-master, the business of the Egyptian task-masters, i. 161. *a.*
Tatnai, a governor under the king of Persia, sends a letter to Darius, to hinder the building of the temple, ii. 672. *b.*
Tekoah, the speech of the woman of Tekoah to David, with the design of it, ii. 343. *a.* &c.
Temple, the day on which the first and second temples were destroyed, i. 550. *b.* globes of fire burst out of the foundation of the temple, ordered to be rebuilt by Julian the apostate, ii. 36. *a.* Solomon's temple begun in the four hundred and eightieth year after the deliverance out of Egypt, ii. 178. *b.* the year in which the foundation of the temple was laid, ii. 399. *a.* the dimensions of it, ii. 399. *b.* its ornaments, carvings, &c. ii. 401. *a.* the finishing of the temple and the time it was building, ii. 403. *a.* the dedication of the temple, ii. 408. *a.* &c. pious men directed their prayers towards the temple, ii. 411. *a.* the temple burnt, and all the utensils carried to Babylon, ii. 533. *b.* a pattern of the temple given to Solomon by David, ii. 590. *b.* the foundation of the second temple laid, ii. 669. *a.* at which the old men weep, who had seen the first, *ibid.* the building ceases,

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ii. 672. *a.* the dimensions of the second temple, ii. 674. *a.* it is finished, ii. 675. *b.*
Tempt, how God is said to be tempted, i. 550. *b.*
Temptations, what they signify, i. 673. *b.*
Tempter, in what manner he seduced Eve, i. 16. *b.*
Ten, a number in which all nations end their account, and then begin with compound numbers, i. 102. *a.*
Tent, the original of dwelling in tents, i. 26. *a.* the tent of Moses where he gave audience, i. 323. *b.*
Tenth, of the spoils of war offered to God, i. 65. *a.* why the tenth was pitched upon to be offered to God, i. 101. *b.* the tenth was holy to the Lord and could not be redeemed, i. 489. *a.*
Tenth-deal a measure, among the Hebrews, i. 306. *a.*
Terah, supposed to have been an idolatrous priest, i. 57. *b.* became a worshipper of the true God, i. 58. *a.* an account of his death, *ibid.*
Teraphim, the use of them particularly explained, i. 107. *b.* a teraphim made by Micah, ii. 198. *a.* is stolen away, ii. 201. *a.*
Testimony, the meaning of the expression, *before the testimony*, i. 233. *b.* why the tables of stone were called *the testimony*, i. 277. *b.*
Thanksgiving, an account of the peace-offering of thanksgiving, i. 366. *b.* in what manner the flesh of it was to be eaten, i. 367. *a.* what is meant by *a sacrifice of thanksgivings*, i. 457. *b.*
Theft reckoned lawful among the Egyptians, i. 142. *a.* the law of Plato concerning theft, i. 259. *b.*
Thief, a thief sold by the Hebrews for his theft, i. 253. *b.* for six years, but a woman was not to be sold, i. 260. *a.* the case of a thief that confessed the fact, or did not confess, *ibid.*
Theocracy, the government of the Israelites a theocracy, i. 623. *a.*
Thermutis, the name of the daughter of Pharaoh that took up Moses, i. 164. *a.*
Thigh, the meaning of the expression, *put thy hand under my thigh*, explained, i. 88. *b.* Jacob's thigh out of joint, i. 111. *a.* the thigh of the suspected wife was to rot, i. 510. *a.*
Thistle, the fable of the thistle and the cedar, ii. 500. *a.*
Thousands sometimes signify many generations, i. 248. *a.*
Thracians, from whom descended, i. 42. *b.*
Throne, a throne built by Solomon where he heard causes, ii. 404. *a.* his throne of ivory described, ii. 421. *a.*
Thumb, the tying of the thumbs, and pricking them till the blood ran, the ancient way of making covenants, i. 71. *a.*
Thunder, an account of the terrible thunder among the plagues of Egypt, i. 197. *b.*
Tibareni, a people, from whom descended, i. 42. *b.*
Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, invades the land, and carries away the people captive, ii. 503. *b.* &c. he takes Damascus, ii. 505. *b.*
Tigris, a river, its rise, i. 11. *a.* its name whence derived, i. 12. *b.* the nature of its course, *ibid.*
Timbrel, always used upon occasions of great rejoicing, i. 226. *a.*
Time of life, the meaning of the expression, i. 74. *a.* the observation of times forbidden, i. 436. *b.*
Timnath, a town, its situation, i. 123. *a.* two places of that name, *ibid.*
Tirshatha, an officer, the meaning of the name, ii. 666. *b.*
Tisri, the first month of the civil year, i. 417. *a.*
Tithes, paid before the law of Moses, i. 65. *a.* an account of tithes under Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, i. 101. *b.* the law concerning the first and second tithe, i. 264. *a.* tithes enjoined by the law of Moses, the manner of redeeming them, i. 488. *b.* what is meant by *the tithe of the herd, and of the flock*, *ibid.* tithes devoted for the maintenance of the Christian ministry, i. 489. *b.* represented as heave-offerings made to God, i. 574. *a.* the tenth of the Levites' tithe reserved to God, i. 574. *b.* the second tithe commanded to be paid, i. 707. *a.* to be carried to the sanctuary by the people, or exchanged into money, i. 707. *b.* the second tithe every third year employed to support the poor, i. 708. *a.* and called the third tithe, i. 710. *a.* the tithe paid in the days of Hezekiah, ii. 648. *a.*
Tob, the land of Tob, ii. 175. *b.*
Tobiah the Ammonite, an enemy to the Jews, ii. 689. *b.*
Tola the son of Issachar, the reason of that name, i. 140. *b.* one of the name a judge in Israel, ii. 172. *b.*
Tool, the graven tool used in making the golden calf, i. 317. *a.* the noise of no tool heard in the building of the temple, ii. 400. *a.*
Tooth, the meaning of the law, *tooth for tooth*, i. 257. *b.*
Topaz, one of the stones set in the breast-plate, i. 293. *a.*
Topheth defiled by king Josiah, ii. 527. *a.*
Tower, the tower in the temple of Belus described, i. 54. *b.* conjectures concerning the reason of its being built, i. 55. *a.* and concerning its destruction, i. 56. *b.*
Tradition, the ground upon which the Jews found their oral tration, i. 330. *b.*
Trance, what is meant by *falling into a trance*, i. 606. *a.*
Travel, a particular account of the travels of the Israelites, i. 640. *b.* &c.
Treasure-cities built by the Israelites in Egypt, i. 161. *b.* in what sense the Israelites are said to be a peculiar treasure to God, i. 242. *b.* the treasure allowed to the Hebrew kings, i. 721. *b.* the treasures of the dedicated things, how governed, ii. 584. *b.*
Tree of life, why so called, and its nature, i. 10. *b.* tree of knowledge of good and evil, an account of it, *ibid.* the superstition of worshipping under trees, i. 696. *a.* trees that bore fruit to be preserved in war and peace, with the reason, i. 735. *b.* other trees might lawfully be cut down, i. 736. *b.* the form of the tree on which were hanged the bodies of criminals, i. 742. *b.*
Trespasses, the law concerning trespasses, i. 506. *b.*
Trespass-offerings, an account of them, i. 343. *a.* sometimes the same with a sin-offering, i. 357. *a.* the several reasons of their being offered, i. 358. *b.* &c. the blood in trespass-offerings to be sprinkled round about upon the altar, i. 365. *b.*
Trespass-money, ii. 496. *b.*
Tribe, a form of government was settled in the tribe of Judah till the coming of the Messiah, i. 148, *b.* &c. the manner of dividing their tribes, i. 241. *a.* who were called the *chief of their tribes*, i. 658. *a.* ten tribes revolt against the family of David, ii. 429. *b.*
Tribute, the share of the prey that belonged to the priests called the Lord's tribute, i. 635. *b.*
Trinity, the doctrine of the Trinity not unknown to the ancient Jews, i. 360. *a.* a text to prove this doctrine, i. 679. *a.*
Troop, *a troop cometh*, the expression particularly explained, i. 103. *b.*
Trumpet, the institution of the feast of trumpets, i. 460. *b.* &c. the reason of sounding trumpets on the year of jubilee, i. 469. *b.* the congregation met at the sound of the two silver trumpets, i. 527. *a.* the uses of those trumpets, *ibid.* the sacrifices appointed at the feasts of trumpets, i. 627. *b.*
Tubal-Cain found the art of melting metals, and making instruments of brass and iron, i. 26. *b.* supposed to be the same with the heathen Vulcan, *ibid.*
Turks, the offspring of Japheth, i. 41. *a.*
Turtle-doves, the occasion of their being offered, i. 345. *a.*
Twins, an account how they are covered in the womb, i. 125. *a.*
Tyre, the metropolis of Phœnicia, i. 45. *a.* said to fall to the lot of the tribe of Asher, ii. 111. *b.*
Tyrians, sent to man king Solomon's fleet, ii. 418. *a.*

VALENTINIANS, some account of their principles, i. 13. *a.*
Vashti, the queen of Persia, refuses to come to the king, ii. 718. *b.* a decree made against her, ii. 719. *b.*
Veil, a woman's veil, the design of it, i. 80. *b.* a veil the ornament of a bride, i. 91. *a.* worn by women when they went abroad, i. 123. *a.* the veil belonging to the tabernacle described, i. 285. *b.* the veil put upon Moses's face, i. 332. *a.*
Venus, supposed to be the same with Naamah, sister of Tubal-Cain, i. 26. *b.*
Vessels, vessels of earth used in sacrifices broken, and brass rinsed, i. 365. *a.*
Vestal-fire, from whence established among the Romans, i. 363. *a.*
Vines, no vines in Egypt, i. 136. *a.*
Vinegar, of a cooling quality in hot seasons, ii. 218. *b.*
Vineyards, first planted by Noah, i. 40. *a.* the fruits of the vineyards every seventh year were given to the poor, i. 267. *a.* the vineyards were not to be gleaned, i. 431. *a.* a man that had planted a vineyard excused from war, if he had not eaten of it, i. 733. *b.*
Viper, a deadly kind of viper described, i. 152. *a.*
Virgin, the case of lying with a virgin betrothed, i. 747. *b.* virgins sought out for the king of Persia, the manner of their purification, ii. 720. *a.* &c. the time of their purification, ii. 721. *a.*
Virgin, the dowry of virgins, i. 262. *a.* the high-priest obliged to marry a virgin, i. 449. *a.*

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Virginity, the case of exposing the tokens of virginity, i. 746. *b.* Jephthah's daughter devoted to perpetual virginity, ii. 181. *a.*
Vision, the manner of revelation by vision, i. 65. *b.* a fuller account of it, i. 541. *a.* sometimes includes all manner of revelation, ii. 234. *a.*
Vitellius desired by the Jews not to carry images in his ensigns through Judea, i. 247. *a.*
Unclean things, the expiation for touching unclean things, i. 356. *b.*
Uncleanness, a person in uncleanness forbidden to eat the flesh of the peace-offerings, i. 368. *a.* a woman in her uncleanness not to be touched by a man, i. 427. *b.* a man under accidental uncleanness to be washed before he came into the camp, i. 751. *a.*
Unleavened, the offerings and sacrifices belonging to the feast of unleavened bread, i. 457. *a.* the first and last days of this feast to be observed with a sabbatical rest, *ibid.*
Unicorn, a creature supposed to be fabulous, i. 603. *b.* a farther account of it, ii. 46. *a.*
Unrighteousness in judgment forbidden, i. 440. *b.*
Voice of the Lord walking in the garden, what it signifies, i. 17. *a.*
Vow, an account of the first vow in Scripture, i. 101. *b.* a vow concerning a voluntary offering, i. 367. *a.* the flesh of such a sacrifice in what manner to be disposed, *ibid.* the making of vows common among Jews and heathens, i. 454. *a.* the meaning of a *singular vow*, i. 484. *b.* the estimation of a person set apart by a vow, *ibid.* a beast set apart by a vow not to be changed, i. 485. *a.* the vow of a Nazarite particularly explained, i. 512. *b.* &c. the case of a vow made by a man or woman adjusted, i. 629. *b.* &c. a vow not to be dispensed with, i. 754. *b.* the vow of Jephthah, ii. 179. *a.*
Ur, a city of Chaldea, the reason of its name, i. 46. *a.* a particular account of it, i. 57. *b.* famous for superstition, i. 58. *a.* Abraham called from thence, i. 58. *b.*
Uriah, his whole story, and the manner of his death, ii. 333. *a.* &c.
Urijah, a priest, complies with Ahaz in making a new altar, ii. 505. *b.*
Urim and Thummim put in the breast-plate of the high-priest, i. 295. *a.* various opinions concerning it, *ibid.* the manner of answering by Urim and Thummim, i. 296. *a.* the consulting of God by Urim, i. 622. *a.* the answer by Urim and Thummim given by a voice, ii. 130. *a.* the Urim and Thummim either lost or burnt with the temple, ii. 666. *b.*
Usury, the law concerning it, i. 263. *b.* strictly forbidden, i. 474. *b.* money might be lent upon usury to a stranger, but not to an Israelite, i. 753. *b.* &c.
Utensils belonging to the temple, ii. 407. *b.*
Uz, from whom Job descended, an account of him, i. 86. *a.*
Uzzah, slain for his rashness in touching the ark, ii. 322. *a.*
Uzziah, a king of Judah, ii. 636. *a.* his buildings, captains, &c. ii. 636. *b.* died a leper, and therefore not buried in the sepulchre of the kings, ii. 638. *a.*

WAGES of a person hired not to be detained, i. 432. *a.*
Waggon, covered waggons used in carrying the tabernacle, i. 517. *b.*
Walls, the walls of the temple described, ii. 402. *b.* of the temple repaired, ii. 690. *b.* &c. of Jerusalem finished, ii. 698. *b.*
War, the meaning of the expression, *a man of war*, i. 224. *b.* what is meant by *the book of the wars of the Lord*, i. 590. *a.* war sometimes declared by the kings of Israel, and sometimes by Divine commandment, i. 622. *b.* the duty of the priest anointed for war, i. 732. *b.*
Washing, the ancient rite of cleansing, i. 115. *b.* and of purification, i. 164. *a.* a washing-room in the temple for cleaning the sacrifices, i. 345. *a.* the washing of the high-priest upon the day of expiation, i. 415. *a.* &c. washings were the old way of purgation among Jews and pagans, i. 416. *a.*
Watch, the watches of the night explained, i. 222. *a.* three watches among the Hebrews and the rest of the eastern nations, ii. 160. *b.*
Waters, what is meant by *the division of the waters from the waters*, i. 3. *b.* sufficient waters to be found in the bowels of the earth to cover the highest mountains, i. 25. *a.* the meaning of the expression, *sodden with water*, i. 205. *b.* the miracle of water brought out of the rock, i. 235. *b.* the ceremony of pouring out water on the feast of tabernacles, i. 464. *a.* the trial of the suspected wife by the waters of jealousy, i. 507. *a.* &c. the bitter waters used in that trial, i. 509. *a.* the use of the water of separation, i. 578. *b.* the water that followed, i. 581. *a.* the courage of soldiers tried by the lapping of water, ii. 158. *b.*
Wave-offering, an account of it, i. 304. *a.* the manner of waving, i. 369. *a.*
Weasel, an unclean creature, i. 387. *a.*
Weaning, the time of weaning children, and the custom of feasting the same day, i. 81. *a.*
Week, an account of the feast of weeks, i. 268. *a.*
Weeping, the days of weeping for the dead, ii. 52. *a.*
Weight, justice to be used in weights and measures, i. 441. *a.* divers weights not to be kept, i. 763. *a.*
Well, a well in the temple for the use of the court of the sanctuary, i. 365. *a.*
West, the Jews turned their faces towards the west when they worshipped, ii. 413. *a.*
Whales, the creation of them why particularly mentioned, i. 6. *a.*
Whore, an express law that there should be no whore in Israel, i. 123. *b.* whores anciently branded in the forehead, i. 124. *b.* there was to be no whore of the daughters of Israel, i. 752. *b.* consecrated whores among the heathen, *ibid.* the price of a whore not to be brought into the house of the Lord, i. 753. *a.*
Whoredom not punished, i. 123. *b.* idolatry called by that name, with the punishment of it, i. 551. *b.*
Whoring after strange gods, what it means, i. 330. *a.*
Widow, an account of a widow's being got with child when she was drunk, i. 79. *a.* they wore a particular habit, i. 123. *a.* the widow was not to be afflicted, i. 263. *a.* the high-priest forbidden to marry a widow, i. 449. *b.* the widow's raiment not to be taken for a pledge, i. 759. *b.*
Wife, the close affection between man and wife explained, i. 14. *b.* the office of a secondary wife, i. 69. *a.* a wife espoused to stay some time with her parents before the consummation of the marriage, i. 90. *b.* the custom anciently to purchase a wife, i. 102. *b.* a custom before the law of Moses for a man to marry his brother's wife, i. 122. *b.* the fruitfulness of a wife of a citizen of Florence, i. 160. *a.* abstinence from the wife a part of sanctification, i. 244. *a.* the trial of the suspected wife, i. 507. *b.* her punishment if guilty, and her reward if innocent, i. 511. *a.*
Wife, a man excused from war if he had betrothed a wife, and had not taken her, i. 733. *b.* the case between a wife loved and a wife hated, i. 740. *b.* the case of a wife suspected not to have been a maid at the first trial, i. 745. *b.* &c. the punishment of a husband for falsely accusing such a wife, i. 746. *b.* the punishment of the wife if the fact be proved, i. 747. *a.* the case of a wife with some uncleanness in her, i. 755. *b.* a new wife excused a man from going to war, i. 757. *a.* the punishment of a wife that takes hold of the secrets of another man in defence of her husband, i. 762. *b.* laws concerning the wife of a king, ii. 336. *b.* the custom of the Persian wives, ii. 719. *b.*
Wilderness, the reason of the Israelites going into the wilderness to sacrifice, i. 193. *b.*
Wilderness of Sinai, its situation, i. 242. *a.* the manner of sending away the scape-goat into the wilderness, i. 413. *b.* &c. the time the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, i. 552. *a.*
Wind, the waters of the deluge assuaged by a drying wind, i. 35. *b.*
Windows of heaven, how to be understood, i. 34. *a.* the windows of the temple, ii. 400. *a.*
Wine, not to be drunk by the priests, i. 379. *a.* said to cheer God and man, ii. 167. *b.*
Wing, the wing of birds to be cloven when offered as a sacrifice, i. 346. *a.*
Wire, the method of making golden wire among the Hebrews, i. 337. *b.*
Wisdom, what is meant by the *spirit of wisdom*, i. 290. *a.*
Wise men of Egypt, an account of them, i. 128. *b.* a farther character of them, i. 186. *a.*
Witch, the law concerning witches, i. 262. *a.* the circumstances of the whole affair between Saul and the witch of Endor, ii. 299. *a.* &c.
Witchcraft, a law of Plato's concerning it, i. 262. *b.* the Jews extremely addicted to witchcraft, i. 725. *a.*
Witness, the law concerning a false witness, i. 265. *a.* no man to be condemned without the testimony of two witnesses, i. 266. *a.* ten sorts of persons incapable of being witnesses, i. 652. *a.* one witness sufficient to put a man to his oath for his purgation, i. 717. *a.* the punishment of a false witness, i. 731. *b.* among the Greeks and Romans, *ibid.*

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Wizards not to be sought after, i. 439. *b.* the punishment inflicted for consulting them, i. 443. *a.* their punishment, i. 446. *a.*
Woman, created after the Divine image as well as man, i. 8. *a.* the reason of the name, i. 14. *b.* women had their apartments by themselves, i. 74. *a.* and children anciently spared in the most cruel wars, i. 114. *b.* the fruitfulness of the Egyptian women, i. 160. *a.* the manner of the delivery of the Hebrew women in Egypt, i. 162. *a.* the punishment for hurting a woman with child, i. 257. *a.* the law to be observed by a woman after child-bearing, i. 389. *b.* &c. the custom among the Greeks in treating their women after child-bearing, i. 391. *a.* the punishment of lying with a woman in her sickness, i. 445. *a.* the case of a woman divorced fully explained, i. 756. *a.*
Womb, what is meant by *closing up the womb*, i. 80. *b.*
Wood, the manner of laying the wood upon the altar, i. 344. *b.* the wood to supply the fire of the altar in what manner disposed, i. 362. *b.* the wood-offering settled by casting lots, ii. 707. *a.*
Wool, a tithe of wool given to the priests, i. 723. *a.*
Word, the Word creator of the world, i. 2. *b.* the Word of the Lord came to Abraham, i. 65. *b.* the ten commandments called the ten *words*, i. 272. *b.*
Work, what is meant by *cunning work*, i. 291. *b.*
World, not eternal, i. 1. *a.*
Wounding, the law concerning it, i. 256. *b.* the civil law, and Plato's opinion upon that subject, i. 257. *a.*
Writing, the way of dating their writings among the Jews, i. 203. *b.*

Year, the year before the time of Moses began in September, i. 34. *a.* the beginning of the year as to things sacred and civil, i. 203. *b.* a full account of the year of release, i. 253. *b.* the increase of the seventh year to be given to the poor, i. 267. *a.*
Younger, the younger frequently preferred by God before the elder, i. 145. *b.*

Zabii, a people, one of their idolatrous rites, i. 353. *b.* their ceremonies in purifying child-bed women, i. 390. *a.* the offerings they made to their great god, i. 701. *a.* &c. they thought that the fruitfulness of the earth depended upon the worship of the planets, ii. 4. *b.*
Zachariah, king of Israel, his character, ii. 502. *a.*
Zadok, the priest, takes care of the ark in the conspiracy of Absalom, ii. 350. *b.* is made priest in the room of Abiathar, ii. 398. *b.*
Zaleucus is said to have received his laws from Minerva, i. 275. *b.*
Zamareni, a people, from whom descended, i. 91. *b.*
Zamzummims, a people, why so called, i. 664. *a.*
Zarah, his birth, and the reason of his name, i. 125. *a.*
Zarephath, the widow of Zarephath, her story, ii. 444. *b.*
Zebulun, the numbering of the families descended from him, i. 616. *b.* the blessing of Moses upon the tribe of Zebulun, ii. 46. *b.* the lot of the tribe of Zebulun in the land of Canaan, ii. 110. *a.*
Zechariah the son of Jehoiada stoned, ii. 633. *a.*
Zedekiah, a false prophet, ii. 460. *a.*
Zedekiah, a king of Judah, ii. 532. *b.* is taken by the king of Babylon, ii. 533. *a.* his wickedness, ii. 661. *a.*
Zelophehad, the case of his daughters adjusted, i. 619. *b.* their inheritance settled by law, i. 653. *a.*
Zemarites, a people, from whom descended, i. 49. *b.*
Zerubbabel, the governor of Judea, ii. 668. *a.*
Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, an account of him, ii. 329. *b.* his unfaithfulness to his master, ii. 351. *a.*
Zidon, the gods of Zidon, ii. 173. *a.*
Ziklag, and the spoil of it, recovered by David, ii. 302. *b.* &c.
Zimri, his conspiracy and success, ii. 441. *a.* his death, ii. 441. *b.*
Zin, the wilderness of Zin, i. 580. *b.*
Zion, the fort of Zion kept by the Jebusites, ii. 102. *a.*
Ziphites, the old enemies of David, ii. 295. *b.*
Zipporah, the wife of Moses, an account of her, i. 167. *b.* she circumcises her child, and the reason of it, i. 177. *a.*
Zoan, the metropolis of Egypt, i. 138. *b.*
Zoar, the same with the city of Tamis in Egypt, i. 62. *a.* called by the name of Bela, i. 78. *b.*
Zoroaster, an account of him, i. 169. *b.* from whence arose the fable that he saw God encompassed with flames, i. 245. *b.* his story supposed to be framed out of the book of Moses, i. 248. *a.* ancient magic derived from him, i. 605. *b.*
Zuzims, a people, an account of them, i. 63. *a.*

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